

**“One of the Most Penetrating Minds in England:”  
Gerald Heard and the British Intelligentsia of the Interwar Period**

Paul Eros, Corpus Christi College  
(DPhil Thesis, Submitted Michaelmas Term 2011)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements and Thanks</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter I</b> The Psychic Community: Heard's Minimum Working Hypothesis	<b>20</b>
<b>Chapter II</b> Sympathetic Minds: Horace Plunkett & "The Incomparable Gerald"	<b>54</b>
<b>Chapter III</b> "The Greatest of All Great Broadcasters:" Gerald Heard and the B.B.C.	<b>82</b>
<b>Chapter IV</b> From Theory to 'Praxis': Heard and "The Dartington Experiment"	<b>112</b>
<b>Chapter V</b> "A Sort of Mutt and Jeff": Gerald Heard, Aldous Huxley and the New Pacifism	<b>173</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> "One of the Public"?: Heard and the Clerisy	<b>243</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>250</b>

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**ABSTRACT**

Gerald Heard (1889-1971) was an influential figure among the intelligentsia of the 1930s, once described by E. M. Forster as “one of the most penetrating minds in England.” However, he remains an ill-defined footnote, a marginal figure whose influence and reputation, although acknowledged, remains unexamined. This dissertation examines his life and work, and considers the role which Heard, as a generaliser and public intellectual, played in the intellectual landscape of the 1930s.

Central to Heard’s philosophy was a belief that society was in need of a spiritual and psychological force which could allow isolated individuals to participate in community with one another. Heard’s solution to bring about this evolution of consciousness would prove to be partly psychological, partly mystical and partly down to the product of a particular way of living. The first chapter outlines Heard’s philosophy in detail. Subsequent chapters are structured so as to provide a loose biographical chronology, each focussing on a different phase of Heard’s career and examining the development of his thought. Running throughout the dissertation is a consideration of Heard’s role as a public intellectual. It was as a popular ‘generaliser’ of thought that Heard found his public, and the limited degree of success he found as a man of action could be seen to be a natural limitation of the role he had constructed for himself.

Chapter II focuses on Heard’s time as personal secretary to Sir Horace Plunkett, father of the Irish Co-Operative Movement, and how the ideals of this movement can be seen to inform his developing ideas of human community. Chapter III looks at Heard’s role as a broadcaster with the B.B.C., where he became a noted populariser of science, firmly establishing himself as a public figure and cultural authority. It is arguably this increased public profile which provided Heard with a ‘public’ to whom he could address his ideas. Chapter IV, drawing on archival material from Dartington Hall, considers Heard’s role as a lecturer at Dartington School, and more importantly his first experiment to establish a small ‘group’ for meditation in an attempt to discover the mystical and psychological basis for a co-operative society. Chapter V examines his career as an outspoken pacifist, where he would advance his arguments for a radical reorganisation of society as a practical solution to the question of peace and further attempt to become a man of action.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

*It might not be a bad idea if no one under thirty was allowed to undertake original research without special permission.<sup>1</sup>*

- John Gross

Having completed in my thirties what I began in my twenties, this particularly aphoristic pronouncement made me laugh like a drain when I first read it in my college library only one week before submitting. It seemed to be an apposite epigraph to the whole thing, although as I gather these disastrous chapters to have them bound I can't help but think T. S. Eliot didn't articulate my feelings more clearly: "Go away! Find a place for your self [*sic*] in a book – and don't expect *me* to take any further interest in you."<sup>2</sup>

I'm not given to mawkish sentiment, and have seen more than my fair share of disastrous Oscar acceptance speeches (and thesis dedications) to know that less is more. Suffice it to say, however, that if your name appears below I owe you a pint, the truest measure of appreciation I know.

I offer my deepest gratitude and warmest thanks to my supervisors, David Bradshaw (Worcester) and Michael Whitworth (Merton), without whom this thesis may have languished forever in various envelopes and file folders containing "miscellaneous masses of Sheets, and oftener Shreds and Snips."<sup>3</sup> I am also very grateful for the supervision of Sue Jones (LMH) and Martin Ceadel (New), and also the advice and encouragement of my 'moral tutor' at Corpus Christi, Valentine Cunningham. Recalling my undergraduate days, I must also raise a Manhattan cocktail to Pat Rae (Queen's University, Canada), without whose encouragement and enthusiasm for English literature I doubt I'd have moved much beyond ENGL110.

Archives proved to be an essential part of this thesis, and I wish to acknowledge and thank the B.B.C. Written Archive Centre in Caversham Park, Reading; the archives of Gonville & Caius and King's College, Cambridge; the Swarthmore College Peace Collection in Swarthmore, PA for kindly supplying two articles outside the orbit of your average researcher; The ONE Institute and Archives in Los Angeles, CA; Lambeth Palace; the British Library; and of course the Bodleian Library. This thesis would also have been impossible without the knowledge and kind assistance of Kate Targett at the Plunkett Archive; Yvonne Widger and the staff at High Cross House, Dartington Hall; William Hetherington of the Peace Pledge Union; and all the librarians and archivists who ever had to remind me *not* to use a fountain pen when looking at manuscripts. Force of habit, I'm afraid – but like George Follansbee Babbitt, I have learned to carry both "a fountain pen and a silver pencil (always lacking a supply of new leads)"<sup>4</sup> without which I would now feel equally naked.

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<sup>1</sup> John Gross, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life since 1800* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 295.

<sup>2</sup> T. S. Eliot, "The Three Voices of Poetry," *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 98.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus* (London: J. M. Dent, 1924), Book One, Chapter XI, 58.

<sup>4</sup> Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt* (New York: Signet, 1961), 12.

It would be entirely remiss of me not to thank Corpus Christi College, whose small size was “inversely [*sic*] proportional”<sup>5</sup> to the enormity of its importance to me as a place of study and a hive of social and academic activity. Of the Fellows, staff and students whose kindness and help was readily forthcoming, there are too many to enumerate - but I will single out the Porters, one and all; College Gardener David Leake; Manciple Mike Curran (and especially his Veal Holstein); Domestic Bursar Colin Holmes; our late Bursar, Ben Ruck-Keene; Librarian Joanna Snelling; Archivist Julian Reid; Masters of Works Stuart Dutton and his predecessor, the late George Ross (who taught me how to repair sash windows – unquestionably the best thing I learned at Oxford); Fellow for Development and my former boss, Nick Thorn; former President, Sir Tim Lankester; and especially our indomitable College Secretary, Rachel Pearson, whose care, attention to detail and expert navigation of the often Byzantine workings of Oxford have been deeply appreciated by more graduate students than I can recall. (Every college should have a Rachel Pearson.)

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and likewise this thesis benefitted from the friendships I have formed over the years that have informed my thoughts (such as they are), writing (such as it is) and character (probably one of those “things” Winnie Verloc would feel “do not stand much looking into”<sup>6</sup>). Whether engaging in intelligent conversation or simply sharing a hangover, these friends – and others I have no doubt forgotten to mention through my own carelessness and inclination to be brief – are dearly beloved and appreciated. Quite how or why they put up with me I shall never know, but I am grateful. To show no favouritism, I have simply listed them in alphabetical order: Belinda Beaton; Aisling Begley; Betony Bell; Bryony Bethell; John Bethell; Paul 'Buzz' Booker; Stephanie Bremner; Matthew Carter; Beverly Chandler; Heather Clarke; Elizabeth Curthoys; Judith Curthoys; Anne-Bénédicte Damon; Katy Darby; Karl Demata; Lander Goodspeed Dunbar; Gaia Elkington; Hania Elkington; Alan 'Eric' Fisher; John 'Skippy' Gannon; Susannah Gill; Laura Henderson; Sam Henry; Rachel Hewitt; Andy Hill; Nate Holcomb; Laura King; George Longley; Stuart Macbeth; Irene Morra; Kim Smith; Sandeep Sreekumar; Tim Steer; Nick Thomas; Emma Tracy; John 'Muggsy' West; Michael 'Red' Wilkins; Gervaise Wood; and finally, what MAD Magazine would affectionately call “The Usual Gang of Idiots” down The Bear, without whom I am sure this thesis would have been written in half the time....

And so from friends to family, to whom I offer my love, thanks and appreciation. The understanding and unfailing support of my parents (Robert and Sharon) has always held me in good stead; as Dr David Marcus said to Admiral James T Kirk, “I’m proud – very proud – to be your son.”<sup>7</sup> Much love and thanks too for my brothers Jonathan and Stephen and their families; to my grandmother Carmel Lajoie; and posthumously to my grandfather Jim Lajoie, whose influence, example and love of Swing music have all had an unquestionable – and largely salutary - effect on me.

Of course, I also cannot fail to mention the girl who insisted upon sitting on my lap while I wrote most of this thesis. Hermione was, like Dr Johnson’s Hodge, “a very

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<sup>5</sup> Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point* (New York: Literary Guild of America, 1928), 377.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent* (London: Methuen, 1946), 170.

<sup>7</sup> *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, dir. Nicholas Meyer, perf. William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley, DVD, Paramount Pictures, 1982. Live long and prosper.

fine cat indeed”<sup>8</sup> and went to her final reward (which I suspect, knowing her tastes, consists largely of *fromage de tête* – posh cat food, when you think about it – and lashings of my Casserole of Liver with Olives and Mushrooms<sup>9</sup>) in 2010, aged 18.

Finally, to anyone who has read this far, I suspect you have elected to write something about, or related to, “Gerald Heard - but not understood.”<sup>10</sup> Might I recommend to a fellow scholar healthy quantities of Hendrick’s Gin and the works of P. G. Wodehouse, without whose distracting influences I would certainly have been a case for Sir Roderick Glossop many times over? Oh, and if you haven’t already seen his handwriting, you’ll find Heard tends to abbreviate Christianity as ‘Xianity’, Psychology as ‘Ψchology’, and in his more intimate early correspondence refers to himself as ‘INFY,’ a little joke about his inferiority complex.<sup>11</sup> That ought to save you two hours “pent ‘mid cloisters dim,”<sup>12</sup> staring through a magnifying glass and scribbling out letter forms on a sheet of paper.

Worst two hours *I* ever spent....

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<sup>8</sup> James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, edited by Christopher Hibbert (New York: Penguin, 1986), 294.

<sup>9</sup> See Constance Spry and Rosemary Hume, *The Constance Spry Cookery Book* (London: J. M. Dent, 1956; Eighth Printing, 1967), 602. Benefits greatly from the addition of a glass of wine and substitution of pimento-stuffed Manzanilla olives for ‘turned’ olives.

<sup>10</sup> *Reportedly* said by John Betjeman in an interview. Source? God bless you! I have none to tell, sir.

<sup>11</sup> For more on the question of ‘INFY,’ see Alison Falby, *Between the Pigeonholes: Gerald Heard, 1889-1971* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Frost at Midnight.”

**“One of the Most Penetrating Minds in England:”  
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**Introduction**

Were one to look at the indices and footnotes of various biographies and critical studies of some of the brightest luminaries of the interwar years, one would encounter, time and again, the name of Gerald Heard (1889 – 1971). To Christopher Isherwood, he was a guru; Heard introduced him to Swami Prabhavananda and Vedanta in California in 1937.<sup>13</sup> In a letter of 12 June 1941, William Somerset Maugham called Heard a “godsend,” and would incorporate elements of Heard’s personality and many of his ideas within the character of Larry Durrel in *The Razor’s Edge*.<sup>14</sup> Naomi Mitchison considered Heard “very nearly [her] best friend”<sup>15</sup> as well as one of the most significant influences on her work in the 1930s.<sup>16</sup> It was Mitchison who introduced the young W. H. Auden to Gerald Heard, then serving as literary editor of the short-lived journal, *The Realist*; Heard had arranged to publish some of his earliest poetry in 1929 but the journal went bankrupt before its publication.<sup>17</sup> Despite this disappointment, Heard would prove to be of greater importance to Auden as a literary influence; in the fragment “In The Year of My Youth,” Auden not only reworks Heard’s turgid prose into poetry, but also depicts Heard as Virgil to Auden’s Dante on a trip through modern London.<sup>18</sup> Heard was also a household name in Bloomsbury, although he was largely described in less than flattering terms. Virginia

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<sup>13</sup> See Christopher Isherwood, *My Guru and His Discipline*, (London: Methuen, 1980), 13-30, for more details about his first meeting Heard, and their first visit to Prabhavananda.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Ted Morgan, *Maugham* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1980), 458.

<sup>15</sup> Naomi Mitchison, ed., *An Outline for Boys and Girls and their Parents* (London: Gollancz, 1932), 419.

<sup>16</sup> Jill Benton, *Naomi Mitchison: A Century of Experiment in Life and Letters* (London: Pandora, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Lucy McDiarmid, “W. H. Auden’s ‘In The Year of My Youth . . .’” *Review of English Studies*, XXIX.115 (1978): 267-312.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

Woolf described “poor bewildered Gerald Heard”<sup>19</sup> as a “lean, starting eyed lobster man, a man of the future without senses. In with Wells and Plunket [*sic*] but essentially a nobody;”<sup>20</sup> “he knows all facts and no feelings,” she later continues, “has no humour, no richness, only advanced ideas.”<sup>21</sup> Clive Bell echoed Woolf’s sentiment; while recognising his “passion for ideas,” he described him as being “more juiceless than a banana.”<sup>22</sup> E. M. Forster (a Cambridge friend to whom Heard dedicated his 1929 book *The Ascent of Humanity*) claimed that Heard possessed “one of the most penetrating minds in England.”<sup>23</sup> And while Roger Fry found his books “full of moving and inspiring suggestions” which “almost ought to have been written in poetry”<sup>24</sup> (a statement which, in light of Auden’s incorporation of Heard’s prose into his early works, is perhaps more apt than Fry could have known), he could not fail to comment on their being both “tiresomely”<sup>25</sup> and “vilely written.”<sup>26</sup> It was, however, to Aldous Huxley that Heard was most important. With Heard’s help and tutelage, Huxley underwent a conversion from his characteristic cynical detachment of the 1920s to a commitment to pacifism and ultimately mysticism by the late 1930s; his novel *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936), which Heard regarded as Huxley’s “watershed,”<sup>27</sup> charts the evolution of Anthony Beavis from cynical detachment from the world towards engagement with it through growing belief in pacifism, meditation and in the underlying unity of all things, facilitated by the support and teaching of James Miller,

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<sup>19</sup> Virginia Woolf, letter to Edward Sackville West, 25 October 1939. *Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume 6, 1936-1941*, ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautman (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 365-6.

<sup>20</sup> Virginia Woolf, diary entry of 1 February 1932 *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, Anne Olivier Bell, ed. Vol. IV (London: Hogarth Press, 1982), 68.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Footnote to a diary entry 17 November 1931, 54n.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Virginia Woolf, *Diaries*, iv.54n.

<sup>24</sup> Roger Fry, “To G. L. Dickinson,” 27 November 1931, letter 675 of *The Letters of Roger Fry* Vol. 2 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972), 665.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* “To Robert Bridges,” 28 September 1929, letter 646, 643.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* “To Margery Fry,” 12 September 1931, letter 672, 662.

<sup>27</sup> Gerald Heard, “The Poignant Prophet,” *Kenyon Review*, XXVII.1 (Winter 1965): 49-70.

a character whose own philosophy owes much to Heard. The two would leave England for the United States to lecture on the subject of pacifism in 1937, but by 1939 settled permanently in California, where they both developed their common interest in mysticism through Vedanta.

This enumeration (which is by no means exhaustive) of the literary figures to whom Heard was known, and the varying regard with which each held him, serves to illustrate his presence was almost inescapable between the wars. However, his seeming ubiquity then is exceeded only by his comparative invisibility today. Outside of short mentions in tomes devoted to brighter stars in the same firmament, there has been little done to assess the thought and significance of Gerald Heard, nor why or how such a divisive figure became important to some of the most prominent and popular thinkers and writers of the 1930s.

By way of introducing the reader to Heard, some modicum of basic biography is helpful. On 6 October 1889, Henry FitzGerald Heard was born to Henry James Heard, then Prebendary of Wells Cathedral, and Maud Jervis Heard (née Bannatyne) at 69 Victoria Park Road, South Hackney, London. He was educated at Sherborne School, but according to his family, Heard was unhappy and staged a hunger strike until his parents relented and withdrew him from Sherborne; thereafter Heard attended day school in Bath.<sup>28</sup>

He studied for his History tripos under G. Lowes Dickinson at Caius between 1908 and 1911. Caius had been his father's college, as well as that of his older brother Alexander St. John Heard, who matriculated in 1904.<sup>29</sup> While at college,

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<sup>28</sup> E. S. Roberts and E. J. Gross, *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College* Vol. IV. Cambridge: CUP, 1912: 95. Also *Gonville and Caius Matriculation Book, 1900-1909*: 641 and interview with Stawell Heard, October 2000.

<sup>29</sup> *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College* Vol. IV.: 46. The *Biographical History* goes on to say that Alexander Heard went on to become a priest, and left England for a curacy in Queensland, Australia.

Heard was a member of the Science and Art Society (where he delivered a paper on G. K. Chesterton on 2 November 1911)<sup>30</sup> and the Historical Society (where he delivered a paper entitled “Trading Companies in the Middle Ages” on 7 December 1909).<sup>31</sup> In the college Annual, *The Caiian*, one of the college wags wrote a short poem about him:

H. F. Heard  
 Twitters like a bird.  
 He knows what fine speech is  
 And has a taste for “Medicis.”<sup>32</sup>

Heard received his B.A. in 1911 and remained at Caius to study for Holy Orders, following in the footsteps of his father, a graduate of the same college. However, according to the Heard family, Heard suffered a nervous breakdown in 1913, apparently the result of having lost his Christian faith.<sup>33</sup> He was therefore spared fighting in the First World War. In 1917 Heard found employment as the private secretary to Lord William Snowden Robson. Robson died in 1918, and Heard was left without a job.<sup>34</sup>

By 1919, Heard had become personal secretary to Sir Horace Curzon Plunkett (1854-1932), Irish statesman and perhaps the most outspoken proponent of the Irish Co-operative movement. Heard worked for Plunkett until 1929, but remained in close contact with him until his death in 1932, and served as executor of his estate.<sup>35</sup> It was during his employ under Plunkett that Heard began what would become a prolific career as a writer, beginning with occasional articles on agricultural and the co-

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<sup>30</sup> Minutes of the Gonville and Caius Science and Art Society. Archives of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

<sup>31</sup> Minutes of the Gonville and Caius Historical Society. Archives of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

<sup>32</sup> Fratres Conspirates, “Biojotical Graphings.” *The Caiian*, Vol. XX, no.1 1910: 297. Archives of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

<sup>33</sup> Stawell Heard, interview with the author, 2000.

<sup>34</sup> Stawell Heard, interview with author, 2000.

<sup>35</sup> Trevor West, *Horace Plunkett: Co-Operation and Politics, An Irish Biography* (Gerarrds Cross, Bucks.: Colin Smythe, 1986), 204.

operative movement to the *Irish Homestead*, then under the editorship of AE (George William Russell, 1853-1935). More importantly, Heard's work with Plunkett would provide him with a model of community that would become the linchpin of his developing ideas on human society.

It was also during his time with Plunkett that Heard published his first two books: *Narcissus: An Anatomy of Clothes* (1924) and *The Ascent of Humanity* (1929). The former attempts to construct a "sartorial metaphysics"<sup>36</sup> by equating changes in fashions in clothing and architecture to a concurrent evolution in the human psyche, and comes off as something resembling *Sartor Resartus* (1833) were Diogenes Teufelsdröckh's philosophy to have been left untempered by Thomas Carlyle's sly wit. The latter, however, formed the basis of a trilogy - in conjunction with *The Social Substance of Religion: An Essay of the Evolution of Religion* (1931) and *The Source of Civilization* (1935) – which not only established Heard's reputation as a thinker and writer, but also constitute the basis of a philosophy of a psychologically sound society in which individuals could break down their isolation and share in the greater community of their fellows, an idea he would continue to develop throughout his life.

Central to his theory of community was a belief that human beings had a subconscious need for society, a need originating with our earliest prehistoric ancestors who were governed by a common, animal social instinct he defined as "co-consciousness." In *The Ascent of Humanity*, Heard advanced the idea that human consciousness is subject to a perpetual and natural evolution commensurate with that of our mental evolution. As our forbearers grew more aware of their separateness from the world about them, they underwent a psychic evolution from a state of group "co-consciousness" to individual self-consciousness. The need for community with

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<sup>36</sup> Moseley, Sydney A. *Who's Who in Broadcasting: A Bibliographical Record of the Leading Personalities of the Microphone* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd, 1933), 73.

others, however, survived even as individuals emerged from a formerly co-conscious group. Society, Heard believed, was a construct designed to satisfy this subconscious need, permitting individuals to transcend their self-consciousness and resolve themselves within a greater whole in a spirit of community.

Heard believed modern social discontent, and particularly the First World War, were indications of a social fragmentation beginning at a fundamental psychological level. As he writes in the *Ascent of Humanity*, “every community, when it is about to end, when its co-conscious homogeneity begins to granulate into individuals like an astronomic nova, bursts into aggressive war.”<sup>37</sup> But he argued that there was hope; “1914 killed the belief in progress,” Heard argued, because although progress provided “ultimate means,” it did so without an “ultimate end,” the result of which was “glut and collision.”<sup>38</sup> He applied his own theory to the rise and fall of past civilisations, arguing that they “do not decay” but instead “explode when the increase of individuality goes beyond what the organism can employ.”<sup>39</sup> Heard believed modern civilization to be at such a pivotal point because the majority of individuals, “unable to recognize psychological evolution,”<sup>40</sup> felt themselves trapped in their individuality, the individual being “final and insoluble.”<sup>41</sup> “The need of our age,” he argued, “is a new psychic hygiene”<sup>42</sup> which would enable us to “create a community in which [w]e may resolve [ourselves].”<sup>43</sup>

Heard believed the “essential requirement” of modern society was to discover a means by which individual self-consciousness could be transcended and the subconscious communal instinct fulfilled. The discovery of this means was not to be

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<sup>37</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 43.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 115.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 107.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 8.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 115.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

found in political or social reform, but only through a psychological re-evaluation and sociological study of humanity; as Heard once observed, “nothing to-day is half as interesting or practically important as science, and politics simply wait on it.”<sup>44</sup> Science, particularly psychology, would enable us to discover “a force which will give individuals the power to act socially,”<sup>45</sup> and the necessary politics of a new society would follow naturally.

Although in 1929 Heard expressed no clear plan for how this psychological transcendence was to be achieved, he would come to suggest a combination of mysticism and applied psychology as a possible answer. In 1932, he wrote a four part article for *Time and Tide*, entitled “Religion and the Problems of a Modern Society.” in which he further considers the viability of a mystical or spiritual answer to re-introduce social purpose to modern civilization. The four articles are an attempt to give a clearer exposition of similar ideas suggested in his 1931 book *The Social Substance of Religion*. In each case, Heard argues that religion originally enabled individual adherents to see that “individual isolation is not the absolute.”<sup>46</sup> Joined in “religious communion,” Heard believed individuals to achieve a “supra-personal” state that allowed each person to feel a “direct sense of the union with their community.”<sup>47</sup> But conventional religion, which was once an “exercise which gave men direct experience of the common, immediate external life,”<sup>48</sup> had for Heard become “infected with the very thing it exists to cure – Individualism.”<sup>49</sup> Heard continued to develop an interest in “true religion,”<sup>50</sup> which he defined as “primarily an

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<sup>44</sup> Mosley, *Who's Who*, 74.

<sup>45</sup> Gerald Heard, “Religion and the Problems of a Modern Society.” *Time and Tide* XII.6, 6 February 1932: 145-46: 145.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

experience,”<sup>51</sup> which he believed had the power to show “the constituent that he is eternal, if he dares to step out of his individuality into the common life that flows about him, sustaining him.”<sup>52</sup>

Heard’s writing established him as a thinker, but it was his career at the B.B.C. (beginning with occasional broadcast talks starting in 1928) that would broaden his appeal and cement his reputation as a public intellectual, a generalist and populariser of ideas. In 1930 he was contracted to deliver a series of fortnightly talks that brought cutting edge scientific discoveries into the home of the average, unspecialised listener. The popularity of his programme, entitled “This Surprising World.” led to his writing four books popularising modern scientific discovery, *This Surprising World* (1932), *Science in the Making* (1935), *Exploring the Stratosphere* (1936) and *Science Front, 1936* (1937). His broadcasting style met with wide approval. As early as 1931, Harold J. Laski praised Heard’s “special ‘microphone sense’”<sup>53</sup> in the *Week-End Review*; this compliment is notable considering Laski’s comment was part of a long-running correspondence that year in the *Week-End Review* condemning the largely somniferous broadcasters of the B.B.C. Talks program. A *TLS* review of *This Surprising World* referred to Heard as “one of the most intelligent and vital of the B.B.C.’s regular speakers,” possessed of the “best qualities demanded in broadcasting,”<sup>54</sup> and a later review of *Exploring the Stratosphere* accorded him a “notable place [...] among popularizers of current scientific work.”<sup>55</sup>

Broadcasting also afforded Heard an opportunity to develop and promote his ideas to a mass audience, and his increased public profile helped to cement his role as

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 146.

<sup>52</sup> Heard, “Religion and the Problems of a Modern Society,” 145.

<sup>53</sup> Harold J. Laski, *The Week-End Review*, August 1931: 68.

<sup>54</sup> “This Surprising World.” Rev. of *This Surprising World: A Journalist Looks at Science*, by Gerald Heard. *Times Literary Supplement* 1932: 309.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

a public intellectual – a role which he would come to use for a specific purpose. Heard had strong views on the power of broadcasting to shape opinion and encourage action; “I feel that anything,” he writes, “which can put common sense and impartial information over the frontier is a necessity if civilization is to grow. Broadcasting seems the only medium that can do this.”<sup>56</sup> The medium of radio became an extension of his own ideas about community and enabled him to function as a leader of this ‘group’ while purporting to be an equally innocent generaliser in a highly specialised world. His listeners constituted a ‘public’ joined by a mutual curiosity and willingness to understand. I shall return to this point later on, but it is worth remarking that as a broadcaster Heard was beginning to establish a ‘public’ receptive to his conception of community and society.

His increased public profile led to his appointment as a regular lecturer in Current Events at the ‘modern’ Dartington School. Heard had become a close friend of the school’s founder, Leonard Elmhirst (1893-1974) during his time as secretary to Sir Horace Plunkett (whose advice Elmhirst regularly sought in establishing Dartington as an experiment both in education and agricultural self-sufficiency). Both shared a belief that education could be a tool with which to develop a new way of life. While Elmhirst was more concerned with the practicalities and economics of a new community life, Heard concerned himself with the psychological and spiritual basis without which a community was doomed to fail. It was here that Heard made his first attempt to move from theory to action, establishing a ‘group’ to experiment with his conception of a means of ‘resolving’ disparate individuals into a larger community. These tentative experiments bolstered Heard’s confidence in his theories, but also served to refine his vision as to how they might best be applied on a wider scale.

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<sup>56</sup> Mosley, *Who’s Who*, 74.

Heard had taken an interest in pacifism, claiming to have become an adherent to what would become “Dick Shepherd’s [*sic*] lot against war” in 1934<sup>57</sup>; this ‘lot’ would become H. R. L. Sheppard’s Peace Pledge Union (P.P.U.) in May 1936. Although he rejected an official title, Heard was effectively a ‘Sponsor’ of the P.P.U. from its formal inception, and with Aldous Huxley (whose embrace of pacifism, as we will see, would not have been possible without Heard’s encouragement) would lead the movement’s Research and Thinking Committee. Feeling that pacifism had to consist of more than “merely a protest and a refusal,”<sup>58</sup> Heard and Huxley did not outline a programme of immediate and practical political action but rather an amalgam of psychology and mysticism intended to bring about the social ‘evolution’ about which Heard had long theorised. As we have seen, Heard identified ‘aggressive war’ as a clear indication of a society’s failure to ‘resolve’ the individuals comprising it. A committed pacifist, in their view, was to undertake a radically new way of living intended to establish the basis for society in which individuals could create a community in which they could resolve themselves as a precursor to wider social change. Drawing on both his experiments in group meditation at Dartington and his knowledge of co-operativism under Plunkett, Heard envisioned the formation of pacifist communes. Heard believed that a combination of shared labour and group meditation were essential to breaking down the separateness of each individual. As a member of “a cell, or team, club or group,” pacifists would “constantly renew that direct sense of *unlimited liability* and psychological communism which make war and competition irrelevant.”<sup>59</sup> He believed that in first working out the problems of community on a small scale, with pacifist cells serving as a *collegium in collegio*, a

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<sup>57</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 23 October 1934. LKE General 17 E: Gerald Heard, Dartington Hall Archive, High Cross House, Totnes, Devon.

<sup>58</sup> Gerald Heard, “The Significance of the New Pacifism,” Gerald K. Hibbert, ed., *The New Pacifism* (London: Allenson, 1936), 17.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

model for larger social change would present itself. Writing in 1936, Heard argued that “peace must end in complete reconstruction, the recognition of continual awareness and adjustment of individual, social and national relationships.”<sup>60</sup> He would express the same sentiment in similar terms to H. R. L. Sheppard in a letter of 29 October 1937:

I am increasingly convinced that what is needed is not merely a political protest but another order & way of living. [...] There must be constant & deep charity in personal relationships & then pacifism in national relationships.<sup>61</sup>

Heard’s emphasis was particularly on the need for a change within the individual. He did not appeal to governments or experts to provide a solution, but rather exhorted pacifists to work together towards a solution. “We must take the initiative,” Heard argues; “We must, if necessary, show the governments what they can do.”<sup>62</sup>

Heard and Huxley’s attempts to establish pacifist communes and meditation groups would meet with limited success, and served largely to frustrate those within the P.P.U. who wished for clear and practical policies with which to oppose war. The two left for the United States in April 1937 to lecture on pacifism, a move that would prove to be permanent. Their interest in the pacifist movement would quickly wane; in October of 1936 Heard wrote to Sheppard, effectively resigning from the P.P.U. (although asserting that he remained “absolutely in sympathy”<sup>63</sup> with its aims), and declaring his intention to pursue in isolation the life he had initially attempted to work out with others. In his letter is a remarkable renunciation of his attempt to lead others to a solution he felt he was insufficiently qualified to provide:

I am increasingly realising that I can do nothing for peace or any form of goodness until I am far better my self [*sic*]. [...] [N]ow I see that to me to

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<sup>60</sup> Gerald Heard, “Notes Along the Way,” *Time and Tide* (21 March 1936): 409. (Hereafter *Notes*.)

<sup>61</sup> Gerald Heard to H. R. L. Sheppard 26 October 1937. Lambeth Palace, Sheppard Papers MS 3745.162.

<sup>62</sup> Heard, “Rue with a Difference,” *Time and Tide*, 8 February 1936: 176.

<sup>63</sup> Gerald Heard to H. R. L. Sheppard 26 October 1937. Lambeth Palace, Sheppard Papers MS 3745.162.

attempt to help other people out of their difficulties & advise them to live the life of complete reliance on the spirit, until I was living such a life, was to serve no purpose but even to defeat one's end.<sup>64</sup>

To this end, Heard established Trabuco College, a small commune and “monastery”<sup>65</sup> in California, where he committed himself to discovering first for himself what he now felt could not be made manifest in a larger context.

Throughout the 1930s, Heard sought to establish himself as an intellectual generaliser, and not a specialist. He did not offer any hard and fast conclusions of his own, nor lay claim to any particular expertise. Rather, Heard appealed to like-minded individuals – in this case, pacifists in general – to work together in the pursuit of what could genuinely be considered an ideal. But in seeking to lead this collaborative effort, Heard had necessarily transcended the role of amateur and general commentator to become a kind of specialist, an expert among a general ‘public’ willing to participate in the experiment he proposed. Previously content to be a theoretician, Heard began to position himself as a man of action. Apart from questioning the effectiveness of his personal transformation, Heard's case also raises questions of the role and limitations of the intellectual in the social sphere. Having cultivated a position of some cultural influence, Heard ultimately retreated from it. Beyond his own personal conviction that he felt he could not provide answers to those who sought them, to what degree was the very role he created for himself a handicap? As a generalist, did Heard overreach the limits of his proscribed authority? Did Heard presume too much about the nature of the general ‘public’ he had cultivated? These are questions this thesis seeks to consider.

Scholarship on Gerald Heard is limited, but this is not the first attempt to come to some greater understanding of his thought and position in the 1930s. Alison Falby's

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Aldous Huxley, letter to Christopher Isherwood, 7 February 1942. *The Letters of Aldous Huxley*, Grover Smith, ed. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), 398.

lone D.Phil thesis on Heard, *Gerald Heard (1889-1971) and British Intellectual Culture Between the Wars* (2000) attempts to trace Heard's sources and influences, pursuing the works cited in his interwar trilogy, *The Ascent of Humanity* (1929), *The Social Substance of Religion* (1932) and *The Source of Civilization* (1935). Further, she attempts to identify Heard's ideas as an offshoot of nineteenth-century British Idealism, which she describes as “a multi-faceted reaction to the empiricism of Locke and Hume, to vulgar ‘Darwinism’ -- the conception of nature as ‘red in tooth and claw’.”<sup>66</sup> Falby also identifies Heard's belief in an underlying unity of all life, a collective consciousness which allows for a natural human community with the philosophy of such Idealist theologians as T. H. Green (1836 - 1882), who argued that there existed a “dialectic” between a society and its members (society being a transcendent entity in which all self-conscious individuals are unified) and also of Josiah Royce (1855-1916), who emphasized the “collective nature of memory” in his works.<sup>67</sup> These are theories which would have been familiar to Heard as both a student of history and Candidate for Holy Orders at Caius College, Cambridge.<sup>68</sup> While her approach has the effect of situating Heard within a specific philosophical context, it tends to bring the Idealists to the fore while obscuring its ostensible subject. However, her 2008 book *Between the Pigeonholes: Gerald Heard, 1889-1971* (2008) is an excellent expansion on her earlier thesis, offering a much broader consideration of who Heard was, and further situating his thought within the currents of 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy and culture. By contrast, I have tried to focus closely on certain formative

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<sup>66</sup> Alison Falby, “Gerald Heard (1889-1971) and British Intellectual Culture between the Wars,” D.Phil diss., Oxford, 2000, 40.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 40-42.

<sup>68</sup> Heard matriculated in 1908, and the biographical history of the college records Heard's History Tripos in 1911, and (later added in handwriting) his studying for Holy Orders until 1913, which he never assumed. (Roberts, E. S. and Gross, E. J. *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College* Vol. IV. Cambridge: CUP, 1912).

episodes or phases in his career to chart how his thought evolved and what role he played within the larger intellectual field of the 1930s.

Considered solely on his merits as a philosopher, one could come to the same conclusion as Stefan Collini, that Heard was a “one-man Committee of Fuzzy Thinking.”<sup>69</sup> Drawing from a wide, if sometimes confusing, array of ideas borrowed from numerous subjects - or as a *TLS* review of his first book has it, a “farrago of advanced psychology, aesthetic theory, biology and obscure sciences”<sup>70</sup> - Heard combined as many branches of knowledge as possible into a cohesive philosophy, attempting to paint as complete a portrait of an underlying unity of all things as he could. (Here again it is useful to consider Collini’s argument that the generaliser risks producing a “mixture of holism and uplift which merely asserts that everything is connected to everything else,”<sup>71</sup> charges which Heard would indeed face, and which will be considered throughout this thesis.) It was Heard’s inability to be specific and focused where such qualities were required that drew the opprobrium of his most formidable critics. In a letter to Richard Acland, H. G. Wells wrote disparagingly of Heard’s often fantastic theories, denouncing him as “an imposter.”<sup>72</sup> A 1934 review in the *TLS* remarks that Heard’s writing “suffers from the capricious selection of facts and their questionable presentation,”<sup>73</sup> a sentiment echoing that of Winifred Holtby in *Time and Tide* two years earlier, who found him guilty of “leaping to conclusions that are suggestive rather than conclusive.”<sup>74</sup> While some lauded above all else Heard’s ability to generalise and simplify complicated theories, Holtby accused Heard of

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<sup>69</sup> Stefan Collini, *Common Reading: Critics, Historians, Publics* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 38.

<sup>70</sup> Review of *Narcissus: An Anatomy of Clothes* by Gerald Heard. *Times Literary Supplement* 16 October 1924: 654.

<sup>71</sup> Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 458.

<sup>72</sup> H. G. Wells, “To Richard Acland,” 28 February 1941, letter 2462 of *The Correspondence of H. G. Wells*, David C. Smith, ed., Vol. 4 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998), 291.

<sup>73</sup> Review of *These Hurrying Years: An Historical Outline 1900-1933* by Gerald Heard. *Times Literary Supplement* 10 May 1934, 347-48: 347.

<sup>74</sup> Winifred Holtby, review of *This Surprising World: A Journalist Looks at Science* by Gerald Heard. *Time and Tide*, 28 (9 July 1932): 771.

being altogether “too vague for the experts [and] too technical for the common man.”<sup>75</sup> Ronald Knox dismissed Heard’s works as “a *mésalliance* between *Tarzan* and *She*,”<sup>76</sup> and accused him of “adopt[ing] the tactics of the cuttle-fish, which emits its ink not to enlighten but to confuse its pursuers.”<sup>77</sup> W. J. H. Sprott, reviewing Heard’s 1931 book *The Social Substance of Religion* (which he described as “another of those useful books written by a man full of ideas and suggestion, who, as it were, cannot see the trees for the wood”<sup>78</sup>) would praise his “powers of grouping and packing his great historical knowledge,”<sup>79</sup> but Virginia Woolf believed this to be his only strength, remarking that “once he’s done historical accounting he’s nothing to offer.”<sup>80</sup>

But considered as an example of a guru, ‘public intellectual’, commentator and man of letters whose intention was to guide and illuminate others, his relevance and appeal in the 1930s (and indeed, his relative obscurity today) becomes clearer. It was, however, his strength as a generaliser that made Heard popular. Winifred Holtby once described Heard as “an artist of ideas,”<sup>81</sup> an epithet which says much about his role as a public figure and intellectual. This same artistry was noted by others; Holtby and Fry were not alone in appreciating the “moving and inspiring” qualities of Heard’s work, itself a synthesis of disparate ideas into a new whole. Heard regarded himself largely as visionary and a guide, a role which he felt essential to any society. Viewed as a visionary, what deficiencies Heard’s contemporaries noted in his writing - particularly his tendency towards pronouncements on illimitable topics without any

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ronald Knox, *Broadcast Minds* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932), 34.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 32.

<sup>78</sup> W. J. H. Sprott, review of *The Social Substance of Religion*, by Gerald Heard. *Mind, A Quarterly review of Psychology and Philosophy*, London, MacMillan, vol. XLI, 1932, 218 – 226: 226.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Woolf, diary entry of 25 October 1939, *Diary*, IV.243.

<sup>81</sup> Holtby, review of *This Surprising World*. 771.

particular expertise - may be largely explained, if not forgiven. As E. H. Owen and R. N. Bragg remark with respect to Heard,

[t]he visionary writer [...] must to a considerable extent rely on an imaginative picture of those whom he wishes to persuade. He tries to form a composite conception of the reader – cynical, disillusioned, prejudiced, as well as complacent, indifferent, frivolous – and indeed, faced with this figment, he argues, pleads, adjures.<sup>82</sup>

This thesis will give some consideration to how Heard's preconception of his larger public both served to help and hinder the development and promulgation of his ideas.

Edward Mendelson once described Heard as a “polymathic generaliser.”<sup>83</sup> The brevity of his description suggests Mendelson uses the word ‘generaliser’ simply to portray Heard as one who made generalisations about the works of others rather than original contributions to thought. However, when considered in the context of intellectual history, amateurism and the dichotomy between specialisation and generalisation, the phrase is suggestive of much more. Stefan Collini offers a useful definition of the generaliser, one to which this thesis largely adheres in its consideration of Heard as an exemplar:

[I]n the cultural and intellectual sphere, the amateur [...] figures as the generalist, a role structurally defined by contrast with that of ‘the specialist’. Here, the intellectual is the individual who goes beyond the ‘merely’ professional role (the preserve of the expert or specialist) to speak out on wider matters of concern to a non-specialist public.<sup>84</sup>

The argument I pursue through this thesis is that Heard was very much an intellectual ‘amateur’ of the old school, a figure for whom bringing a synthesis of specialist knowledge to a perceived ‘non-specialist public’ was his greatest concern. However, having constructed this role for himself, Heard attempted to do more than simply ‘speak out’.

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<sup>82</sup> E. H. Owen and R. N. Bragg, “What Happens to an Idea?,” *Transformation Three*, ed. Stefan Schimanski and Henry Treece, (London: L Drummond, 1945), 81-92: 82.

<sup>83</sup> Edward Mendelson, *Early Auden*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), 26n.

<sup>84</sup> Collini, *Absent Minds*, 304.

Early in his career, Heard adopted the mantle of an intellectual generalist, and immediately sought to construct for himself a role as mediator between specialist knowledge and a disconnected public. In the introduction to *The Ascent of Man* (1929), Heard describes his work as “an appeal from one of the public, general but concerned, to the experts, asking them to investigate a possible solution to our problem.”<sup>85</sup> Further, Heard considered any hypotheses he put forward to be “of general application” that would need to be “worked out by many minds.”<sup>86</sup> Here we might accuse Heard of attempting to construct a receptive ‘public’ as a means of lending strength to his arguments and establishing himself as a spokesman for this ‘public’. These assertions serve to suggest just what sort of role Heard was creating for himself in the intellectual landscape of the 1930s. He is, of course, not unique in this respect. Stefan Collini argues that a particular school of intellectual, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, affected “a deliberate or self-conscious amateurism in the face of a growing array of specialisms.”<sup>87</sup> An important part of this affectation was to define a public arena “from which specialists were retreating by their inability to participate in the ‘common conversation’.”<sup>88</sup> This was to become literally true of Heard as he became a populariser of specialist scientific knowledge for the B.B.C., an intermediary between the world of the specialist and a ‘general’ public.

While Heard’s lack of formal qualifications in the fields he saw fit to profess knowledge marks him as a genuine amateur, there is something to be said for his accentuating his amateurishness by positing the existence of a like-minded, non-specialised public for whom he could act not merely as interpreter but as a leader. As a pacifist, a philosophy David Bradshaw neatly sums up as being “expressly

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<sup>85</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 13.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Stefan Collini, *English Pasts: Essays in History and Culture*. (Oxford: OUP, 1999), 313.

<sup>88</sup> Collini, *English Pasts*, 309.

libertarian, egalitarian and anarchistic,”<sup>89</sup> Heard did not so much seek to work in cooperation with others committed to solving the problem of peace but rather (to paraphrase Martin Ceadel’s phrase) define a faith. In so doing, he necessarily made presumptions about the ‘public’ to whom his ideas of pacifist and a resulting philosophy of living would appeal. Trabuco College, an isolated commune where only those genuinely devoted to his conception of a larger spiritual life, was the apotheosis of his ideas from the realm of generalism to specificity; by putting into practice what had hitherto been a theory, Heard necessarily elevated himself to the level of an expert. Heard conceived of Trabuco as a place of study where a very few, representing a high caste of visionaries, would develop a way of living which could be transmitted to others. His ideas were no longer the preserve of generalists but a class of experts removed from the general public. In this way, Heard can be seen to have constructed an intellectual ‘clerisy’ as envisioned by Coleridge, an echelon of visionaries whose role it was to transmit spiritual meaning to a secular society. Heard’s evolving role as a public and intellectual figure constitutes an important part of understanding his ideas and their relevance in the 1930s.

This thesis consciously focuses on Heard’s work and thought prior to his departure for America with Huxley in 1937 and his establishment of Trabuco College in 1942. This is not an arbitrary delineation; Christopher Isherwood made a distinction between “the Gerald Heard of London”<sup>90</sup> and the Heard of California, just as Maria Huxley considered him “changed,”<sup>91</sup> remarking that “one knows the natural Gerald and forgets the ‘become’ Gerald.”<sup>92</sup> Heard’s life in the United States is worthy

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<sup>89</sup> David Bradshaw, “Flight from Gaza,” *Now More Than Ever: Proceedings of the Aldous Huxley Centenary Symposium*, ed. Bernfried Nugel (Berlin: Münster, 1994), 11.

<sup>90</sup> Isherwood, *Diaries*, 72.

<sup>91</sup> Qtd in Sybille Bedford, *Aldous Huxley, A Biography*, Volume I (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973), 358.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* 346.

of a monograph unto itself, but the life of the “natural Gerald” in the context of England and the 1930s is of sufficient interest and complexity to occupy a single dissertation. Apart from the first chapter, which establishes a ‘minimum working hypothesis’ (a neat phrase used by Aldous Huxley in *Vedanta and the West* (1948)) from which to approach Heard’s work, the chapters are structured thematically around different phases in Heard’s life and development, and seek to chart an evolution of his thought over time. In constructing an intellectual chronology and biography for a largely forgotten figure (one for whom no simple references to scholarly biographies or critical assessments were possible), it has proven necessary to include salient passages of Heard’s work and to present as much unconsidered archival material as possible. The intention behind this was twofold. First, it provides the reader with sufficient primary material by which to measure and judge the analysis of it presented here; were Heard as well studied and documented as his most prominent contemporaries, greater concision with sources would have been possible, as one could presume a wider familiarity with the subject. Secondly, it is hoped that the inclusion of this material and identification of its sources will make it useful as something of a ‘source book’ for future researchers.

## Chapter I

### **The Psychic Community: Heard's Minimum Working Hypothesis**

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: to identify and explain what I call Heard 'minimum working hypothesis', or a condensed summary of his philosophy, and to identify some possible sources of this philosophy. Each enterprise undertaken by Heard, from broadcasting to pacifism, mysticism to psychic research, was a means to proving his hypotheses and affecting change in that direction. A thorough examination of his theories at this juncture is therefore necessary on the grounds that subsequent chapters will require of the reader a clear understanding of the ideas and principles that motivated Heard, and can be said to form the axis around which his life and work revolve. In the first part of this chapter, I will investigate Heard's minimum working hypothesis: his utopian vision of human society and human nature. In the second part, I will consider possible sources for much of his thought.

Heard's talent lay not so much in the origination of ideas, nor in the critical assessment of them, but rather in synthesising accepted ideas, paring them down to their essence so as to make them widely accessible. He was a 'generaliser,' a deeply erudite man who condensed wide and seemingly disparate facts into a single cohesive philosophy. Heard's career as a B.B.C. broadcaster involved translating the complicated discoveries of highly specialised scientists into terms easily understood by a general audience is perhaps suggestive both of the scope of his mind and his power of interpolation. This chapter will therefore consider how Heard's own ideas are a synthesis of other sources, particularly Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* and the thought of psychologist and anthropologist W. H. R. Rivers (1864-1922).

Between 1929 and 1935, Heard wrote a series of books in which he attempted to diagnose the human condition using examples from psychology, history and

anthropology, and to draw from this some model of a society best suited to this nature. These books were *The Ascent of Humanity* (1929), *The Emergence of Man* (1931), *The Social Substance of Religion* (1932) and *The Source of Civilization* (1935). The argument that runs through these books, and the various articles he wrote alongside them during these years, will be condensed and explained in this chapter. In short, Heard argued that human nature is fundamentally gregarious owing to our common prehistoric ancestry. As our evolution affected changes in our physiology, so too did it affect changes in our psychology. The natural instinct for gregariousness was slowly displaced by a sense of individual self-awareness, or self-consciousness, into the unconscious part of the human mind. However, by failing to recognise this instinct, Heard believes there arose a fundamental misunderstanding about the nature of human relationships; namely, that each individual constituent of society is an autonomous entity whose loyalty to a greater good is bought by greater securities. The result, argued Heard, was that individual self-interest increasingly obscured our natural tendency to co-operation. Instead, Heard argued that within our unconscious mind the instinct towards community still lurked, acting upon our conscious mind and allowing us to be sociable. Where competing individual interests come foremost, a sense of community becomes increasingly impossible. Heard therefore sought a praxis that would again make conscious that displaced social instinct and with it a new paradigm for society, one which recognised the rights of the self-conscious individuals and balanced them with those gregarious tendencies.

Heard envisioned a utopian future made possible by advances in psychology. He attributed modern social ills to a fundamental misunderstanding of human nature, namely that we are entirely self-sufficient individuals. Writing in *Time and Tide* in

1935, Heard objected to the “Hobbesian outlook”<sup>93</sup> of modern political and social thinkers, that “man is an individual, his communities only constructs of and for his personal convenience and that therefore you had only to satisfy his individual needs for him to become wholly amenable.”<sup>94</sup> Arguing instead that “individual mutual self-interest is not enough,”<sup>95</sup> he wrote in a 1932 that society was not held together “by each constituent coldly calculating his profit and loss in the arrangement” but rather “through subconscious forces.”<sup>96</sup> Psychology could demonstrate an underlying subconscious bond between all individuals, a corporate mind that enabled us to be sociable. By applying psychological thought to history, Heard constructed what he called an “outline of the evolution of consciousness”<sup>97</sup> in his 1929 book *The Ascent of Humanity*. Heard argued that our earliest pre-historic ancestors were not self-interested, but rather possessed of a tribal sense which precluded “any consciousness of individual separateness”<sup>98</sup> from the group. As Heard writes, the “first human unit is the group, not the individual.”<sup>99</sup>

Heard called this tribal sense “co-consciousness,” a level of consciousness below self-awareness in which each individual constituent was only part of a larger whole. In this “co-conscious” state, Heard posited that each constituent of a community was in “constant telepathic communication with the rest of the group.”<sup>100</sup> In his 1932 essay “The History of Ideas, or How We Got Separate” (published in Naomi Mitchison’s *Outline for Boys and Girls and their Parents*), Heard asserts that Palaeolithic humans, who “did not think of themselves as self-conscious, separate

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<sup>93</sup> Gerald Heard, “Men and Books.” Rev. of *Ethics of Power* by Philip Leon and *We Europeans*, by J. Huxley et. al. *Time and Tide*, 21 December 1935: 1907.

<sup>94</sup> Gerald Heard, “Men and Books.” Rev. of *Ancient Art and Social Ritual* by Jane Harrison and *The Sacred Dance*, by W. O. Osterley. *Time and Tide* 26 October 1935: 1545-46.

<sup>95</sup> Gerald Heard, “Religion and the Problems of Modern Society,” 115.

<sup>96</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 115.

<sup>97</sup> Gerald Heard, *The Ascent of Humanity* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929), 21.

<sup>98</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 23.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* 14.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

individuals,”<sup>101</sup> could scarcely help but feel a unity with all life; “their ideas of their own aliveness and the aliveness of animals,” Heard writes, “were not divided.”<sup>102</sup> “At that stage,” continues Heard, “we took things very much for granted and assumed that everyone and everything was very like oneself.”<sup>103</sup> However, growing human knowledge brought about an evolutionary advance in our consciousness. The psychological homogeneity of our ancestors eroded as humans became increasingly able to understand and control the world in which they lived. In the Neolithic period, humans began to exercise a mastery over their world, learning such arts as agriculture, pottery and making tools. Such advances were only possible by what Heard called a “power of separating,”<sup>104</sup> the ability to regard the world objectively and to see one’s self as separate from it. Despite the material benefits afforded by this new-found power to dissect and study, it ultimately brought about the dissolution of our original sense of unity. To illustrate his point, Heard compares the cave art of the Neolithic with that of the Palaeolithic era. The paintings of the Palaeolithic, argues Heard, were not so much “works of art, but works of magic.”<sup>105</sup> Feeling that “the world is emotionally tied up with him,”<sup>106</sup> the Palaeolithic artist represents scenes of hunting, believing in a unity between the act of drawing and successful hunting. However, Heard remarks that a change in artistic style in the Neolithic period betrays a significant shift in consciousness:

Those little pictures that the New Stone Age men made, and have no beauty like the pictures of their predecessors drew, show that men’s ideas have become so clear, and have broken up what they see into such distinct parts,

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<sup>101</sup> Gerald Heard, “The History of Ideas, or How We Got Separate,” Naomi Mitchison, *An Outline for Boys and Girls and their Parents* (London: Gollancz, 1932), 430. (hereafter “History”.)

<sup>102</sup> Heard, “History,” 430.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. 445.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. 433.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. 428.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. 429.

that the old vague sense of unity is gone, and instead of it men have a new power of taking things to pieces and of feeling themselves detached.<sup>107</sup>

However, at some point in history, this “co-consciousness” dissolved. It was at the moment when individuals became conscious of their detachment from the world that the tribal “co-consciousness” vanished; as Heard argues in his 1935 book *The Source of Civilization*, our “inherent power of co-operation” was lost at the “period in [our] psychic evolution when [we] attained self-consciousness.”<sup>108</sup> Heard attributes this loss to the development of a self-conscious awareness which created “a fissure and specialisation”<sup>109</sup> in our unified undifferentiated psyche, a divide which elevated our self-awareness at the expense of our “co-consciousness.” Heard would write that, psychically, “we are divided against ourselves”<sup>110</sup> by a “threshold,” or a “‘limen’ [...] that now divides the subconscious and conscious mind so completely that the conscious mind can generally have not direct knowledge of the subconscious.”<sup>111</sup> In *The Ascent of Humanity*, Heard explains that our primitive ancestors were not “blinded to that wider field of illumination by the dazzling ‘spotlight’ of individual self-consciousness;” “no ‘limen’ has risen,” writes Heard, “to shut off this way to the larger whole.”<sup>112</sup> Heard felt it was imperative to break down the bulkhead between the subconscious and conscious mind if we were to enjoy a true sense of community with others. Within our subconscious mind, Heard argued, “that original nature of man remains, though denied vision.”<sup>113</sup> Despite being isolated by the conscious mind, the subconscious mind is “still the source of all human energy.”<sup>114</sup> This blind, innate social power of our ancestors somehow percolates through our conscious

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<sup>107</sup> Heard, “History,” 433.

<sup>108</sup> Gerald Heard, *The Source of Civilization* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935), 224.

<sup>109</sup> Gerald Heard, *The Social Substance of Religion* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1932), 30.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* 42.

<sup>111</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 145.

<sup>112</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 50.

<sup>113</sup> Heard, *Substance*, 27.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.* 27.

minds, and is visible in our perpetual attempts to find unity with one another through love or friendship. Heard also attributed the origin of human civilization to the machinations of this subconscious force, describing civilization in 1931 as “the precipitation of the unconscious social habits of man.”<sup>115</sup> Society is more than a convenient “profit and loss” arrangement, but an unconscious expression of our innate sociability. “The individual and society,” concludes Heard, “make a psychic reciprocation”<sup>116</sup> which cannot be ignored for the convenience of an economic theory. It was therefore essential to develop a deliberate technique of making this subconscious force readily accessible to self-conscious individuals.

Looking to prehistoric civilizations, Heard attempted to identify how early civilisations and religions provided a means of crossing the “threshold,” conjoining the independent conscious mind with our greater subconscious social instincts. In 1932, Heard wrote a four-part series in *Time and Tide* entitled *Religion and the Problems of a Modern Society*, in which he discusses the how religious experience had worked to alleviate the sudden isolation felt by our first self-conscious ancestors. “Religious communion” enabled each individual to feel a “direct sense of the union with their community and through it with eternal life.”<sup>117</sup> United “in a like minded group,” Heard believed that the limen in our consciousness could be surmounted, enabling “the individual [...] to recover his symbiotic relationship with his fellows,” and providing the “social satisfaction of coming together as a congregation.”<sup>118</sup> Heard is essentially describing a state of *agape* in which the individual participant

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<sup>115</sup> Heard, *Substance*, 42.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>117</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 145.

<sup>118</sup> Heard, *Source*, 15.

experiences a life that is “supra-personal and unlimited,” achieving what Heard calls “at-one-ment”<sup>119</sup> with his or her community.

A mistaken belief in the solidarity of the individual made the religion of experience, that primitive agape, increasingly impossible. The earliest religion, argues Heard, was primarily “an exercise which gave men direct experience of the common, immediate external life.”<sup>120</sup> However, as individualism grew stronger, the religion of experience developed “into rites which were intended to assure those individuals after death.”<sup>121</sup> In his 1935 book, *The Source of Civilization*, Heard would extol the merits of pre-historic fertility religion, which he believed

rouses the individual from his growing preoccupation with his calculated personal economic concerns [...] throws him back into the stream of life and chokes, at least for a moment, the growing anxiety rising from his fellow and his narrow concern as to what is going to happen to this precarious perishable self, which is all that now is fully real to each.<sup>122</sup>

However, once religion became “infected with the very thing it exists to cure - Individualism”<sup>123</sup> it served only to further their isolation by stressing personal salvation instead of promoting group unity. With the failure of religion, Heard sought a new means of uniting our divided consciousness.

Heard argued in 1932 that “the essential requirement [...] and [...] chief need of society [...] is to find access to a force which will give individuals the power to act socially.”<sup>124</sup> He often wrote about developing a “deliberate technique” to tap the subconscious “social and greater self,”<sup>125</sup> or a “psychic hygiene”<sup>126</sup> which would enable each individual to “re-mend the fissure in his own psyche and so see himself

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<sup>119</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 145.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Heard, *Source*, 204.

<sup>123</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 145.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Heard, *Source*, 17.

<sup>126</sup> Heard, “Religion” 115.

and his community, it and Life, and Life and the universe as one.”<sup>127</sup> Our earliest self-conscious ancestors were able to cross over that limen quite easily, having been recently “condensed” out of a natural co-consciousness. However, Heard asserted that, “in a self-conscious age,” any attempt “to explore the subconscious, cross the limen, and make the vital contact that exists beyond the individual self-consciousness” had to be made “deliberately, self-consciously.”<sup>128</sup> The first step in Heard’s solution was to recognize that individualism was not the correct paradigm for human relations. He argued that we had to understand our “vast psychic evolution,”<sup>129</sup> and appreciate that individuality is only a “growing pain or birth-pang” of a “larger consciousness.”<sup>130</sup> As individuality had “condensed”<sup>131</sup> out of the earlier “co-consciousness,” so too would a new consciousness coalesce from self-consciousness. Heard believed that we were on the cusp of a new phase of psychic evolution, made possible by our growing understanding of psychology. Beyond co-consciousness and self-consciousness awaited what Heard called “superconsciousness,”<sup>132</sup> a state in which we would be simultaneously self-aware and aware of our subconscious extra-individuality. This evolution would occur naturally in the fullness of time, but its arrival could be accelerated with our help. A better understanding of our own psychology would facilitate “a swift transition between the complete insensitiveness of the absolute individual and the new collective being.”<sup>133</sup> Heard proposed a combination of psychological analysis and mystical experience as a means to achieve this transition. By means of psychological analysis, Heard believed we could understand and apprehend the deep-seated forces which motivated us. By

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<sup>127</sup> Heard, *Source*, 20.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

<sup>129</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 12.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.* 11.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.* 12.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.* 11.

meditation, Heard argued, our subconscious “social habits” could be raised from the depths of the subconscious mind and into the conscious mind.

Heard believed that group meditation was essential to breaking down the barriers both in our minds and between each other. In *The Ascent of Humanity*, Heard describes the self-transcendence afforded by group meditation:

Individuals, psychology suggests and the spirit of man approves, grow by fusion. When two or three are gathered together in the spirit of the future it begins to dominate them, to break down their isolation, to confer new powers, and finally to deliver them into a new unity as real as their former separation.<sup>134</sup>

Heard was initially sceptical of mysticism as a means to his end, writing in *The Ascent of Humanity* that it “has been charged, and it has not cleared itself of the accusation, of wish-solution,” but believed there was some hope that the mysticism could quell the self-regarding instinct of individuals; “the usual survival-prompting wish,” argues Heard, “resents the mystic emphasis on the necessary dissolution of individuality little less violently than it resents extinction.”<sup>135</sup> By the early 1930s, however, Heard had begun to regard mystical experience as the key to social renewal. In “Religion and the Problems of Modern Society,” Heard argued that, in meditation, “any group of like-minded people,” could achieve “an experience of precipitated power” and come to feel a “direct sense of the union with their community.”<sup>136</sup> The only limit to group meditation was the “absurdly small”<sup>137</sup> size of the group: “the dozen seems to be the number which gives best results.”<sup>138</sup> In “The Significance of the New Pacifism,” Heard would reiterate that “queer but distinctive limitation”<sup>139</sup> that an effective group could not exceed twelve members. The establishment of such groups would become

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<sup>134</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 12.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>136</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 146.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Heard, “New Pacifism,” 21.

for Heard the preliminary to wide-scale social reorganisation. Having been reassured of their unity with all life in their group, individuals could then return to a larger community, confident in their role as part of a larger whole. Such a technique, Heard believed, would enable individuals to “to live a life of unlimited liability with their companions”<sup>140</sup> rather than regarding human society as a construct of enlightened self-interest. By meditation, Heard believed we could effectively lay the foundations of a new society, “a true co-operative commonwealth based surely on psychology.”<sup>141</sup> Believing that the only way forward for society was to expand our consciousness, he claimed that the frustrated, isolated individual would

be driven [...] to create a community in which he may resolve himself, compassing a real progress from the original co-consciousness (out of which he his individuality is condensed) through the painful transition, that is that individuality, to the superconsciousness of a purely psychologically satisfying state.<sup>142</sup>

Heard’s theories rely heavily on earlier sources. As we have seen, he openly objected to what he called the “Hobbesian conclusion” that individuals were autonomous self-interested entities who were made sociable only by the possibility of personal gain, or by the threat of violence. According to Heard, Hobbes’ vision cannot work because it is based on a flawed conception of the individual. Only having first recognised the true nature of the individual can we hope to design a commonwealth to suit. “[Man’s] salvation,” Heard argues, “is in realizing his own nature which, if he would explore beyond those narrow bounds, and assume its limit, he would find stretches out, until he is united with all.”<sup>143</sup> Using his knowledge of psychology and human history, Heard constructs an alternate identity for the individual with the intention of creating the foundation for “a *true* co-operative

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<sup>140</sup> Heard, “New Pacifism,” 18.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. 18.

<sup>142</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 6.

<sup>143</sup> Heard, *Source*, 341.

commonwealth based surely on psychology.”<sup>144</sup> Rather than being autonomous, the individual possesses psychic vestiges of our prehistoric ancestors, whose “co-consciousness” enabled them to associate on a tribal basis. Heard posits that there are no innate individual rights to be yielded to the common good because we are all inextricably bound by ties which exist in the subconscious mind.

For his psychology, Heard is greatly indebted to W. H. R. Rivers, a long standing professor of psychology at Cambridge who specialised in the psychological effects of the First World War. In particular, Heard owes much to Rivers’ treatise *Instinct and the Unconscious* (1920), which discusses at length the difference between instinctual behaviour and conscious deliberation, and the power of the unconscious (or subconscious) mind to affect the conscious mind. Rivers considers the power of the conscious mind to exclude or suppress information which is harmful or upsetting; for example, the mind is capable of forcing the trauma of war deep into the unconscious mind. However, this suppressed information still has the power to interrupt our conscious mind, invisibly affecting our behaviour from unseen depths. Rivers attributes this power to the brain’s ability to keep the conscious mind free to consider immediate stimulus, while maintaining basic autonomic and reflex functions unconsciously. For example, human beings possess animal instincts of self-preservation, such as the need either to fight or to flee from danger. These instincts are not the result of conscious deliberation, but spring from the unconscious mind. But the conscious mind is often able to tailor those instincts that drive us. Rivers considers how differently the “danger instinct” is adapted by the conscious mind to suit different situations. While flight might be the natural reaction to a physical attack, the same instinct is not suited to all sources of danger; “The driver of a car and

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<sup>144</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 18 (my emphasis).

the pilot of an aeroplane in danger of collision,” argues Rivers, “have to perform complex movements by which the danger is avoided.”<sup>145</sup> The instinct is the same, but the conscious response to it is controlled and guided. Using Rivers, Heard is able to argue that there are primal forces at work in the unconscious mind; that is, those primitive impulses of our ancestors have become an innate and perfected set of instincts, which keep our conscious mind free to think of other things than self-preservation. Further, Heard uses Rivers to argue that there is communication between the unconscious and conscious mind, and that the conscious mind can be affected by unconscious instincts. Heard asserts that one instinct in particular, what Rivers refers to as the “gregarious or herd instinct,”<sup>146</sup> is the most insistent upon our consciousness. It is in this gregarious instinct that Heard argues for a kind of telepathy between individuals which enables them to act socially. By making this innate sociability imminent, Heard believed it would be short work to create a commonwealth founded not upon violence or fear, but on the natural and universal psychological need for community.

A fuller consideration of Heard’s relationship to Hobbes highlights the difference between their conceptions of individuality, and also explains why Heard feels compelled to argue with Hobbes’ ideas. Hobbes understood all individuals to be autonomous, but fundamentally equal and possessed of the same fundamental needs and desires. Hobbes confirms every individual’s autonomy by providing each with an equal right to pursue his or her own self-interest: “[W]hen all is reckoned together,” writes Hobbes, “the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another man may not

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<sup>145</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, *Instinct and the Unconscious* (Cambridge, CUP: 1920), 54-55.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* 90.

pretend, as well as he.”<sup>147</sup> In short, all are entitled to pursue their own needs and desires without consideration for others. Hobbes explicitly asserts that the strength of our own individual rights makes the idea of a natural human community impossible:

[M]en have no pleasure, (but on the contrary a great deale of grieffe) in keeping company, where there is no power able to over-awe them all. For every man looketh that his companion should value him, at the rate he sets upon himselfe: And upon all signes of contempt, or undervaluing, naturally endeavours, as far as he dares [...] to extort a greater value from his contemners, by dommage; and from others, by the example.<sup>148</sup>

For Hobbes, the intensity of individual desires necessarily makes relations difficult between two or more self-seeking individuals. The fundamental selfishness with which Hobbes endows the individual accounts for the “three principall causes of quarrel,” which Hobbes identifies as “First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory.”<sup>149</sup> All three causes are borne of an intense and exclusive focus on individual needs. To preserve individual well being or pride, the individual is entitled to employ any means necessary. For this reason, Hobbes defines war as a state wherein “every man is Enemy to every man” and “wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withal.”<sup>150</sup> For Hobbes, war “consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the times there is no assurance to the contrary.”<sup>151</sup> This state precludes the possibility of community, creating only a state of “continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short.”<sup>152</sup> The natural condition of humanity “is a condition of Warre against every one; in which case every one is governed by his own Reason.”<sup>153</sup> That is, humans are

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<sup>147</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 91.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* I.xii.95-96.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.* I.xii.96.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* I.xii.97.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.* I.xiv.99

naturally self-interested, and their relations are inherently competitive. The potential for peace exists only when an individual “devest himselfe” of what Hobbes terms the right “of doing any thing he liketh.”<sup>154</sup> Hobbes summarises this in what he calls the Right of Nature, “which is, *By all means we can, to defend ourselves.*”<sup>155</sup>

The Right of Nature contrasts sharply with The Law of Nature: “*to seek Peace, and follow it.*”<sup>156</sup> Peace is the state wherein all individuals are co-operative and sociable. It seems impossible to believe that a creature so fundamentally uncivil can be made to work together towards a common good; one might recall the adage that there is no changing human nature. For Hobbes, however, the inclination to peace is not altruistic, but merely an extension of individual appetites. “The Passions that encline men to Peace” are not so much for some imagined common good, but rather because of individual greed and vanity. If, by surrendering their absolute autonomy, individuals can gain more than by competing, then individuals will surrender this right out of self-interest. Hobbes admits as much when he explains that “[t]o lay downe a mans *Right* to anything, is to *devest* himself of the *Liberty*, of hindring another for the benefit of his own right to the same.”<sup>157</sup> Here liberty is equated with self-interest, and characterised as an obstacle to co-operation.

The only way to dissuade self-interested individuals from exercising their natural autonomy and become civil and communal is through the threat of force; as Hobbes writes, “it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in the condition which is called Warre.”<sup>158</sup> What keeps individuals sociable is the “terroure of punishment”<sup>159</sup> for transgressing civil

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid. I.xiv.100.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid. I.xiii.96.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. I.xv.110.

laws, or “Feare as a Revenger of their perfidy.”<sup>160</sup> Lacking sufficient force or authority, there can be no hope for civil order; “Where there is no common Power,” Hobbes asserts there is no Law.”<sup>161</sup> Hobbes’ conception of war and peace are not so vastly different; in both, individuals live in fear of death or punishment, and work self-interestedly to preserve their own lives. The ideal commonwealth Hobbes envisions is made marginally better by co-operative efforts, but this co-operation is awkwardly forced upon its members, whose nature is not conducive to such co-operation.

Here we can see the fundamental differences between Hobbes’ and Heard’s vision of human nature and community. Hobbes’ own assessment of the individual is not unlike Heard’s, that the individual’s self-interest will make social ties precarious, requiring outside force to preserve community. This leads us to consider the first major difference between the two. Whereas Hobbes conceived of the individual as being, in Heard’s term, “final and insoluble,”<sup>162</sup> Heard saw the individual as only one phase of a perpetual “psychic evolution.”<sup>163</sup> The “intensity and isolation” of individualism was to be considered “a very late and passing consequence of man’s psychological evolution at its acutest.”<sup>164</sup> To Heard, the purely self-conscious individual is a transitional creature. As we have seen, Heard believed that self-consciousness evolved out of a pre-historic “co-consciousness” in which our ancestors shared. Further, Heard believed individualism would give way to a greater “superconsciousness” in which both our individual and co-conscious awareness would coexist. Heard’s objection to Hobbes is founded partly on the insistence on individualism to be found in his works. Because Heard believed human nature was

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid. I.xiv.109.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. I.xii.98.

<sup>162</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 6.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. 11.

essentially co-operative, he objects to Hobbes on the grounds that preserving self-interested individualism is to impede our own evolution. “The individual is not solved by being made immortal,” Heard writes; “He remains, as the myth of Tithonus foreshadowed, a problem of arrested elimination.”<sup>165</sup> The answer proposed by Hobbes, to direct individual competition under a single “common Power,” suggests stagnation, a perpetual state of competition and subjugation.

On the subject of a “common Power” which awes individuals into civil obedience, Heard has much to say. In *The Source of Civilization*, Heard questions the assertion that violent force is an effective means to enforce virtues. Writing in 1935, Heard is thinking specifically of violence with reference to “sanctions” against Germany and Italy, in particular reference to the invasion of Abyssinia in October of 1935. The threat of economic sanctions and violent opposition from the common power invested in the League of Nations was seemingly incapable of preventing the growth of fascism in Italy and Nazi Germany, leading Heard to question not only the effectiveness of violence but also how our social loyalties function. If the threat of violence fails to pull recalcitrant individuals back into line, Heard argues, then perhaps we are not so motivated by fear as Hobbes argues. As Heard writes,

All man’s agreements, co-operations, self-subordinations, loyalties and devotions, the natural values of human life, are not ends preserved at the sad price of violence. That is to invert the picture. The true relationship [...] is that loyalty, love and devotion, admiration and compassion only exist to make violence more efficient. Virtues exist to make brutality succeed.<sup>166</sup>

Unlike Hobbes, who argues that without violence there can be no law, Heard sees this argument as putting the cart before the horse. Hobbes argues that violence arises as a “sanction”<sup>167</sup> because justice requires reinforcement. But Heard argues that justice

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<sup>165</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 12.

<sup>166</sup> Heard, *Source*, 22.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.* 29.

“would exist whether it were enforced or no.”<sup>168</sup> Individuals resort to violence when we feel that community is imperilled, suggesting to Heard an innate drive to sociability. Violence does not further community, but instead threatens to pervert it. “[S]anctions,” Heard argues, “are the confession of justice’s failure.”<sup>169</sup> If individuals are naturally given to be sociable, violence must be seen as a means of forcibly shaping this sociability into a particular form. For example, under the guidance of a government, individuals who would be otherwise peaceful can be made to fight in a war. Heard believed strongly that violence had more power to upset society than to repair it; “violence,” he warns, “must continue to encroach until it has destroyed justice, until might is right and whatever is is law.”<sup>170</sup> Heard supports this assertion by drawing directly on Hobbes. “Has not every individual been taught,” he writes, that when ‘right’ is at stake then any violence, any wrong may be used?”<sup>171</sup> Heard concludes with a maxim reminiscent of Aldous Huxley’s in *Ends and Means* (1936), that “the means used, in the end, dictate the end attainable.”<sup>172</sup> Violence means cannot secure peaceful ends. The threat of violence may breed fear, but also resentment, which debases social obligation to grudging obedience. Thwarting the good will of each individual constituent by a display of force, Heard argues, a society becomes dependent upon violence to ensure obedience. “Those who will not face facts,” he asserts, believe that “sanctions, force, violence” are “only temporary expedients, the shuttering put around the soft concrete of the peoples’ will until that will sets in accepted custom and prescriptive right.”<sup>173</sup> Instead, employing violent means to secure community guarantees an end entirely unlike the one proposed, and

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid. 29.

<sup>169</sup> Heard, *Source*, 33.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. 33.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. 37.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. 42.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. 33.

erodes the inherent sociability Heard believed each of possessed. “Justice cannot be done,” argues Heard, “as long as the beat of the happy wings of human violence can sway the scales by hovering closer upon them.”<sup>174</sup> Heard’s final say on the matter is an ironic twist on Hobbes; while Hobbes argues “*Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*,”<sup>175</sup> Heard argues more strongly, “if you trust human beings and treat them justly and generously *then they will be lawful*.”<sup>176</sup> Heard is able to argue that good and fair treatment will guarantee reciprocation because of his faith in our underlying social instincts. To Heard, these instincts constituted the colloidal “common Power” Hobbes found in violence. “A force which is both real and yet non-violent does exist,” Heard asserts.<sup>177</sup> But what exactly constitutes this force? Why and how does a vestigial remain of a long-displaced consciousness exert force upon our self-conscious, much less qualify as an innate characteristic of sociability?

We can also see in Heard’s theory of psychic evolution evidence of his objection to Hobbes’ assertion that self-interest is an innate human characteristic. Looking back to our earliest tribal ancestors, Heard is able to posit a time when human beings possessed a common consciousness. Far from finding grief with their fellows, as Hobbes imagined, our earliest ancestors were psychologically disposed to find nothing but a natural sense of community, of a shared common life with one another. In *The Source of Civilization*, Heard describes the ease with which early humans lived in harmony:

As each individual man almost imperceptibly becomes conscious that he is growing up in a family, so in prehistory, it seems certain mankind, as gradually and unawares, awoke to the fact that he was living in a society with his fellows.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Heard, *Source*, 31.

<sup>175</sup> “And you shall do no harm, and none shall be returned.” Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.xiv.100.

<sup>176</sup> Heard, *Source*, 376.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.* 47.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* 11 (my emphasis).

The idea of living socially preceded the rise of individual self-consciousness; as Heard argues, the “first human unit is the group, not the individual.”<sup>179</sup> The possibility of individual separateness only became possible as our minds evolved. By Heard’s argument, individualism could therefore not be the foundation of human nature. Our ancestry instead suggests that we are psychologically disposed to behave socially. As has been discussed earlier, Heard believed that the birth of individualism displaced our “co-consciousness” from the conscious mind into the subconscious. However, our “co-consciousness,” that which enables us to be sociable, was not entirely lost. Heard asserted that there is an imperceptible communication between the conscious and subconscious minds. The suppressed social instinct, Heard argued, continually affected our conscious mind, and ultimately enables self-conscious and self-interested individuals to be sociable. Rather than making the individual “immortal,” or taking individualism to the only paradigm for social relations, Heard advocated intensive psychological study to make this buried social force imminent.

In order to affect any change in the basis of social systems, Heard believed it necessary to outline a new and accurate theory of biology: “Until we find a principle in line equal to the part Natural Selection was intended to play, as the explanation of how evolution worked in the past and is working among us still today, practical people, out of habit, will fall back on Natural Selection even though they know it to be baseless.”<sup>180</sup> Heard’s 1935 book *The Source of Civilization* presents both biological and historical evidence to suggest that “Life is not a constant, unremitting contest”<sup>181</sup> but a question of continually applied creative energies. Arguing that humans have “won the way through sensitiveness and awareness” through the

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<sup>179</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 14.

<sup>180</sup> Heard, *Source*, 51.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

“peaceful life process,”<sup>182</sup> Heard dismisses competition by claiming that violence is “no more natural than are disease and accident.”<sup>183</sup> He presents biological examples which demonstrate the possibility that evolution lies in humanity’s inherent adaptability. Heard suggests that evolution functions in two ways: if the evolving creature is malleable and aware, it will mutate and subsequently advance; conversely, for those creatures stuck in an evolutionary “rut,” evolution merely “deepens the groove”<sup>184</sup> in which those creatures have become entrenched. For example, Heard argues that the dinosaurs became physically strong and powerful only at the expense of sensitivity and adaptability. They became extinct because of their inability to adapt to their changing environment; as Heard writes,

They had used up all their resources of vital energy in adapting to things as they were. Like unwise virgins, they had no oil left over for further adaptations. They were committed, could not readjust, and so they vanished.<sup>185</sup>

The undisputed survivor of the prehistoric period was, for Heard, the most unlikely candidate: the mammal. The mammal had no tough skin, no bulk, and comparatively less effective teeth and claws. However, it exhibited “a perpetual widening capacity of awareness”<sup>186</sup> and retained the ability to adapt as its environment required. “Nothing could illustrate more vividly,” writes Heard, “the principle that life evolves by sensitivity and awareness, by being exposed not by being protected.”<sup>187</sup> The basis of evolution was not uninterrupted growth but instead a perpetual process of what Heard termed ‘foetalization’; that is, advancing creatures retain the essential formlessness of the unborn, “becoming not more specialised but more generalised,

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<sup>182</sup> Heard, *Source*, 25.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.* 62.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.* 67.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.* 70.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.* 113.

malleable, sensitive.”<sup>188</sup> Heard would reiterate this phrase almost verbatim in his 1935 work *The Source of Civilization*, arguing that evolutionary advantages were won only by those creatures which became “more generalised, impressionable, sensitive, and wonderingly aware.”<sup>189</sup> “The creature which ascends,” summarises Heard, “is a creature which somehow chooses sensitiveness, awareness, a constantly widening focus and new experiences which is cannot master rather than preparedness [and] narrow purposiveness.”<sup>190</sup> Heard concludes that humans have the choice of forward progress or decay, but can never remain still:

As the Red Queen said to Alice, “Really, to keep your place you have to keep on running as fast as you can.” Really, to avoid becoming gradually, imperceptibly cemented by custom and efficiency, the creature which would live must constantly be unwinding the gossamer clinging shroud which its own effectiveness continually, like an autotoxin excretion, throws out onto itself, to harden if left into the rigid shell of its sarcophagus.<sup>191</sup>

Heard illustrates both the stagnation of those creatures that did not answer the challenge of nature to evolve, and also the ultimate triumph of “those creatures that dared feel, suffer, experience and respond.”<sup>192</sup> Heard’s new theory of evolution insists that survivors are not necessarily the strongest, but rather the most adaptive. In Heard’s conception of evolution, there is no evolutionary pinnacle to be attained, but only a perpetual process of adaptation and adjustment: “Man must develop or degenerate. He is, as Nietzsche recognised, a transitional animal.”<sup>193</sup>

Heard’s conception of evolution in *The Source of Civilization* is a development of an earlier similar theory he put forward in his first book, *Narcissus: An Anatomy of Clothes* (1924). Here Heard attempts to “extend the established idea of

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<sup>188</sup> Heard, *Source*, 77-8.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.* 115.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.* 70-71.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.* 115.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.* 78.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.* 318.

evolution”<sup>194</sup> by arguing that evolution “is going on no longer in but around man.”<sup>195</sup> That is, our ability to transform and to bend the world to our uses has become so powerful as to make us equal to nature. Heard claims that our own generative powers have usurped the evolutionary forces that originally shaped us. “When the Force that shaped all life evolved man,” writes Heard, “it seems that it kept him henceforward unspecialised” and provided him with an “innate opportunism”<sup>196</sup> to grow and advance. In *Narcissus* Heard creates a sartorial history to suggest that the changing style of human clothing is “homologous with [our] physical evolution”<sup>197</sup>: that is, we tailor ourselves as we tailor our clothing. The epigram to Heard’s book (taken from Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus*: “In all his Modes, and habilitory endeavours, an Architectural Idea will be found lurking”<sup>198</sup>) Heard suggests that the creative force of nature is mimicked in the act of tailoring, which modifies materials and shapes them according to both aesthetic and practical ends. Our increased creative powers make us agents of the evolutionary “Force,” functioning as a sort of “wireless valve, a transmitter which in the process immensely amplifies the current that [it] receives.”<sup>199</sup> Writing in a 1935 article, Heard would return to this conception of evolution, arguing that evolution, “having ceased to work in the body [...] is now directed upon the mind.”<sup>200</sup> In short, Heard reiterates that the same facilities of sensitivity, awareness and invention which had first enabled humanity to ascend were the only things which would ensure its forward progress and prevent its collapse; “those societies will alone survive which think most trenchantly.”<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Heard, *Narcissus: An Anatomy of Clothes* (London: Cobden Sanders, 1924), 18.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.* 19.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.* 19.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

<sup>198</sup> Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, Book One, Chapter V, 25-26.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.* 19.

<sup>200</sup> Gerald Heard, ‘University Supplement: Leviathan. Introduction,’ *Time and Tide* XVI.47 16 November 1935: 1667.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

As has been suggested, Heard's thought also owes much to W. H. R. Rivers' book *Instinct and the Unconscious*. A comparison of Rivers' book with Heard's hypothesis serves not only to identify Rivers as an important source for Heard, but also helps to clarify Heard's arguments about consciousness, many of which appear as uninformed speculation. In his book, Rivers attempts to distinguish the difference between the conscious and unconscious mind, and further the power of the unconscious mind to affect us consciously. Rivers begins by explaining how the conscious mind is capable of processing information of immediate relevance. "At any given moment," he writes, "we are only clearly conscious of the experience which is in the focus of attention."<sup>202</sup> However, such experience as we are conscious of "forms only an infinitesimal proportion of the experience which is capable;"<sup>203</sup> that is, there is much experience in the periphery of our minds which, as the conscious requires, can be drawn into consideration. As an analogy, consider the relationship between the hard drive and processor of a computer. The processor handles such information as is immediately useful to the task at hand, while the hard drive stores a wealth of information to be drawn upon. It is important to note that Rivers does not consider such peripheral experiences as unconscious experience because they can be readily recalled by the conscious mind. Unconscious experience, to Rivers, is comprised of those experiences which are "not capable of being brought into the field of consciousness by any of the ordinary processes of memory or association, but can only be recalled under certain special conditions."<sup>204</sup> Such conditions include sleep, hypnotism, free association, or what Rivers refers to as "certain pathological states."<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Rivers, *Instinct*, 9.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

As an example, Rivers discusses the case of a previous patient who was affected by claustrophobia. After much analysis, Rivers discovered that the source of his patient's anxiety was the result of having been forced to hide in a small enclosure in order to avoid an angry dog. The experience, irretrievable to the conscious mind of the patient, was nevertheless present in the unconscious, where it invisibly affected his conscious mind. Such examples, argues Rivers, "afford conclusive evidence for the existence of experience shut off from our consciousness under ordinary conditions" and further that "though inaccessible to consciousness directly," such experience "may yet be capable of affecting it indirectly."<sup>206</sup> In the case of Rivers' patient, the memory of the dog attack was relegated to the unconscious by a process of suppression, or "the process by which we wittingly endeavour to banish experience."<sup>207</sup> However, Rivers is quick to point out that not merely traumatic experiences are subject to suppression. It is instead an involuntary process by which the conscious mind absents itself of experience or information which is either painful or not immediately relevant. This includes, but not exclusively, traumatic experiences. As an example of non-traumatic experience which the mind is able to jettison, Rivers explains in great detail various experiments conducted by himself, Henry Head and James Sherren on the effects of damage to the nervous system.<sup>208</sup> In these experiments, it was determined that there are two elements to the human nervous system, the protopathic and the epicritic. The protopathic system, Rivers explains, are those channels along which instinctual reactions are conducted. The epicritic system is not a separate entity, but an important companion to the

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<sup>206</sup> Rivers, 10.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. 17.

<sup>208</sup> For more information, Rivers included the following sources in a footnote: H. Head, W. H. R. Rivers, and J. Sherren, *Brain*, vol. xxviii. (1905): 99; H. Head and J. Sherren, Ibid. vol. xxviii. (1905): 116; W. H. R. Rivers and H. Head, Ibid. vol. xxxi. (1908): 323.

protopathic. The epicritic system applies a fine-tuning to the automatic reflexes made possible by the protopathic system. In Rivers' words, the epicritic system provides "a greater perfection of protopathic sensibility" by allowing us "an exactness of discrimination" not afforded by our basic reflexes.<sup>209</sup> In the course of their experiments, Rivers, Head and Sherren were able to isolate the two and observe their function. This was accomplished by damaging nerves in Head's arm, applying a stimulus (namely an object heated to 45 degrees Celsius) and comparing the reactions with those of an undamaged part of the arm. Where the nerves were damaged, the heat source caused a painful reaction. Where undamaged, there was no sensation of pain, but only of warmth. The conclusion drawn by both Rivers and Head was that in the damaged part of the arm, epicritic sensibility was lost, and only protopathic responses were possible; that is, the nerves in the limb were unable to judge and measure the significance of the stimulus, but only respond to the heat as pain. In the undamaged part of the arm, the epicritic system was able to temper the protopathic response, meaning that the heat was regarded as comfortable rather than painful. In an example of wider application, consider the human response to fear compared with that of an animal. Animals, Rivers argued, are possessed largely of a protopathic system which renders "fight or flight" the only options under threat of danger:

An animal [...] exposed to danger, which is so recognised as danger that it produces a reaction, tends to give itself to the reaction fully. If it runs away, it tends to run away with every particle of the energy which it is capable of putting forth; if it cries, screams, or utters a sound, it tends to do so with all the vigour at its command. In these cases there is no discrimination of the degree of danger.<sup>210</sup>

The human protopathic system similarly registers pain or harm, and, unchecked by the epicritic system, enables similar responses; without the graduated epicritic response,

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<sup>209</sup> Rivers, 23.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid. 44.

the protopathic response to heat was simply pain. In the case of danger, it is the epicritic sensibility which is able to keep our instinct to flight under control, ultimately enabling humans to react accordingly to various circumstances. As has been mentioned before, the flight instinct is of little use when the threat of danger requires complicated manoeuvring of the individual. The instinctual tendency persists, but finds itself suited to the occasion. Rivers concludes that the epicritic system “is adapted to behaviour of a far more complex kind”<sup>211</sup> than stimulus and response. As a result of epicritic sensibility,

sensations do not merely tell the animal or man that something is there and set up the crude mass-movements of approach or withdrawal, but they enable the many forms of reaction which become possible when the exact nature of the stimulating object is recognised.<sup>212</sup>

In short, the human nervous system is able to suppress immediate instinctual responses, thereby making the individual capable of interpreting and analysing stimulus as it presents itself. This ability to control and moderate is, to Rivers, evidence of an evolution in human sensibility, whereby our imperfect animal instincts yielded to a precision of sensation and response. As Rivers argues,

The exact localisation of fully developed cutaneous sensibility would be impossible if the early radiation and distant reference of the protopathic stage persisted. These features would furnish elements of vagueness and confusion wholly incompatible with the exact power of localisation which developed later and enabled the animal to modify its behaviour according to the nature of the external object by which the sensations were being produced.<sup>213</sup>

However, the protopathic system did not disappear. Rather, it was sublimated into the unconscious mind, persisting in the form of instinct: “The affective reactions lie ready to spring into activity whenever the situation calls for an emotional rather than an intellectual response.”<sup>214</sup> This assertion leads Rivers to describe the unconscious as

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid. 24.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid. 30.

“a storehouse of experience associated with instinctive reactions.”<sup>215</sup> Rivers is also fascinated by the universality of this ability; “we are not dealing with the suppression of individual experience,” he writes, “but with the suppression in the race of experience belonging to the earlier phases of history.”<sup>216</sup> This ability is not an individualised and learned process, but a common and psychophysical reaction resulting from eons of evolution.

We can see that Heard was greatly influenced by Rivers, and how his own ideas about a common social instinct are a calculated projection of Rivers’ ideas. Rivers essentially provides the psychological arguments that make Heard’s hypothesis viable. Rivers not only confirms the existence of an unconscious mind, but also how the conscious mind may be motivated by stimulus from the unconscious. Further, Rivers demonstrates how conscious behaviour is often a response to the mute insistence of the unconscious. Finally, Rivers confirms that this is a natural, universal phenomenon, and that the same instincts are universally present in the subconscious. Given Rivers’ work, it is easy to see Heard’s reasoning. If there can be said to be a common human instinct towards social behaviour located in the unconscious, then it is possible to read conscious social behaviour as the expression of an unconscious desire, an instinct filtered through the conscious mind and expressing itself in the form of communities of individuals. By insisting on the absolute autonomy of individual self-consciousness, this universal subconscious instinct becomes obscured. As Heard wrote in *Time and Tide* in 1935, “man has a necessity to count, to be worth something to his community [...] This need is also [...] blind.”<sup>217</sup> By asserting that mutual self-interest is the only basis for a society is to overlook this blind necessity, the true and natural basis for human interaction. Heard champions psychological

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid. 39.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. 29.

<sup>217</sup> Heard, “Men and Books,” Rev. of Leon and Huxley, *Time and Tide*, 21 December 1935: 1907.

research, and particular Rivers' work, because it arguably points the way to understanding what really motivates human community.

We are left to consider more fully one last aspect of Heard's hypothesis, namely his belief that social behaviour is instinctual. The ideas of Rivers enabled Heard to posit the existence of a social instinct. In *Instinct and the Subconscious*, Rivers examines in some detail the tendency towards gregarious behaviour in both humans and animals. We have seen how Heard's arguments for a common psyche are in part confirmed by Rivers. Given that the function of the subconscious mind is similar in all individuals, and that the subconscious can motivate our behaviour, it is not unreasonable for Heard to posit the possibility of their being a level at which minds can communicate. However, Heard goes so far as to suggest a kind of telepathy by which socialisation is made possible. The basis for this assertion is taken directly from Rivers' discussion of the "gregarious instinct" to be found in animals. "The essential function of the gregarious instinct," writes Rivers, "is that it shall lead all the members of the group to act together towards the common purpose of furthering the welfare of the group."<sup>218</sup> Group welfare, by Rivers' assertion, may be considered an instinctual tendency rather than the result of coercion. Rivers explains that the gregarious instinct works largely by suggestion, manifesting itself in imitation; "The actions of every member of the group" are ultimately "determined by the 'imitation' of those of some member of the group, this process of imitation being especially definite when the group has a definite leader."<sup>219</sup> In short, the gregarious instinct is "a 'sympathy' [that] produces in every member of the group an affective state which may arise in one of its own number."<sup>220</sup> It is a "reciprocal and unwitting" process,

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<sup>218</sup> Rivers, 90.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid. 90-91.

and is “spontaneous and wholly free from voluntary forcing,” becoming “more real and more effective the more unwittingly it comes into being.”<sup>221</sup>

Suggestion is an unconscious process, and its resulting imitation is both a natural and unpremeditated experience of common thought and action. Rivers is not more explicit on how the “affective” or suggestive state is achieved, but remarks that suggestion is an observable, if inexplicable, fact. Rivers does, however, outline an anatomy of suggestion, arguing that the “unwitting character of suggestion” requires three preconditions; “a motor or affector, the affective, and the cognitive.”<sup>222</sup> That is, for suggestion to occur there must be one who makes the suggestion for other to follow, and a particular behaviour (or “cognitive”) that may be learnt by others. Insofar as behaviours can be communicated by suggestion, Rivers posits the potential for “thought-reading” between group members, which he carefully defines as “the unwitting transmission of ideas from person to person in the present of another.”<sup>223</sup> The experience is unwitting because it enters into the unconscious mind, where it stimulates the conscious mind to action. Rivers summarises the gregarious instinct, describing it as “the process which makes every member of the group aware of what is passing in the minds of the other members of the group.”<sup>224</sup> The group is not only aware of the thoughts of others, but naturally forgets self-regard in the interest of the group. As Rivers explains, suggestion provides members of a given group with “a mental content so similar that all act with complete harmony towards some common

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid. 96n. It is important to note that Rivers distinguishes between “thought-reading” and the “problematical telepathy or distant thought-transference.”

<sup>224</sup> Ibid. 91. For corroboration, Rivers also makes reference to *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, a frequently updated text by William McDougall (1887—1938), first published in 1908. Here McDougall defines the gregarious instinct as “a process of communication resulting in the acceptance with conviction of the communicated proposition in the absence of logically adequate ground for acceptance” (quoted, 91).

end.”<sup>225</sup> Rivers claims that suggestion “belongs to an instinct which is concerned with collective as opposed to individual needs,”<sup>226</sup> arguing that the protopathic instinct, reserved for the preservation of self, is subdued by the concern for others. “As soon as it became necessary to adjust behaviour to that of other members of a group,” he argued, our self-preserving instincts “had to be modified in the direction of discrimination and graduation.”<sup>227</sup> The same innate quality of the human mind to temper our animal instincts is also capable of checking the self-regarding instinct, not for an altruistic sense of the common good, but because of our instinctive gregariousness.

Rivers relates examples of gregariousness and suggestion from his own experience, examples which Heard cites in *The Ascent of Humanity*. On a trip to Melanesia in 1908, Rivers found occasion to observe the seemingly “co-conscious” behaviour of the Melanesians. Rivers recounts that when the need for manning a boat arose, the Melanesians were able to assume their positions without any verbal communication:

Never once was there any sign of disagreement or doubt which of the ship's company should man the boat, nor was there ever any hesitation who should take the steer-oar, though, at any rate according to our ideas, the coxswain had a far easier task than the rest. It is possible that there was some understanding by which the members of the crew arranged who should undertake the different kinds of work, but we could discover no evidence whatever of any such arrangement.<sup>228</sup>

Rivers attributes their “harmony” to a “delicacy of social adjustment,”<sup>229</sup> a form of intuition that renders verbal communication unnecessary. As another example (also cited by Heard), Rivers considers the nature of government among the Melanesians, which operates without recourse to debate:

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid. 94.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. 99.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid. 95. (Heard’s account of this story is to be found on page 51 of *The Ascent of Humanity*.)

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

[I]n the councils of such people there is no voting or other means of taking the opinion of the body. The people seem to recognise instinctively, using this much misused word in the strict sense, that some definite line of action shall be taken.<sup>230</sup>

By a force of intuition, the thoughts and desires of the whole community are understood, and it is gregarious instinct which makes this possible. Similarly, the arrangement of the Melanesian boatmen suggests a sympathy of minds which eliminates the need for spoken communication or deliberation. For Heard, such experiences are evidence of a common consciousness, a sympathy of minds which makes group relations inescapable and individual autonomy impossible. But Rivers makes it clear that that same kind of “co-consciousness” does not commonly exist outside such peoples as the Melanesians; “the Melanesian,” asserts Rivers, “is distinctly more gregarious than the average European.”<sup>231</sup> Rivers considers that this tendency toward gregariousness exists, but only in a vestigial form. As examples of how modern Western civilization is attuned psychically, Rivers considers the ease with which humans walk down crowded streets:

A speculative Melanesian who watched the traffic in the streets of a great English town would be greatly struck by the harmony of the passage of people on the pavements in which the rarity of jostling is to be explained by an immediate intuition of the movements of others which takes place unwittingly with all the signs of characteristic behaviour.<sup>232</sup>

The act of walking down a crowded street is largely unconscious. We do not constantly and consciously calculate distance and direction to avoid collisions, but rather rely on our unconscious mind to make sudden adjustments for the movement of oncoming pedestrians or the appearance of obstacles. That such an example is evidence of gregariousness is obvious to Rivers, for it bears “a definite relation to the

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid. (Heard quotes the first sentence of this passage verbatim on page 51 of *The Ascent of Humanity*.)

<sup>231</sup> Ibid. 94.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. 96.

welfare of the group and [...] promote[s] its safety as well as its comfort.”<sup>233</sup> A stronger example offered by Rivers is that of social tact. Tact depends on our being aware of what others are thinking and avoiding talking about potentially embarrassing or painful subjects. Rivers describes tact as a “processes which take place unwittingly [...] in which one person becomes aware of what is passing in the mind of another or others.”<sup>234</sup> When the “mental content” of others has been so intuited, it takes on an “affective quality;” that is, we decide upon a course of behaviour through some silent accord, and to leave certain topics of conversation untouched. Because such arrangements are made unconsciously, Rivers again claims that tact is “associated with instinctive reactions”<sup>235</sup> towards gregariousness, or concern for the group. Even if there is no direct telepathy between individuals, there is a natural similarity in the human unconscious which makes similar actions possible.

Let us consider Rivers’ ideas in terms of Heard’s thoughts on both our mental evolution and on the persistence of a common psyche today. Like Rivers, Heard believes that there was a time when gregarious behaviour was predominant. The telepathic quality of gregarious society can be explained in terms of suggestion; no supernatural psychic force accounts for this telepathy, but merely the natural and imperceptible sympathy of minds. Like Heard, Rivers believes there was some natural tendency to suppress individualism in the interest of group living, a condition made inescapable by our psychology. This reminds us of Heard’s attack on Hobbes, that social obligations exist independent of violence. However, Rivers similarly believes that there was some point where this gregariousness was no longer normal. He observes that modern human beings are “very far from being completely adapted

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid. 96.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid. 97.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

to the gregarious life.”<sup>236</sup> Heard’s argument for the growth and predominance of individual self-consciousness helps to explain why we are no longer suited to the gregariousness of our ancestors. However, the old consciousness was not eradicated but rather displaced. The gregarious nature of our ancestors was increasingly relegated to the unconscious mind in order that the conscious mind could focus on more pressing business. Sublimated into the unconscious mind, this gregariousness became an instinct. Rather than thinking consciously about how to socialise, the human brain assumed this trait as another instinctual or reflex action, to be classed with the fear response. Rivers lays the groundwork for this assertion by his differentiation between the protopathic and epicritic sensibility in human beings. The animal protopathic system supplies instinctual behaviour, while the epicritic tailors the response. The process is entirely unconscious until the point where the conscious mind reacts; again, consider the example of the doomed motorist, whose epicritic senses relate danger which the conscious translates into appropriate manoeuvrings. Heard argues that the same thing occurs in cases of the gregarious instinct. The desire for community persists in the unconscious, a protopathic instinct which presses itself upon our consciousness and manifests itself in our conscious and deliberate construction of communities and societies; herein lies the meaning of Heard’s maxim “Civilization *is* self-consciousness.”<sup>237</sup> In discussing suggestion and its appeal to our gregariousness, Rivers essentially outlines what Heard would later call the “co-conscious” state of our earliest ancestors, a state wherein community was natural owing to a “constant telepathic communication with the rest of the group.”<sup>238</sup> Heard also gleans from Rivers the basis for his own understanding of human nature. That first unwitting group instinct, later sublimated into the unconscious, was the “source

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid. 94.

<sup>237</sup> Heard, *Source*, 87.

<sup>238</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 15.

of civilization,” that force which made all personal and social relationships possible and, more importantly, natural. Mutual self-interest is undermined by our other-regarding instincts. It is therefore little wonder that Heard regarded psychology as the means to reconciling self-consciousness with that underlying common unconsciousness, nor that such an advance was a necessary prerequisite to social change.

This chapter began with the reflection that Heard was a generaliser rather than a specialist. When considering the numerous influences on his work, it becomes apparent that this title is most appropriate. Heard’s minimum working hypothesis represents a comprehensive condensation of thought, from the philosophical to the psychological, in the interest of defining human nature and the modes of living most amenable to it. On the surface, Heard’s theories of an essentially gregarious human nature, and of an underlying psychic unity which enables individuals to realise their sociability, appear specious. However, when considered in the context of a larger body of thought, it becomes clear that Heard is creating a synthesis, a theory of human nature and community that incorporates many facets of the debate on human nature and community.

## Chapter II

### Sympathetic Minds: Horace Plunkett and “The Incomparable Gerald”

As we have seen, an essential part of Heard’s “radically new way of life”<sup>239</sup> was the definition of a new social model which could check a surfeit of competitive individualism and engender a spirit of mutual concern between individuals in place of a narrowly focussed, self-interested outlook. Modern urban life demanded a form of individual specialisation, each performing a single task in isolation, and resulted in unhappiness and social disintegration. The commune was the model of human community to which Heard was attracted as a viable substitute; as he argued, any new society would “have to build up, from such groups, in which alone the individual can be solved, a psychological backing for the economic associations in which the world will have to be organized.”<sup>240</sup> Further, he considered the organization of individuals into a “true co-operative commonwealth”<sup>241</sup> as a pre-requisite to social change, one which would have to be achieved first independent of political reform; legislation could simply not affect the great change of mind which Heard championed. As Heard wrote in a 1936 *Time and Tide* article:

The community can no longer leave the individual to find by himself the purpose of his life in a series of irrelevant, private, inconsequential affairs, excitements, adventures and enterprises. The community is an unlimited liability company - the only company fully deserving that grave title. It must purpose together what life and what goal it believes to be worthy of its endeavour and unlimited devotion.<sup>242</sup>

Interestingly, Heard would once again make use of the phrase ‘unlimited liability’ as he became involved in the pacifist movement. Organised into independent, close-knit

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<sup>239</sup> Gerald Heard, “The Significance of the New Pacifism” *The New Pacifism*, ed. Gerald K. Hibbert (London: Allenson, 1936), 16. (Hereafter “Significance.”)

<sup>240</sup> Gerald Heard, “Religion and the Problems of Modern Society,” Part 4 of 4. *Time and Tide*, 20 February 1932: 198.

<sup>241</sup> Heard, “Significance,” 18.

<sup>242</sup> Gerald Heard, “University Supplement: Leviathan. Introduction,” *Time and Tide* 16 November 1935: 1665.

communes in which social obligations and responsibilities would be most keenly felt, Heard believed pacifists would come to feel a sense of “unlimited liability”<sup>243</sup> with his fellows.

The phrase “unlimited liability” is immediately suggestive of the language of business, wherein an unlimited liability company is one in which all stakeholders and members have an unlimited and shared obligation to meet any shortfalls within the company. This may seem an odd metaphor considering Heard’s loftier psychological and mystical ideas. However, his adoption of this phrase is evidence of the degree to which Heard was influenced by Irish statesman and agriculturist Sir Horace Curzon Plunkett (1854 - 1932), for whom Heard was literary secretary between 1919 and 1929. A sympathy of minds can be deduced by examining Heard’s developing thought while in Plunkett’s employ, and indeed a clear picture of their friendship and mutual influence becomes very much apparent in reading what sources remain. Both believed that social reform could be accomplished only by making each constituent aware of the greater sense of “extra-individuality” within a community. Like Heard, Plunkett believed that human community was a subconscious psychological requirement, and that strong social relationships provided the necessary feeling of “neighbourhood and kinship” which kept communities together. Plunkett was convinced that to achieve this kinship, a social and economic foundation must function according to the principles of co-operativism he strove to perfect. Further, Plunkett believed that the revival and reorganisation of agriculture along co-operative lines would prove to be of greater power in winning Irish independence than strictly political agitation; by working to make Ireland a model of self-sufficiency, Plunkett sought by implication to strengthen the rural community life and the life of the nation

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<sup>243</sup> Heard, “Significance,” 17.

as a consequence. This is clearly reminiscent of Heard's later sense that governments could be shown 'what to do', and that politics largely waited upon action from those outside of its machinations to construct a viable alternative. One supporter of the co-operative movement would claim that Plunkett's comprehensive social vision made him the "forerunner of the other practical idealists who have emerged since the war;"<sup>244</sup> indeed, while Plunkett's thinking is idealistic, is it eminently practical and practicable. It is certainly worth considering the probable influence of Plunkett on his long-time secretary. Much of Heard's conception of communal living, and the larger social ends to which it could be applied, is informed by the practical and political aims of agricultural co-operativism as advanced by Plunkett. The experience Heard gained working with Plunkett provided a practical counterbalance to the ideals he advanced. Further, Plunkett may have been something of a role model to the young Heard. Recalling his first meeting with Plunkett in the epilogue to Margaret Digby's 1949 biography of Plunkett, Heard writes:

Naturally [Plunkett] had been known to every Anglo-Irishman for a generation. He was thought of as the one man above politics who actually got things done, did good things of a high quality and on a large scale.<sup>245</sup>

To a large extent, these qualities which Heard would hope to develop in becoming a public authority and shaper of public opinion. By setting himself 'above politics', Heard set out to accomplish wide ranging reform in his writing, and ultimately in undertaking to become a man of action. Plunkett embodied the characteristics of just such a man of action as Heard would try to become.

Alison Falby's asserts in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, that "the precise nature of [Heard and Plunkett's] relationship is not clear,"<sup>246</sup> is not entirely

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<sup>244</sup> Rupert Metcalf, *England and Sir Horace Plunkett: An Essay on Agricultural Co-operation* (London: Gerald Howe Ltd. 1933), 43.

<sup>245</sup> Gerald Heard, Epilogue to Margaret Digby's *Horace Plunkett: An Anglo-American Irishman* (1949), 297. (Hereafter "Epilogue.")

true. Falby offers little in the way of discussion of their relationship in her thesis on Heard, and little more in her 2008 book *Between the Pigeonholes*. However, an examination of Plunkett's surviving correspondence and diaries, as well as contemporary biographies of Plunkett, clarifies the nature of their professional and personal relationship considerably. The archives of the Horace Plunkett Foundation in Long Hanborough, Oxfordshire, house Plunkett's extensive diaries and letters (rescued from destruction by Heard in 1923 when Plunkett's house was burned in the Troubles). These were originally bequeathed to Gerald Heard in Plunkett's will. He delivered these to the offices of the Horace Plunkett Foundation (then located in London) shortly before his departure to the United States in 1937.<sup>247</sup> These diaries offer glimpses into but no explicit descriptions of the working or personal relationship between Heard and Plunkett. Heard wrote a short but helpful memoir of his time with Plunkett for Digby's biography. The few surviving letters and telegrams between Heard and Plunkett, spanning from 27 December 1922 to 21 July 1931, help to give more than a cursory glance into their working relationship. The annual reports of the Horace Plunkett Foundation, too, are sporadic during the years of Heard's trusteeship,<sup>248</sup> preventing a clear picture of Heard's duties and responsibilities in that capacity. However, there are sufficient details extant to make clearer the nature of their relationship.

Gerald Heard mentions his first meeting with Plunkett in the Epilogue to Margaret Digby's biography of Plunkett, *Horace Plunkett: An Anglo-American*

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<sup>246</sup> Alison Falby, "Henry FitzGerald Heard (1889–1971)," *DNB*.

<sup>247</sup> Personal interview with Kate Targett, archivist at Horace Plunkett Foundation. According to Ms. Targett, the Irish Co-operative Organization Society (ICOS, formerly the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, Plunkett's flagship organization, founded on 24 April 1898) would "give their eye teeth" to have the papers which Heard gave to the HPF.

<sup>248</sup> Interview with Kate Targett, archivist at Horace Plunkett Foundation. The annual reports between 1937 and 1958 are missing, a lack which Ms. Targett considers to be "unaccountable."

*Irishman* (1949). Heard recalls he was “summoned” to meet Plunkett late in 1919.<sup>249</sup> Heard does not explain why he was summoned, nor for what reason, but Plunkett claims he “got Heard to help me with some literary work and decided to take him on as private secretary.”<sup>250</sup> Heard gives the impression this was their first meeting, but this seems unlikely; Plunkett may have heard good reports of his work as a secretary from his previous employer, Lord William Snowden Robson, First Baron Robson (1852 - 1918), who hired Heard to assist with the writing of his memoirs in 1917.<sup>251</sup> Despite his past secretarial experience, Heard recollects that he was unsure of his duties as Plunkett's secretary, believing Plunkett's *coterie* was peppered with some of the finest minds in Ireland and England;<sup>252</sup> “A new member of such a ‘force’ had to find his feet--there seemed hardly standing room.”<sup>253</sup> He recollects that soon after his joining Plunkett an unnamed observer commented ““You are not a secretary, you are an A.D.C.””<sup>254</sup> “That was it,” Heard continues:

“H.P.” needed someone to talk to, to talk himself out to, to try out his ideas on, to carry his bag, sort his thoughts over on--like a table--to be as he said, an “alter ego.” He wanted such a one to be on the spot all the while.<sup>255</sup>

All evidence suggests that Plunkett was greatly impressed with “the incomparable Gerald.”<sup>256</sup> In his diary, Plunkett records that “in Gerald Heard I have a secretary who, however ill I feel (and I am far from well) can amuse the most varied and most brilliant guests” whose “knowledge of literature and of the arts is amazing.”<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Heard, “Epilogue,” 297.

<sup>250</sup> Plunkett’s diary, entry of 8 December 1919. (Hereafter PD.)

<sup>251</sup> Alison Falby, “Gerald Heard (1889-1971) and British Intellectual Culture between the Wars,” D.Phil diss., Oxford, 2000, 19.

<sup>252</sup> Heard explains his dilemma more fully in the text. “Was one to write memoranda? He had the pick of clever Dublin journalists - none cleverer - to help. Did he want ideas – lofty - he had AE, whom he was fond of calling ‘that wonderful mixture of seer, artist, poet, philosopher and economist’. Ideas, practical, none better than R. A. Anderson.” (297)

<sup>253</sup> Heard, “Epilogue,” 300.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> PD, 7 February 1931.

<sup>257</sup> PD, 29 November 1924.

Plunkett had always been closely associated with the intelligentsia of his own day,<sup>258</sup> but Heard brought with him many members of the intelligentsia of his generation. Writing to Charlotte Shaw in 1940, Heard would briefly recall one house party when George Bernard Shaw and Lady Fingall came to stay:

It seems only the other day – but it is 20 years ago almost to the day – that Sir Horace said ‘The G.B.S.s are coming to stay.’ I remember the austere breakfasts – you and H.P. and Lady Fingall all upstairs and the great [G.]B.S. coming down when we two broke fast in silence – he putting pats of butter on his porridge. He was working at St Joan I believe. You and he are most days in one’s mind.<sup>259</sup>

The guests Heard would bring to Plunkett at Crest House (his new home in Weybridge, Surrey after the destruction of Kiltereagh, Foxrock, Co. Dublin on 31 January 1923) included Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, Julian Huxley,<sup>260</sup> E. M. Forster, Naomi Mitchison and his companion, Chris Wood<sup>261</sup> to name but a few. Heard was equally astute as secretary and socialite; Plunkett wished to “shape him” as his “successor” in the co-operative movement,<sup>262</sup> and recalls having “long talks with Heard about the future of my Irish estate.”<sup>263</sup> Heard would become the executor, and the main benefactor, of Plunkett's will.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> For example, in *Ireland in the New Century* (1904), Plunkett champions the efforts of the Gaelic League as a significant means of reviving Irish identity and culture, an initiative equally important to rural reorganization. Trevor West's biography of Plunkett also discusses Plunkett's attempts to “strengthen the links between co-operators and the Irish writers” (91) and his connections with Lady Gregory, W. B. Yeats and George W. Russell (AE), who would become the editor of the Irish Homestead from 1905 to 1924 and the short-lived *Irish Statesman*.

<sup>259</sup> Gerald Heard to Charlotte Shaw, 8 June 1940, Charlotte Shaw Papers, British Library, Add. 56494, 78.

<sup>260</sup> PD, 9 December 1923.

<sup>261</sup> Chris Wood was also Heard's partner at the time, and Plunkett recalls visiting with Heard and Wood in “Brookman Park near Hatfield to see the huge installation of the B.B.C.” (PD, 15 May 1930).

<sup>262</sup> PD, 19 April 1927. Although Heard would remain a trustee of the Horace Plunkett Foundation (founded in 1919 shortly before his hire) until 1948, the presidency of the Irish Agricultural Organization Society (IAOS, now ICOS, Irish Co-Operative Organization Society) would be assumed by R. A. Anderson (then vice-president and a long standing Co-operative supporter) and Sir Daniel Hall would become Chair of the Horace Plunkett Foundation after Plunkett's death in 1932.

<sup>263</sup> PD, 15 November 1922. Plunkett writes to Heard, after Kiltereagh's destruction, that he had been “planning to put the house sooner or later to a public purpose” (Letter to Gerald Heard, 1 Feb 1923 Horace Plunkett Foundation, HEA.21). Heard later recalls that Plunkett intended to turn Kiltereagh into a hospital for children with tuberculosis (Heard, “Epilogue,” 297).

<sup>264</sup> Trevor West, *Horace Plunkett: Co-operation and Politics, An Irish Biography* (Gerald Cross, Bucks: Colin Smythe, 1986), 204. Also, in a letter of 21 December 1931, Heard writes to Plunkett to

Horace Plunkett is regarded as the father of the co-operative movement in Ireland, which sought to unite farmers by improving their economic and social relations. Believing that the improvement of the material benefits of farming was inseparable from improving community spirit, Plunkett began a comprehensive programme of social reform, establishing co-operative banks and creameries, and also championed such organizations as the Gaelic League, which sought to revitalise Irish literature and help to revive and define a national identity. Plunkett felt that the potential for Irish unity lay in the rediscovery of their common agricultural roots, their cultural heritage and of their tradition of clannishness. The first step towards any social reform was therefore cultivating these “primitive instincts and translating them into a new and self-conscious communal spirit. Observing the success of the co-operative movement in England, under which farmers pooled their resources and shared production, Plunkett sought to transpose the English system to agriculturally “backward” Ireland. Through the co-operative movement, Plunkett sought not only to improve the economic situation of farmers, but to effect a large-scale reorganization of rural Ireland into a vital, self-supporting community with a culture and character all its own; the ethos of co-operative movement is succinctly stated in its motto, “Better farming, Better business, Better living.”<sup>265</sup>

As a statesman, Plunkett was a pivotal figure in the development of Irish independence, serving as Chairman of the Irish Convention in 1917 that would ultimately lead to the creation of the Irish Free State in 1921, and was a Senator between 1922 and 1923.<sup>266</sup> However, Plunkett's role in politics is often overlooked because of his failure as a parliamentarian. Plunkett was not well suited to parliament,

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confirm that he has “read the will carefully” and confirms that the amount of £3,000 will be bequeathed to the Horace Plunkett Foundation. (Letter to Horace Plunkett, HEA.22).

<sup>265</sup> Horace Plunkett, *The Horace Plunkett Society: Its Origins, Principles and Programme*. (London: The Horace Plunkett Foundation, 1926), 5.

<sup>266</sup> West, 177.

and was renowned for being a poor speaker.<sup>267</sup> As Plunkett was all too aware, Irish politics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were highly partisan, divided along religious, political and cultural loyalties. Plunkett had little use for such polar distinctions of religion or nationality which he believed to be the stumbling block of politics in Ireland. Politically, he was neither a strong Unionist nor Nationalist; although Plunkett was the Unionist MP for South Dublin between 1892 and 1900, Trevor West argues that Plunkett's attempts to “widen the narrow context of Unionist thinking” by supplementing their “sterile” policies with “a constructive social policy” made him largely unpopular within his own party.<sup>268</sup> The same social movement he envisioned prompted the opposing Nationalists to attack Plunkett's policy as distracting from the political concerns of Ireland. Plunkett lost his seat in 1900 to a Nationalist candidate and would never run for a seat again. Instead, Plunkett believed that the “political obsession”<sup>269</sup> of the Irish was a case of putting the cart before the horse. What he felt best for the future of Ireland was to forget this ‘obsession’ and engage in practical means to end the economic and social strife of Ireland; Plunkett's approach to politics is neatly condensed in his maxim, “The more business in politics, and the less politics in business, the better for both.”<sup>270</sup> Only after solving social and economic problems, Plunkett believed, would Ireland be ready to consider political independence. Plunkett argued that the co-operative movement was to have “the two-fold effect of brightening rural life and increasing the attachment of the members to their society.”<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> R. A. Anderson, Plunkett's successor as President of the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, states that “as a speaker he was not a success,” for while “the matter was excellent when one sees it in print, his speeches were too long” (Anderson, quoted in Metcalf, 139).

<sup>268</sup> West, 40.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid. 62.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid. 61.

<sup>271</sup> Plunkett, 199.

Sir Horace Curzon Plunkett was born 24 October 1854 at Sherborne, Dorset. He was the sixth child of Edward, sixteenth Baron Dunsany, and in 1860 moved with his family to Dunsany, Co. Meath in Ireland. Trevor West describes the Dunsanys as “major land owners, upper strata aristocrats”<sup>272</sup> who were largely reliant on farming, despite income from other sources, such as coal interests, in England.<sup>273</sup> In 1878, Plunkett received a history degree from Oxford, where Trevor West posits Plunkett fell deeply under the sway of such socially conscious philosophers as J. S. Mill (whose *Principles of Political Economy* discusses the both beneficial and natural organization of labour and capital in agriculture) and was generally affected by the “moral ardour”<sup>274</sup> prevalent at Oxford of the nineteenth century; as West explains,

The brash individualism which had sought to justify itself by economic dogma was withering under the denunciation of John Ruskin. T. H. Green was shaking the hold of utilitarian ethics. Arnold Toynbee, the historian of the industrial revolution, was compelling thoughtful minds to reflect on the costs of the material progress of the previous century in terms of human suffering.<sup>275</sup>

“Some of this social thinking,” concludes West, “must have rubbed off on the young Plunkett.”<sup>276</sup> Certainly this is plausible explanation for Plunkett's opening a forerunner of a co-operative store for his father's tenants; it was essentially a joint stock company, serving only those farmers who invested in the enterprise. Plunkett's social concern also marks a significant difference from the rest of his family, who led a “pointless and boring”<sup>277</sup> existence punctuated by parties and races. This vapid lifestyle was epitomised by his brother John, successor to the title Lord Dunsany in 1889, a wastrel whose alcoholism meant that the practical management of the estate

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<sup>272</sup> West, 5.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid. 7

was the responsibility of Horace.<sup>278</sup> Owing partly to the tuberculosis of his childhood, and partly to his adventurous spirit, Plunkett departed for the United States in order to ranch in the rugged West in 1879. Heard recollects that “T.B. had developed sufficiently in him to have given him a small curvature of the spine before the plains of the Middle West cured what the damp of Ireland had provoked.”<sup>279</sup> Plunkett arrived in Denver, Colorado in 1879, but soon after moved to the Powder River Valley of Wyoming, whereupon he founded the E K Ranch in Johnson County.<sup>280</sup> Between 1879 and 1888, Plunkett spent three-quarters of the year in Wyoming, gaining first-hand, practical knowledge of agricultural development, especially in the spheres of raising cattle, dairying and farming; however, in 1908, Plunkett would argue that here he “learnt more about men than cattle.”<sup>281</sup> The pioneering spirit, which allowed for the use of new techniques and technology of farming, and also freedom from a class system, allowed Plunkett to share in the kind of small communal agricultural venture he would make the model for Ireland. However, on the death of his father in 1889, family responsibilities forced Plunkett to return to Ireland.

The ideals of co-operativism were well established in England when Plunkett began promoting the movement in Ireland in the late 1880s. The so-called “father of co-operation” was Robert Owen (1771 - 1858), a Welsh entrepreneur and philanthropist who established industrial communities and a type of credit union in Clyde. The first stirrings of the co-operative “movement,” however, began on 21 December 1844, when 28 artisans in Rochdale formed the Rochdale Equitable Pioneer Society, whose founding principles became the model for all further co-operative development. Trevor West enumerates these “tenets” in his biography of

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<sup>278</sup> West, 15.

<sup>279</sup> Heard, “Epilogue”, 297-98.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>281</sup> Quoted in West, 14.

Plunkett, but they are easily condensed. The Society was a limited liability company: each investor received a fixed return on their invested capital. Membership was extended to anyone, and the Society was non-political, non-sectarian, and democratically run. The Society sold goods of high quality, and traded on a cash only basis with no system of credit. Further, the society also promoted and provided for the education of its members.<sup>282</sup> The Rochdale Pioneers became a model for other co-operative societies, and by 1888, there were some 1,300 co-operative societies in England, boasting a million members and generating revenue of £37,000,000 annually.<sup>283</sup> However, the real value of co-operative organization was not only financial, but social. Co-operation was widely viewed as a means of revitalizing human community. For example, James Wilder, a tradesman and secretary to the Co-operative store in Newmarket, wrote an essay in 1862 extolling the co-operative movement as “a plan pre-eminently calculated to advance your social, moral, domestic and intellectual condition” and “which, under proper regulations, may establish pure comfort and domestic happiness where misery and squalor once held sway.”<sup>284</sup> Wilder also argues that the material improvements afforded by co-operation are negligible compared with the social values it instils; “If co-operation were only calculated to assist in the accumulation of wealth,” writes Wilder,

I, although a fellow worker, should not advocate its cause; but it is because I am convinced that it may be a powerful engine of social and moral improvement, as well as a means of more pecuniary advantages, and that the social and moral elevation of the honest sons of toil must follow from its general adoption.<sup>285</sup>

The co-operative “principle of `self help” led to moral and social improvement by its ability to “call into use the better qualities of our nature,” namely self-respect, self-

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<sup>282</sup> West, 20.

<sup>283</sup> Plunkett, Horace “Co-operative Stores for Ireland” *Nineteenth Century* 24 (1888): 410-18.

<sup>284</sup> James Wilder, *An Essay on Co-operation, showing the necessity of attaining self-knowledge, self-reliance and self-respect*. Rev. Isaac Bank Robinson, ed. (London: Emily Faithfull & Co, 1862), 5.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.* 12.

reliance and “the great Christian rule, ‘To do to others as you would yourself wish to be treated.’”<sup>286</sup> In an essay of 1888, Scottish co-operativist William Maxwell similarly discusses “the doctrine of associated effort” in terms of its predominantly moral and social value. The co-operative movement, for Maxwell, was not only a means of yoking together the “two seemingly contending forces” of labour and capital for economic convenience and profit, but to have them “welded and wedded together” that they might “work in harmony for the good of mankind in general.”<sup>287</sup> Maxwell asserts that “the kernel of co-operation” is not financial gain, but “the brotherhood of man.”<sup>288</sup>

While there were some small-scale forays into co-operation in England and Scotland, the idea still had yet to take root in Ireland. John Vandaleur, with the assistance of English socialist Thomas Craig began a small agricultural commune on his land in Ralahine, Co. Clare on 7 November 1831. The Ralahine Commune was a democratically run labour society, consisting of 22 single men, 7 married couples, and several orphan children. The land was not communally owned, but retained by Vandaleur. Vandaleur gave his workers £200 per annum with which to farm, and charged a rent of £700 for the use of his land. The workers were paid largely in a currency known as “labour notes” which were only legal tender in their local co-operative store; this policy kept capital within the commune and encouraged self-sufficiency. The commune ran smoothly for a while, but collapsed 23 November 1833 when Vandaleur's estate was seized to pay his gambling debts and the tenants were evicted.<sup>289</sup> Trevor West recounts how William Thompson (1785-1833), “one of the

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<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> William Maxwell, *Lecture on Wholesale Co-operation: A Necessity*. (Manchester: Central Co-operative Board, “Presented at Leeds on 4 February 1888.”), 1.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>289</sup> I am indebted to the Clare County Library's history of the Ralahine Commune, which is to be found at <http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/history/ralahine.htm>.

great co-operative thinkers,” died before he was able to found a similar commune.<sup>290</sup> As a result, Plunkett's foundation of the Belfast Co-operative Society in 1889 marks the official birth of the Irish co-operative movement;<sup>291</sup> “There were in Ireland no precedents to guide us and no examples to follow,” Plunkett recalls, “but the co-operative movement in England appeared to furnish most of the principles involved and a perfect machinery for their application.”<sup>292</sup> The co-operative store enabled farmers to minimise the amount of money lost to middle-men and to maximise their own profits by combining both effort and capital. Plunkett explains the financial rationale of co-operation in *Ireland in the New Century* (1904):

[Farmers] must combine [. . .] to buy their agricultural requirements at the cheapest rate and of the best quality in order to produce more efficiently and more economically; they must combine to avail themselves of improved appliances beyond the reach of individual producers, [. . .]; or in ordinary farm operations, to secure the use of the latest agricultural machinery and the most suitable pure-bred stock; they must combine --- not to abolish middle profits in distribution, whether those of the carrying companies or those of the dealers in agricultural produce -- but to keep those profits within reasonable limits, and to collect in bulk and regularise consignments so that they could be carried and marketed at a moderate cost; they must combine [. . .] for the purpose of creating, by mutual support, the credit required to bring in the fresh working capital which each new development of their industry would demand and justify. In short, whenever and wherever the individuals in a farming community could be brought to see that they might advantageously substitute associated for isolated production or distribution, they must be taught to form themselves into associations in order to reap the anticipated advantages.<sup>293</sup>

As is evident, Plunkett's vision was greater than co-operative stores, extending beyond marketing to the level of production. Plunkett was also convinced that co-operation had to go beyond the retailing of goods to the improvement of the agricultural industry as a whole: “I have often regretted,” Plunkett wrote in 1921, “that the

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid. 20.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid. West remarks, however, that prior to this co-operative venture, Plunkett had tried to encourage co-operativism in Ireland. For example, in 1885, Plunkett attempted to organise Irish graziers, urging them to adopt modern techniques of preservation, especially refrigeration, as a means to increase their profits by exporting butchered meat instead of stock. West recounts that the attempt failed, being impeded by the both objections of “butchers and various jobbers” and the “apathy [...] of cattlemen.” (21).

<sup>292</sup> Plunkett, *Ireland*, 184.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid. 181-82.

Rochdale pioneers continued to divide up a chest of tea instead of killing and curing a co-operative pig.”<sup>294</sup> To this end, Plunkett began to promote the adoption of modern techniques in agriculture, and to help farmers implement these techniques. Some co-ordinating body was required, and so on 28 April 1894, Horace Plunkett founded the Irish Agricultural Organization Society (IAOS), which he declared at its founding was to be “strictly economic, and no political or sectarian ends shall be promoted by word or deed.”<sup>295</sup> The IAOS was intended to promote the growth of co-operative organization in other branches of agriculture and to disseminate information about new agricultural techniques.

In his first address to the IAOS, Plunkett argued for the creation of a governmental department of agriculture,<sup>296</sup> whose role it would be to co-ordinate agricultural activity in Ireland. According to Trevor West, the Irish government of the time distributed “bits and pieces” of administrative responsibilities to government offices in “a seemingly haphazard fashion.”<sup>297</sup> Given the rapid growth of the co-operative movement, a dedicated agricultural organization was essential. Plunkett, then an MP for South Dublin, used his position to lobby the government for the creation of such an institution. Plunkett realised it would be difficult to persuade the Irish government, split by Nationalist and Unionist loyalties and obsessed with the idea of Home Rule, to agree to something that was helpful to neither political position, nor calculated to solve the issue of Home Rule. Plunkett's agricultural ideas made him unpopular with both Unionists and Nationalists; the Unionists felt Plunkett's forays in social reform were too radical, while the Nationalists believed his

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<sup>294</sup> Horace Plunkett, *Oxford and the Rural Problem* (Oxford: OUP, 1921), 9.

<sup>295</sup> Quoted, [www.iaws.com](http://www.iaws.com)

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>297</sup> West, 60.

actions diverted attention away from the strict politics of independence.<sup>298</sup> Gerald Heard also argues that Plunkett could “never wholly believe in either side” and that his adoption of a “cross-bench position” exposed him to “to the maximum of hostile pressure.”<sup>299</sup> Two longstanding supporters of the co-operativist movement, Lionel Smith-Gordon and Cruise O'Brien, recount why both parties “attacked” Plunkett's efforts:

To the Unionist politician it seemed a movement of suspicious, liberalising character; to the Nationalists it appeared a specious attempt to undermine by economic prosperity the national discontent with alien government.<sup>300</sup>

However, Plunkett insisted that the cause of agricultural improvement was a fundamental issue, one which had a more immediate impact on the lives of the Irish population than political status. The adoption of a practical programme of agricultural and social sufficiency was a prior necessity to political movements. “We are on the eve of the creation of a peasant proprietary,” Plunkett wrote in 1904,

involving the rehabilitation of rural life, and one essential condition of the successful inauguration of the new agrarian order is the elimination of anything approaching to sectarian bitterness in communities which will require every advantage derivable from joint deliberation and common effort to enable them to hold their own against foreign competition.<sup>301</sup>

West asserts that Plunkett believed the solution of the “economic problem” in Ireland would put the Irish people “in a position to solve their political problems.”<sup>302</sup> As he wrote in 1904,

The people have an extraordinary belief in political remedies for economic ills; their political leaders, who are not as a rule themselves actively engaged in business life, tell the people, pointing to ruined mills and unused water power, that the country once had diversified industries, and that if they were

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<sup>298</sup> Ibid. 40.

<sup>299</sup> Gerald Heard, “Epilogue,” *Margaret Digby, Horace Plunkett: An Anglo-American Irishman*. Oxford (Blackwells, 1949), 297.

<sup>300</sup> Lionel Smith-Gordon and Cruise O'Brien, *Co-operation in Ireland* (Manchester, Co-operative Union Ltd., 1921), 14.

<sup>301</sup> Plunkett, *Ireland*, 100.

<sup>302</sup> West, 135.

allowed to apply their panacea, Ireland would quickly rebuild her industrial life.<sup>303</sup>

Politicians who argued for political independence without first affecting a comprehensive scheme to revitalise the social, industrial and economic order played “only a dilettante part in politics;”<sup>304</sup> “Can it be,” Plunkett asks, “that to the Irish mind politics are, what Bulwer Lytton declared love to be, 'the business of the idle, and the idleness of the busy'?”<sup>305</sup> As though to answer his own question, Plunkett made an appeal in a letter to the *Irish Press* of 27 August 1895, “under the quite sincere, if somewhat grandiloquent, title, “A proposal affecting the general welfare of Ireland,”<sup>306</sup> to parliamentarians who believed that party differences could be temporarily put aside in order to effect an improvement of the social and economic state of agriculturists. “Finding ourselves still opposed upon the main question” of Irish Home Rule, Plunkett writes,

but all anxious to promote the welfare of the country, [...] it would appear [...] to be alike good patriotism and good policy to work for the material and social advancement of the people. Why then, it was asked, should any Irishman hesitate to enter at once upon that united action between men of both parties which alone, under existing conditions, could enable either party to do any real and lasting good to the country?<sup>307</sup>

The letter goes on to advocate “sinking our party differences for our country's good, and leaving our respective policies for the justification of time”<sup>308</sup> to work in unison to improve Irish infrastructure. The result was the founding of a committee (“a committee sitting in the Parliamentary recess, whence it came to be known as the Recess Committee”<sup>309</sup>) whose task it was to investigate the feasibility of a department of agriculture. Embodying Plunkett's pragmatism, the Recess Committee was open to

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<sup>303</sup> Plunkett, *Ireland*, 34.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.* 34.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.* 34.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.* 214.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.* 214-15.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.* 215.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.* 215.

“any Irishmen whose capacity, knowledge, or experience might be of service to the Committee, irrespective of the political party or religious persuasion to which they might belong.” The united effort of the committee resulted in the creation of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (DATI) in 1899. Although it might appear that Plunkett had made a great step forward in resolving the bipartisan schism of Irish politics, his achievement would result in his own removal from parliament. Enraged by Plunkett's appointing Nationalist T. P. Gill as Secretary of the DATI, the Unionist party put forth another candidate alongside him, which split the vote and cost him his seat on 10 October 1900.<sup>310</sup> However, in his capacity of Vice-President of the newly-formed DATI, Plunkett remained active in the government in a ministerial capacity.<sup>311</sup> Freed from his parliamentary responsibility, Plunkett was free to guide the DATI, which Trevor West claims would “put the benefits of modern science at the disposal of the Irish farmer.”<sup>312</sup> The DATI effectively overhauled the agricultural scene of Ireland. For example, under Plunkett's guidance, a statistics and information bureau was formed, which offered the first accurate picture of Irish agricultural resources; a system of co-operative credit was established for the benefit of farmers; schooling was made more practical, and also made to reflect the needs of the community in which it was offered; existing agricultural colleges were expanded, and roaming instructors saw to the education of farmers; and finally, an experimental farm was begun, on which new techniques were pioneered.<sup>313</sup>

Plunkett's co-operative venture remained committed to improving the economic conditions of rural Ireland after 1900. However, Plunkett also added a highly social dimension to the movement. Plunkett's 1904 manifesto, *Ireland in the*

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<sup>310</sup> IAWS Website. Trevor West states that the election was won by Mooney, the Nationalist candidate (West, 57).

<sup>311</sup> West, 58.

<sup>312</sup> West, 61.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid. 61-62.

*New Century*, both summarises the vast material improvements and scientific advances made possible by co-operative organization and considers how such organization would prove to be an invaluable model for social interaction in the future. The success of co-operative economic organization was entirely due to our basically gregarious human nature. The intensity of self-interest and self-preservation obscured this nature, but the co-operative movement demonstrated that those seemingly utopian visions of human brotherhood could be realised if the proper social and economic model were established. Plunkett's thoughts on the human instinct for society, the nature of human relationships and the structure of a community best suited to our relationships are remarkably similar to the ideas Gerald Heard would later promulgate in his inter-war trilogy, and ultimately incorporate into his pacifist philosophy.

The most striking similarity between the ideas of Heard and Plunkett is their common conception of a social instinct inherited from our tribal ancestors. Gerald Heard argued in *The Ascent of Man* (1929) that our earliest ancestors were united in “co-consciousness;” that is, they were not self-aware, but aware only of their place within a community. As our knowledge and control of the world increased, so too did our awareness of our individuality, and our psyche evolved naturally from co-consciousness to self-consciousness. The growth of self-conscious individualism slowly displaced our almost animal basis for community into the subconscious, where it resided as a social instinct. Heard argued that the next step in our psychic evolution was “superconsciousness,” a state in which we would be simultaneously self-aware and aware of the “supra-individual” psychological unity we all share. The underlying psychological unity afforded by our psychic ancestry was to be a means of reviving human community. Plunkett's vision of the Irish race is remarkably similar. In *Ireland*

*in the New Century*, Plunkett describes the Irish mind as being “dominated, more or less unconsciously, by the associations and common interests of the primitive clan.” He asserts that as the Irish were evolving out of their “nomad pastoral stage,”<sup>314</sup> they were subject to invasions which arrested their psychological and social development. As Plunkett writes, “a healthy evolution was constantly thwarted by the clash of two peoples and two civilisations,” and so “[t]he Irish people have never had the opportunity of developing that strong and salutary individualism” enjoyed by the English.<sup>315</sup> The problem of the arrested evolution of the Irish was further complicated by the imposition of English law; “Before the English could impose upon Ireland their own political organisation,” Plunkett writes, “it was obviously necessary that the very antithesis of that organisation, the clan system, should be abolished.”<sup>316</sup> The English system was antithetical to the Irish because of its Individualism. Plunkett remarks that the “large scale, self-supporting, self-protecting”<sup>317</sup> plantations of the English were an entirely foreign concept to the Irish. Lionel Smith-Gordon and Cruise O'Brien, in *Co-Operation in Ireland*, explain briefly that “[i]n the early days of Irish history, the land had been the common possession of the clansmen and was administered under the ancient Brehon laws.”<sup>318</sup> Brehon law, originating from a time when the individual was inseparable from his or her community, shows no conception of the authority of the state and the autonomy of the individual. Despite the efforts of the British to eradicate the clan system physically, Plunkett argues that the Irish psyche was still predisposed to co-conscious unity, affected by “qualities inherited from a primitive social state in which the individual was nothing and the community everything.”<sup>319</sup> The co-operative

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<sup>314</sup> Ibid. 57.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid. 75.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid. 76.

<sup>318</sup> Smith-Gordon and O'Brien, 9.

<sup>319</sup> Plunkett, *Ireland*, 81.

movement therefore had only to appeal to the “inherited clannishness”<sup>320</sup> of all individuals and consciously manipulate their common social instinct into a social pattern. Plunkett's conception of a collective subconscious, and of primitive social urges that could be brought to the level of consciousness and acted upon, prefigured Heard's notion of “superconsciousness,” a state of mind in which our conscious and sub-conscious minds are in communication, allowing for the conscious realisation of our subconscious needs. While Heard believed that a psychological “praxis” was necessary to elevate us to “superconsciousness,” Plunkett's work ethic, and the communal organization it required, accomplished comparable results.

Communal living was a common feature of the social schemes of Plunkett and Heard. For Plunkett, the co-operative movement was not intended to improve the economic situation of farmers only, but to lead a large-scale reorganization of rural Ireland into a vital, self-supporting community with a culture and character all its own; as Plunkett himself wrote, the co-operative movement was to have “the two-fold effect of brightening rural life and increasing the attachment of the members to their society.”<sup>321</sup> Just as James Wilder believed that the “pecuniary advantages” of co-operation were secondary to the moral betterment it encourages, so too did Plunkett argue that the “physical environment and comfort of an orderly home” paled before the needs of our larger social instincts: “What the Irishman is really attached to in Ireland is not a home,” he argues, “but a social order.”<sup>322</sup> Accordingly, his aim was to improve both material and social conditions simultaneously, as the methods of co-operative association necessarily create a spirit of interdependence which finds its social correlative in close community. Rupert Metcalf, an exponent of the co-operative movement writing in the 1930s, describes Plunkett's vision of “rural

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid. 72.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid. 199.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid. 54.

civilization”<sup>323</sup> as agricultural socialism. Metcalf quotes Plunkett's assertion in his book *The Rural Life Problem of the United States* (1910) that an agricultural commune “exhibits the feelings of human solidarity in its most extreme manifestations.”<sup>324</sup> Solidarity is most evident in communal organization because such organization makes individual welfare inseparable from communal welfare. As all constituents depend on one another, Metcalf insists, communal organization is the easiest means to generate “the conditions where social instincts germinate best.”<sup>325</sup> The world of agriculture provided a perfect medium for an experiment in social organization because of a common interest which united them. The nature of agricultural work is such that “everyone employed on a farm must know something of all the operations connected with it” whereas in an urban setting one can be isolated in one's particular specialty; “the bricklayer cannot do the carpenter's work,” argues Metcalf, “nor the plumber the electricians.”<sup>326</sup> As Metcalf writes, “the basis of Horace Plunkett's commune was this voluntary communism of effort rather than a joint ownership of land.”<sup>327</sup> Plunkett argued that the land ownership in Ireland had been “largely based on the tribal system of open fields and common tillage”<sup>328</sup> prior to conquest by the English. The English control of land “ignored, though it could not destroy, the old feeling of communistic ownership.”<sup>329</sup> Plunkett's assumption was that it was almost natural for the Irish to revert to their prehistoric communism may seem naive, but his conviction that the wide-reaching benefits of co-operation would conquer individual greed was unshakable.

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<sup>323</sup> Metcalf, 41.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.* 42.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.* 41.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>328</sup> Plunkett, *Ireland*, 21.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*

This aspect of combined effort is central to Heard's philosophy of communal life. He asserted in *The Ascent of Humanity* that individuals united in a common cause found socialization quite natural; "Individuals," he writes, "[...] grow by fusion," and a common cause serves "to dominate them, to break down their isolation, to confer new powers, and finally to deliver them into a new unity as real as their former separation."<sup>330</sup> Further, as Metcalf argues, the commune would enable each individual to feel most keenly their social attachments; the commune, while being "large enough to allow free play to the various interests of human life," was still a society "not so large as to become an abstraction to the imagination."<sup>331</sup> The largest difference Metcalf observes between rural and urban community is the immediacy of social bonds. "In such communes," Metcalf writes, "[Plunkett] believed social feeling and character would assume its most binding and powerful character." Again, we are confronted with Heard's belief that small societies "in which alone the individual can be solved"<sup>332</sup> were the basis for a root and branch social reconstruction. These ideas will take on greater significance in the following chapters, but it is worth noting here that what Heard set forth in his philosophy was not simply fine sounding speech, but something he had witnessed, experienced and helped to create with Plunkett and the IAOS.

Heard, however, was not solely interested in the best social organisation, but moreover that elusive "psychological backing for the economic associations in which the world will have to be organized."<sup>333</sup> The only viable economic structure of Heard's model society would be essentially communist, for as he argues, community is to be regarded as an "unlimited liability company." Plunkett's attempts to organise

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<sup>330</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 12.

<sup>331</sup> Metcalf, 41.

<sup>332</sup> Heard, "Religion", 198.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

rural credit unions, which, quite literally, made agricultural co-operatives into unlimited liability companies. The IAOS also undertook to create credit unions, borrowing as their model the system pioneered by Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen (1818-1888) in Germany. After an agricultural crisis in 1846, Raiffeisen used his own capital to provide ruined farmers with credit to aid their recovery. Plunkett, observing that farmers were saddled with debts to the local moneylenders, began a system of credit in order to generate capital for the agricultural co-operative. Credit unions, Plunkett writes, “perform the apparent miracle of giving solvency to a community composed almost entirely of insolvent individuals.”<sup>334</sup> A loan, based on the combined solvency of its members, who have “no subscribed capital,” the credit union would decide democratically to provide loans “for a productive purpose only;”<sup>335</sup> that is, the applicant had to demonstrate that a loan would accomplish something for the whole organization. The success of the individual in turn decides the success of the group, for “every member is liable for the entire debts of the association.”<sup>336</sup> Plunkett believed that by this method “the whole community is taught the difference between borrowing to spend and borrowing to make.”<sup>337</sup> This system of credit was not charity or welfare, but rewarded gumption and promoted hard-work, thereby adding to the farmer's sense of self-sufficiency. “Horace Plunkett's method was not to help the farmers financially,” Metcalf writes; instead, he “showed them how they might organize cooperatively, and left them to do the rest themselves.”<sup>338</sup> Again, one might argue that Plunkett was a naive idealist for entrusting so much financial responsibility to farmers without financial expertise and a history of financial ruin. However,

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<sup>334</sup> Plunkett, *Ireland*, 195.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.* 196.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.* 195.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.* 198.

<sup>338</sup> Metcalf, 28.

Plunkett asserts in *Ireland in the New Century* that such a programme is in fact “perfectly safe;”

Raiffeisen held, and our experience in Ireland has fully confirmed his opinion, that in the poorest communities there is a perfectly safe basis of security in the honesty and industry of its members. [ ... ] Social influences seem quite sufficient to secure obedience to the association's laws.<sup>339</sup>

Plunkett believed his co-operative credit system engendered a communal spirit, in addition to cultivating self-sufficiency and industry, which would ensure its smooth and fair operation. Metcalf similarly believed that members of a community “would feel a pride in its material expansion”<sup>340</sup> that would prevent any fraud. The “accumulated profits” of each community were deposited into a “communal fund” to be re-invested in developing the “social and cultural life of the village.”<sup>341</sup> The co-operative combination of labour and credit Plunkett designed provided a pragmatic framework for the revitalization of Ireland.

Both in spirit and deed, Plunkett's movement greatly resembles Heard's vision of human society. Fundamental to their philosophies was the importance of understanding our “co-conscious,” or clannish, tribal associations as a common basis for socialization which makes all other differences irrelevant. Furthermore, Heard's belief in the necessity of social “reconstruction” beginning at the level of the small commune wherein each member can experience a “continual awareness and adjustment of individual, social, and national relationships”<sup>342</sup> is prefigured in Plunkett's co-operative ideal.

In the surviving correspondence between the two, there is a nine-year gap after the letters pertaining to the bombing of Kiltreagh in 1923, and after this, only one letter from 1931, in which Heard tries to interest Plunkett in the ideas he advances in *The Ascent of Humanity* (1929); Heard mentions that “Two v. able men - E.M. Forster

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<sup>339</sup> Plunkett, *Ireland*, 196.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.* 41.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.* It is also worth noting the Plunkett was a strong supporter of the Gaelic Revival in Ireland, a movement committed to advancing Irish art and literature. Plunkett felt that the aims of co-operation were not unlike those of the Gaelic Revival, arguing that improving conditions “in the industrial sphere” was “very much the same work as that which the Gaelic movement attempts in the intellectual sphere---the rehabilitation of Ireland from within.” (*Ireland* 148-49). The most notable figures of the Gaelic Revival were Lady Gregory, W. B. Yeats and George W. Russell (AE), who in fact edited the official journal of the co-operative movement, *The Irish Homestead* from its inception in 1870 until its conversion into *The Irish Statesman* in 1924.

<sup>342</sup> Heard, “Notes,” 21 March 1936: 409.

the novelist & a psychologist<sup>343</sup> -” had just read it. This last surviving letter is fascinating, as Heard uses Plunkett as a sounding board for his idea of “superconsciousness.” Heard discusses the difference between a life of selfish isolation and a life of community service in terms of “self-regarding impulses” and “other-regarding impulses.”<sup>344</sup> He suggests that self-regard is itself a form of death because it denies what modern psychology affirms, that our social relations are a conscious extension of our subconscious psychological unity. “There is undoubtedly a connection between our minds,” Heard writes; “below the level of consciousness our individual minds are in touch with each other.”<sup>345</sup> If our need for community is inescapable, Heard argued, it is foolish to hide behind selfish individualism. As Heard writes, “life is to follow the ‘other-regarding impulses’ + death to follow the ‘self regarding impulses.’”<sup>346</sup> Heard believed that excessive individualism resulted in a “triad” of “greed, malice and fear” which made socialization impossible. However, Heard also argues that this “self-regarding triad” could be “neutralized by the ‘other regarding triad,’” consisting of “generosity and creativeness, compassion instead of malice + understanding.”<sup>347</sup>

After weighing the evidence of modern psychology, Heard's conclusion looks like a modern redressing of co-operativism:

Whenever I sit down and work out the calculation I get the result. There is only the possible life of “other regarding” purpose[.] that life leads outside this life, and points to a solution larger than the single human career.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> W. J. H. Sprott, a graduate of King's College, Cambridge, and Professor of Psychology at the University of Nottingham. Heard and Sprott kept up a lively correspondence throughout the 1920, the remains of which may be found in the King's College archive.

<sup>344</sup> Gerald Heard, letter to Horace Plunkett 21 December 1931, HEA.22.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Gerald Heard, letter to Horace Plunkett 21 December 1931, HEA.22.

These ideas would not have been unfamiliar to Plunkett, who expressed similar beliefs in a sustaining social instincts that originated with Ireland's prehistoric clans. As well, Plunkett was aware that Heard was “immersed in psychical research”<sup>349</sup> prior to hiring him; “Is it, I wonder,” Plunkett muses in his diary, “the best he can do.”<sup>350</sup> It is also conceivable that Plunkett, who read Heard's first book *Narcissus: An Anatomy of Clothes* (1924) and described it as “a brilliant book,”<sup>351</sup> had read *The Ascent of Humanity*. What is certain, however, is that the tone of the letter is meant to give Plunkett hope. Heard writes as though Plunkett were greatly disheartened, trying to convince him of the value of his life. For example, Heard compares Plunkett with his brother Lord Dunsany:

The influences you have had by [...] your example, the sight of such character as Dunsany who has lacked the power to follow you, there -facts - one positive and the other negative must reaffirm the belief that your life points somewhere + the lives that don't follow that effort don't lead anywhere.<sup>352</sup>

This reassuring tone might have much to do with Plunkett's sense of his approaching death; in the postscript to this letter, Heard writes to confirm details of his will. However, there is no doubting that Heard is trying to convince Plunkett that our psychic unity makes co-operation possible, rather than the lure of material gain. As Heard writes,

Such great effort and such consistent advance can't be a `biological aberration' wh: if materialism has been true, it would have been. At the same time the theory isn't simply “dope.” an ad hoc fancy rigged up to save us from the source of tragedy should such nobility have proved futile. It isn't based on nobility but on these newly emerged strange facts that conflict with materialism.<sup>353</sup>

The “strange facts” to which Heard refers are the details of our deep-seated psychological need for community, and the larger psychic unity such community with

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<sup>349</sup> PD, 6 March 1919.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

<sup>351</sup> PD, 29 November 1924.

<sup>352</sup> Gerald Heard, letter to Horace Plunkett 21 December 1931, HEA.22.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

ones fellows can afford. Heard looked to science as both a means of better understanding these “strange facts,” but also because he felt there was something of social benefit (not simply material) in scientific study. Heard writes “Where I see a glimmer - though its v. faint I am quite sure it’s real - is in the growing unmaterialism of science.”<sup>354</sup> Heard felt science had for so long been harnessed to ‘progress’ and applied largely to providing material benefits. However, the further science developed into the realm of the ‘unmaterial,’ making discoveries whose significance could not immediately be applied, it increasingly demonstrated the interconnectedness of all things, and demanded a facility of mind Heard felt was analogous to an impending psychic ‘evolution’. This can be considered a foreshadowing of Heard's fascination with science which would culminate in his role as a science journalist for the B.B.C., but also an early indication of his growing belief that purely material improvements were insufficient to a revitalisation of society.

However, the letter also serves to suggest Heard's admiration of, if not indebtedness to, Plunkett. As Heard tells Plunkett, “it is a life like yours that makes onlookers like me continually to try and search for its reason.”<sup>355</sup> This statement is interesting for two reasons. First, it shows that Heard considered himself to be an ‘onlooker’ to the realm of action which Plunkett clearly inhabited. Plunkett had a position of authority as a landed aristocrat, and his embrace of co-operativism can be seen as a political extension of *noblesse oblige*; in seeking to reform Irish agriculture along co-operative means, Plunkett could be said to have merely fulfilling a role which in another time would have been that of an enlightened landowner, ‘doing well by doing good’ like Coke of Norfolk. By comparison, Heard was, in Virginia Woolf’s

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<sup>354</sup> Gerald Heard, letter to Horace Plunkett 21 December 1931, HEA.22.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

phrase, “essentially a nobody,”<sup>356</sup> attached to the realm of action only by virtue of his employment as Plunkett’s secretary. He was, however, sufficiently inspired by Plunkett’s life to feel he should, in his own way, contribute to a new vision of society by his searching for an unmaterial backing for it. Heard, as we will see, came not only to develop a psychological ‘cosmology’ for a new society, but also a social model around it, one which bears evident traces of Plunkett’s influence. But as an onlooker and a ‘nobody’, Heard first had to construct for himself a public role and profile from which to advance his views. As we will see in the following chapter, he would establish his public profile in becoming a popular broadcaster at the B.B.C.

As an agriculturist and statesman, Horace Plunkett did much to shape Ireland in the early twentieth century. His belief in human solidarity enabled him to see the need for co-operative organization, while his pragmatism ensured that a practicable social and economic programme could be developed to support his vision. As to his influence on Heard, the similarities between their philosophies cannot be overlooked. Plunkett's vision of agricultural community is strikingly similar in spirit to the pacifist communes Heard envisioned. Both Heard and Plunkett believed that there were deep-rooted social instincts to which a social reformer could appeal. And most importantly, both believed that the efforts of small, committed groups would affect wide-spread social change by demonstrating the viability and goodness of such a system. While the specific details of the relationship may be somewhat sparse, the similarity of their ideas is suggestive of a keen mental association which undoubtedly benefited the thoughts and plans of both individuals.

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<sup>356</sup> Virginia Woolf, diary entry of 1 February 1932, *Diary*, Vol. IV 68.

### Chapter III

#### “The Greatest of All Great Broadcasters:” Gerald Heard and the B.B.C.

If my wife and I were told we should only have one item a week on the wireless, we should, without hesitation, choose a talk by Gerald Heard. He is, in our view, the greatest of all great broadcasters.

-Letter from “M & I. I. W.” to  
‘What the Other Listener Thinks,’  
(the letters page of *The Radio Times*)  
5 May 1933 vol. 39 no. 501, 278.

And then the B.B.C. came along and said here’s ten guineas go out on the 24<sup>th</sup> at 9 p.m. & open debate “Prophecy is dangerous” – which with the money & my nerves & the aptness of it all well I don’t know quite whether to laugh or cry, or ask you to listen....

-Letter from Gerald Heard to W. J. H. Sprott  
(then Professor of Psychology at Nottingham University),  
18 February 1928.<sup>357</sup>

By 1930, Heard had published two books and was slowly distinguishing himself as a journalist, thinker and writer. His literary output would increase throughout the 1930s and with it his reputation and prominence. But it was Heard’s role as a populariser of specialist knowledge for the B.B.C. that created an audience for his written works, and established him as a public intellectual, a figure of some authority over thought and action. Initially employed on a casual basis, Heard was called upon as required to report on special developments in the world of science<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Heard’s first associations with the B.B.C. are difficult to discern. His letter to Sprott would seem to refer to his first broadcast; Sidney A. Mosley’s *Who’s Who in Broadcasting* (1933) confirms this, mentioning that Heard’s maiden broadcast was a debate entitled “Prophecy is a Dangerous Thing” (73), but unfortunately he offers no more information about the date of the broadcast, and the earliest surviving microfiche tape of Heard’s broadcasts (B.B.C. Written Archive Centre, Tape 203) is entitled “1932,” a fifteen-minute retrospective on the past year originally broadcast on 2 January 1933 at 7.10 p.m. Heard’s surviving personnel file begins with a short internal memo of 27 September 1932 to Joe Ackerly, then an assistant to the Talks Department, regarding his notes for a forthcoming broadcast (“Will you get one of your people to look these through and let me have comments,” Heard writes) but it is impossible to say which one.

<sup>358</sup> For example, one can see from Heard’s personnel file at the B.B.C. W.A.C. that the B.B.C. regularly called upon him to provide coverage of the annual exhibition of the Physical Society, a display of modern science and technology. However, by 1936 Heard found himself replaced; in a letter of 25 December 1935, J. M. Rose-Troup (then Director of Talks, having succeeded Charles Siepmann in 1935) writes to Heard asking him to cover the Physical Society Exhibition, saying it is “of considerable

and often recruited for unscripted debates<sup>359</sup> or to address general subject as necessary.<sup>360</sup> Heard also delivered “schools broadcasts,” a series of programmes intended for schools across England as a supplement to traditional education which Asa Briggs described as being both “supremely practical in its approach and in its organisation” and “the envy of educationalists in every other country.”<sup>361</sup>

However, the most significant role Heard played at the B.B.C. began in 1930, when he became the long-standing host of a fortnightly scientific programme entitled

general interest” and “extremely popular with anyone who has a general interest in science.” On 2 January 1936, Rose-Troup replies to a letter of Heard’s of 25 December (missing or destroyed) to say that “I have talked to the Chief News Editor about the possibility of including in the news a talk by you about the Physical Society’s Exhibition, but I gather he already had arrangements of his own in train. Apart from the News, I am afraid there is no opportunity to deal with the subject in the main Talks program for which I am sorry.” On 13 January 1936, however, it appears Heard managed to convince Rose-Troup that it was worth five minutes worth of air time; a Talks Fixture from 13 January shows Heard was paid seven guineas for a brief report on the annual exhibition on a programme entitled “Topics in the Air.”

<sup>359</sup> As an example, on 2 August 1935, broadcaster Mary Adams wrote to Heard inviting him to participate in an unrehearsed debate on the motion ‘That life a hundred years ago is preferable to a hundred years hence;’ the 45-minute debate was broadcast on 5 October 1935, and Heard received 20 guineas for his time. The response to the broadcast was exceedingly positive; Adams wrote to Heard on 7 October, “Just a quick note to let you know how very brilliant we thought you were last Saturday. Praise pours in on all sides, and I just wanted to turn it towards you.”

<sup>360</sup> On 16 May 1935, Heard was paid five guineas to participate in a discussion on the programme “At Home Today,” delivering a six hundred word paper, “What the Report of the National Physical Laboratory Means to the Housewife.” (B.B.C. W.A.C.)

<sup>361</sup> Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: The Birth of Broadcasting*. Vol. 1 (Oxford: OUP, 1965), 176. There is evidence in the archives of the B.B.C. which proves Heard made at least four such broadcasts. In a letter of 9 November 1934, Lloyd Williams, the Secretary of Schools Broadcasts wrote to Heard, asking if he wouldn’t “give a broadcast talk to schools on the recent archaeological research on Tuesday next, November 13<sup>th</sup>, from 3.35 – 3.55 p.m.” Heard replies on the same day, writing “I beg to say that I am prepared to give the Broadcast as you suggest.” The broadcast was generally well received; in a letter of 20 November 1934, Williams writes to Heard that “I have had a couple of postcards from listening schools” regarding his “admirable talk last Tuesday.” “One of them,” writes Williams, “Newton Abbot Secondary School, says – ‘a really advanced and informative talk. Very much appreciated.’ The other, Charles Edward Brooke School for Girls, Camberwell, says ‘very interesting. Excellent summary.’ However, there was one exception; “I have had another report from a school,” writes Williams again on 26 November 1934, “from Sydenham County Secondary School (Girls) which says that it was a repetition of history which the mistress had already taught them! If this is true we can only rejoice that admirable schools do exist after all.” The next mention of a schools broadcasts in Heard’s file are in a letter of 5 August 1936, the Schools Broadcast Department asks Heard to make another broadcast to Sixth Formers for the fee of twelve guineas, since “we recollect that for your series of talks on the Claims of Science broadcast in the August term of 1931 and the Spring and Summer terms of 1932 you received a fee of 10 guineas for this single talk to Sixth Formers.” No contracts or other references exist with regard to the school broadcasts of 1931 or 1932. However, on 9 August 1936, Heard replies that he will accept the contract and proposes the topic “On Knowing Oneself.” The broadcast was made on 2 October 1936. Williams again follows up after the broadcast, writing on 16 October that “[o]n the whole, reports from the schools have been favourable, although, of course, they found the subject pretty difficult.” There appear to be no surviving transcripts of these broadcasts.

“Research and Discovery” (later called “This Surprising World” and finally “Science in the Making”), dedicated to the presentation of specialised scientific discoveries to a non-specialist audience.<sup>362</sup> This was not a new idea; in the third chapter of his DPhil thesis, *Physics and the Literary Community, 1905-1939* (1994), Michael Whitworth offers an enlightening commentary on the general incomprehensibility of scientific works to a “middlebrow”<sup>363</sup> audience, and in particular the B.B.C’s efforts to bring scientific discovery to the fore. Whitworth cites a 1929 editorial in *The Listener*, entitled “Broadcasting and Popular Science.” which outlines the perceived need for such broadcasts and the public which they would find: “It remarked that while the ‘average man’ might not go far to learn the latest in history, literature or theology, a number of people try to keep abreast of the latest developments in science.”<sup>364</sup> To accomplish this, the B.B.C. needed scientists with a willingness and an ability to convey their ideas in terms a general public could understand; among the first and most notable to offer such talks, beginning in 1929, were Oliver Lodge, William Bragg and Ernest Rutherford. But not all scientists were natural broadcasters. What was required was a suitably informed generaliser who could mediate between both parties, the sort of individual Ronald Knox dismissed as knowing “no more than the

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<sup>362</sup> The programme was known by three different names between 1930 and 1935. From its first broadcast on 2 May 1930 (a transcript of which was printed in the B.B.C.’s *Listener* magazine on 7 May), the programme was simply entitled ‘Research and Discovery.’ From 11 July 1930 onward, the programme was known as “This Surprising World.” Heard would later publish a collection of his broadcasts from this series in a book of the same name, *This Surprising World: A Broadcaster Looks at Science* (1932). The series again changed names in 1934, this time to “Science in the Making;” in a letter of 1 August 1934, J. S. A. Salt, then one of four General Assistants to the Director of Talks, Charles Siepmann, writes to ask Heard if “Siepmann has already discussed with you the question of your continuing the series on “Science in the Making” in the autumn, but this is to let you know that we would definitely like you to do so” (B.B.C. Written Archive Centre, personnel file of Gerald Heard). Also in Heard’s personnel file is a surviving Talks Fixture contract (dated 10 August 1934) for 16 fortnightly talks between 17 September and 31 December 1934, to be broadcast between 6.30 and 6.45 p.m., at a salary of 20 guineas per talk. There are, sadly, no other surviving contracts regarding this programme. Heard would also publish a collection of his broadcasts in this series as a book entitled simply *Science in the Making* (1935).

<sup>363</sup> Michael Whitworth, *Physics and the Literary Community, 1905-1939*. Diss. University of Oxford, 1994, 59.

<sup>364</sup> Whitworth, 85.

A.B.C. of philosophy, and perhaps only the B.B.C. of science.”<sup>365</sup> Whitworth quotes an undated memo from Mary Adams to the Director of Talks regarding the “difficulty” of finding speakers “capable of reporting such a wide field,”<sup>366</sup> mentioning, among others, Julian Huxley, J. G. Crowther and J. W. N. Sullivan as examples of speakers whose capabilities allowed them to both understand specialist theories and relate their significance along general lines. J. W. N. Sullivan (1886-1937) was an established scientific journalist and populariser of scientific theories (notably Einstein’s). Beyond his powers of making such theories comprehensible to non-specialists, Sullivan’s journalistic style also added a context and relevance that could be appreciated by an unspecialised audience; Whitworth comments on how Sullivan “gave clear expositions of scientific theories, but also considered their aesthetic aspects and their humanistic implications.”<sup>367</sup> It was in this mould that Heard – regarded by Adams as “the most successful (from a broadcasting point of view)”<sup>368</sup> of the various speakers on science at the B.B.C. – would cast himself as a scientific journalist.

The purpose of Heard’s radio broadcasts between 1930 and 1936 was to both report and explain the significance of current scientific discoveries to an audience of laymen. The title of the first talk in this series, “Humanising Science,” was broadcast on 2 May 1930 and states explicitly the purpose of his broadcasts. (As with the many of his talks, it was printed in the B.B.C.’s magazine, *The Listener*, the following week.) In this broadcast, Heard outlines the rationale behind the B.B.C.’s introducing a scientific programme:

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<sup>365</sup> Ronald Knox, *Broadcast Minds* (London, Sheed & Ward, 1932), 32.

<sup>366</sup> B.B.C. Written Archive Centre, R51/523/1A, qtd in Whitworth, 91.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*

These two considerations - the difficulty of the subject itself and the need for us to map its outline and implications - have led the B.B.C. to try these talks. As you know they are to be a fortnightly review of current discovery. They are an attempt to tell you, in the simplest possible ways, not only what has occurred of immediate interest, but also how the various items bear on the whole scientific advance.<sup>369</sup>

Heard's broadcasts reported the news of numerous scientific discoveries, covering such anthropological events such as the discovery of Peking man<sup>370</sup> and evidence of the Hyskos invasion of Egypt,<sup>371</sup> medical advances such as a greater understanding of our endocrine system,<sup>372</sup> early genetic experiments by Muller upon drosophila flies<sup>373</sup> and experiments in suspended animation<sup>374</sup>, and on such pioneering journeys as Piccard's ascent to the stratosphere by balloon<sup>375</sup> and Beebe's descent to a depth of 1,426 feet.<sup>376</sup>

However, Heard's broadcasts were not restricted to reportage. Rather, they became a means of helping him to develop and promote his own ideas. Heard declared himself "an ordinary layman interested in science" who would bring the remotest discoveries of the scientist into "the average focus."<sup>377</sup> He defined a space between the realm of specialisation and "the range of ordinary interest"<sup>378</sup> and situated himself within it: "That is where I come in, between the specialist and you."<sup>379</sup> In stating his intention to be a generaliser, Heard puts himself forward as a figure of authority in seeking to shape the information he was transmitting. It is instructive to

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<sup>369</sup> Heard, "Humanising," 808.

<sup>370</sup> Gerald Heard, "Research and Discovery," *The Listener* III.71 21 May 1930: 911-12.

<sup>371</sup> Gerald Heard, "This Surprising World," *The Listener* VI.131 15 July 1931: 107-108.

<sup>372</sup> Gerald Heard, "Glands as Masters and Servants," *The Listener* XI.281 30 May 1934: 931-32.

<sup>373</sup> Gerald Heard, "Research and Discovery," *The Listener* III.75 18 June 1930: 1077-78.

<sup>374</sup> Gerald Heard, "This Surprising World," *The Listener* VI.131 15 July 1931: 107-08.

<sup>375</sup> Gerald Heard, "Ten Miles Up!," *The Listener* V.126 10 June 1931: 964-65.

<sup>376</sup> Gerald Heard, "Research and Discovery," *The Listener* IV.91 8 October 1930: 911-12.

<sup>377</sup> Heard, "Humanising," 808. It is perhaps because of Heard's willingness to pontificate on scientific matters without possessing specialised knowledge of the subject that led H. G. Wells to write, in a letter to Richard Acland of 28 February 1942, "Why do you get your science from an impostor like Gerald Heard?" (Wells, *Correspondence*, Vol. 4, letter 2462, 291.)

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*

consider Heard as an embodiment of what Stefan Collini describes as the ‘dimensions’ of a public intellectual. Collini argues that the “characteristic use of the public standing of the intellectual [...] is to licence the expression of a view which in some way goes beyond that available from those with a merely instrumental or expert relation to the matter in question.”<sup>380</sup> He also contends that “the intellectual must, by definition, build out from a relatively secure basis in one specialized activity and simultaneously cultivate the necessarily more contestable perspective of a ‘non-specialist’.”<sup>381</sup> With his books, Heard had established himself, paradoxically, as something of a specialist in condensing and reforming ideas on psychology and evolution. As a broadcaster, Heard would broaden his role as a generaliser and ‘non-specialist’, and would assert that the power to change society resided not in specialism but applied generality.

Discussing various ‘dimensions’ of public intellectualism, Stefan Collini remarks that a generality of scope, or an ability to address generally subjects outside of the field in which he first distinguished himself, is an important requirement:

An individual who writes one acclaimed book or makes one important discovery may attract initial attention, but unless they in some way indicate a capacity and a willingness to use the relevant media to address other questions on other occasions, they will slip from view.<sup>382</sup>

Heard’s willingness to embrace the medium of radio is unquestionable; he believed that it was the only means capable of putting “common sense and impartial information across the frontier.”<sup>383</sup> His broadcasts would also keep him very much in the public realm; as “a voice on the wireless,” writes Ronald Knox, Heard grew to be “so familiar as to have attained an almost avuncular status.”<sup>384</sup> Three points worth

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<sup>380</sup> Collini, *Absent Minds*, 56.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.* 57.

<sup>382</sup> Collini, *Absent Minds*, 56.

<sup>383</sup> Sidney A. Mosley, *Who’s Who in Broadcasting* (London: Pitman and Sons, 1933), 74.

<sup>384</sup> Knox, *Broadcast Minds*, 155.

consideration are the degree to which Heard, and indeed the information he was putting across, was ‘impartial’; how one who purported to be a generalist came to be regarded as a cultural ‘avuncular’ figure; and what power Heard exerted in this new found role as a public figure.

Had Heard been content with simple reportage, one could make a case for the impartiality of his broadcasts. However, in a 1936 article in *Time and Tide*, Heard writes about the need to shape a ‘general’ public to whom he could present his ideas. Heard considered that while the majority “want to have opinions, they do not, most of the time, know exactly what these opinions are to be about.”<sup>385</sup> He concludes that there is therefore “a public opinion which wants not merely to be informed, but, to go deeper, to be formed [...] Lines must be drawn for public opinion.”<sup>386</sup> Heard, as a journalist, believed he had a great responsibility to bring about social change, writing in 1935 that “constructive cases must be moulded in which democracy can cast itself. This is the essential task of informed journalism today.”<sup>387</sup> Writing about radio and its potential for education, R. S. Lambert asserts that “the B.B.C. has an instrument of unparalleled range and power for reaching the mass of the people.”<sup>388</sup> Alison Falby similarly notes in the evolving ethos of the B.B.C. an attempt to seize “the democratic impulse” which presented itself owing to the “the universal availability of radio.”<sup>389</sup> Heard considered that there were numerous “agencies” - generalist publications and journals, for example - which “try to give people of this sort - strong willed but ill informed - the information they may pass on as theirs [...]”<sup>390</sup> but none as immediate

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<sup>385</sup> Gerald Heard, review, *Time and Tide* XVII.5 1 February 1936: 154.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>387</sup> Gerald Heard, “Men and Books,” rev. of *Man the Unknown*, by Dr. Alexis Carrel *Time and Tide* XVII.5 1 February 1936: 154.

<sup>388</sup> R. S. Lambert, “Broadcasting This Winter,” *Highway*, October 1927.

<sup>389</sup> Falby, *Between the Pigeonholes*, 26.

<sup>390</sup> Gerald Heard, “Men and Books,” rev. of *Man the Unknown*, by Dr. Alexis Carrel *Time and Tide* XVII.5 1 February 1936: 154.

or wide-reaching as radio. As he asserted in his biographical entry in *Who's Who in Broadcasting*, "Broadcasting seems the only medium that can do this, and the B.B.C. the only corporation that understands that that is its job."<sup>391</sup>

Heard advocated the development of a scientific outlook in the mind of the average individual, believing in the power of scientific discovery to shape the world; "nothing to-day," he claimed, is half as interesting or practically important as science, and politics simply wait on it."<sup>392</sup> He believed that advances in technology had outstripped the ability of politics to regulate it, and that an understanding of scientific progress was crucial to human development. His broadcasts do not simply inform, but rather shape knowledge according to his philosophy of evolution and the importance of remaining thoughtful, sensitive and adaptive to change. Heard converted what could have been a merely informative and factual report on scientific progress into a vehicle to promulgate his conception of a new way of life through increased awareness and understanding. Heard believed strongly that humanity was "entering a new world through science,"<sup>393</sup> both in terms of a world of unparalleled technology, and also in terms of the developments in human thought technological advances force upon the outlook of an entire generation. The scientific mind, argues Heard, is able to think beyond what he would describe in *The Source of Civilization* (1935) as "an outlook which only sees what it can use."<sup>394</sup> Science progresses by its objectivity and its refusal to cling tenaciously to accepted practice in the light of new theories and discoveries. The same spirit, Heard argued, was absolutely essential to the development of humanity. In a broadcast of 7 June 1933, entitled "Tissue Culture and

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<sup>391</sup> Mosley, *Who's Who*, 74.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid.

<sup>393</sup> Heard, "Humanising," 808.

<sup>394</sup> Heard, *Source*, 71.

Human Habits,” Heard suggests the necessity of a more ‘scientific’ approach to society:

The world needs a philosophy of life, and instead we are based on the idea of fixity. We must have one based on the idea of change and progress. Without that we are heading for chaos. It is well worth thinking about quite remote effects of science in order to see the general trend of our evolution and think out a general philosophy to fit it. Only then shall we be ready for the control over our human destiny which science is holding out to us.<sup>395</sup>

Heard’s faith in science was also predicated upon the fact that science possessed the potential to condition the attitude of the general public. The objective detachment and curiosity of the scientist could become the basis for a progressive society. He felt that our ability to continually question and learn about the world led nature to incorporate us within her plans, making us agents--rather than subjects--of evolution.<sup>396</sup> However, human survival necessitated the maintenance of an ever-curious and adaptive mind. Consequently, Heard embraced the study of science - particularly human sciences such as anthropology, psychology, and sociology - which would not only ensure that our minds remained ever active, but would also improve our condition with the physical benefits they yielded. The ever increasing awareness, sensitivity, and courage to adapt demanded of the scientist were to be a model for us all, replacing the old evolutionary emblem of competition with that of co-operation. It remained for Heard to bring his philosophy to the attention of the public, and to inculcate in the minds of the public a scientific outlook as a precursor to social change.

It is worth considering to what extent Heard’s attitude towards both forming and informing opinion could be said to be an extension of the principles and ideals of

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<sup>395</sup> Gerald Heard, “Tissue Culture and Human Habits.” *The Listener*, 14 June 1933, IX.231: 953.

<sup>396</sup> Heard expresses a similar theory in his first book, *Narcissus: An Anatomy of Clothes* (1924), in which he argues that tailoring and architecture are examples of how, having learned enough about our environment to alter it, we have wrest control of our destiny from nature; “Is this,” Heard asks, “to suggest that intelligence is a medium of the Life Force? That as soon as we get understanding and can take part we are allowed in our own province to take over?” (7)

the B.B.C., which as an institution equally sought to accomplish the same thing. At the time of its foundation on 18 October 1922, the B.B.C. was a private broadcasting company; it would not become a corporation until 1926. However, even as a private company, the B.B.C. perceived itself as a public utility and accordingly strove to be an instrument of public betterment through the broadcast of educational, mature and culturally significant programmes. The philosophy of public service which characterised the early B.B.C. was in large part attributable to its first General Manager, J. C. W. Reith, an engineer by trade, who was appointed to the position of General Manager on 14 December 1922 at the age of 34. At the time of his interview on 13 December, Reith stated that he “knew nothing of broadcasting,”<sup>397</sup> and later amended his diary entry for that day to say that he had not “the remotest idea as to what broadcasting was.”<sup>398</sup> One thing of which Reith was certain, however, was that the B.B.C. ought not to be a novel form of entertainment, and instead a service for the public good. Asa Briggs writes in his *History of Broadcasting* that radio was largely reserved for “private rather than public communication: the idea of its being used to ‘feed’ or to ‘serve’ a whole community was foreign,”<sup>399</sup> and the B.B.C. was “journeying into the unknown”<sup>400</sup> through its forays into public broadcasting. Briggs also writes that the early B.B.C. attributed “a conscious social purpose to the exploitation of this medium” instead of viewing it as “a means of handling people or ‘pandering to their wants.’”<sup>401</sup>

Reith’s 1924 book *Broadcast over Britain*, which Asa Briggs describes as “the best statement of the public service character of broadcasting before the Crawford

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<sup>397</sup> Quoted in Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: The Birth of Broadcasting* Vol. 1 (Oxford: OUP, 1961), 135.

<sup>398</sup> J. C. W. Reith, diary entry, 14 December 1928, *The Reith Diaries*, ed. Charles Stewart (London: Collins, 1975), 128.

<sup>399</sup> Briggs, *History*, 6.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.* 7.

Committee in 1925,”<sup>402</sup> outlines the ideals and intentions of the B.B.C.: “As we conceive of it,” he writes, “our responsibility is to carry into the greatest possible number of homes everything that is best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour and achievement.”<sup>403</sup> Early in his book, Reith acknowledges and objects to the limited definition of “entertainment” employed by most radio stations as the broadcast of “jazz bands and popular music, or sketches by humourists.”<sup>404</sup> Instead, Reith claims that broadcasting should not showcase only the entertainer, but, more importantly, the “discoveries of the intellectual forces which are moulding humanity, who are trying to show that time may be occupied not only agreeably, but well.”<sup>405</sup> The value of radio was in its potential to become an integral part of “a systematic and sustained endeavour to re-create, to build up knowledge, experience and character”<sup>406</sup> rather than as an ethereal vaudeville theatre. Rather, radio was for Reith a potential tool for shaping and disseminating ideas and opinions. Reith recognised that through the democratic medium of radio a “new and mighty weight of public opinion is being formed.”<sup>407</sup> The immediacy of radio also made news of political, scientific and social developments available to anyone who wished to listen. Radio made it possible for public opinion to be formed with greater alacrity and on a larger scale than ever before, which Reith felt brought with it a great responsibility on the part of the broadcaster. Reith was concerned that the public be suitably educated to employ its new-found power of opinion constructively. “Broadcasting is not an end in itself,”<sup>408</sup> Reith believed, but a means not only to better inform its audience and form its

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<sup>402</sup> Briggs, 234. The Crawford Committee, which published its report on 5 March 1926, was the first document to recommend the formation of a public broadcasting corporation.

<sup>403</sup> J. C. W. Reith, *Broadcast over Britain* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924), 34.

<sup>404</sup> Reith, *Broadcast*, 18.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.* 19.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.* 132.

opinion, but to educate its audience as well. Reith felt if broadcasting were left “uncontrolled, unsupplemented by a progressive nature,” that there was “an element of danger.”<sup>409</sup> He believed that those in control of the medium were obliged to educate their audience so that they might use the power afforded by their informed opinion wisely; as Reith writes, “to disregard the spread of knowledge with the consequent enlargement of opinion [...] is not only dangerous but stupid.”<sup>410</sup> Although radio furnished its audience with an enlarged opinion, it did nothing to increase its intelligence so as to enable them to use this power constructively. What Reith describes as the “progressive nature” of broadcasting manifested itself in the B.B.C.’s extensive educational programming.

In February 1924, a B.B.C. conference identified a “need for a close link between broadcasting and education.”<sup>411</sup> As Reith reflects in his 1949 autobiography *Into the Wind*, “Educated men and experts--how were they to be integrated?”<sup>412</sup> The answer presented itself on 18 July 1924 at a meeting at King’s College, London between the B.B.C. and “delegates from various bodies connected with adult education” who expressed an interest in “rendering assistance by advice and propaganda.”<sup>413</sup> This meeting resulted in the creation of the B.B.C.’s Central Educational Advisory Committee in August 1924, composed of members of “various educational associations from all parts of the country.”<sup>414</sup> A relationship between educators and broadcasters had been forged. In addition to this central organisation, each regional B.B.C. station had a Local Education Advisory Committee which could

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<sup>409</sup> Ibid. 132.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid. 19.

<sup>411</sup> Briggs, *History*, 199.

<sup>412</sup> J. C. W. Reith, *Into the Wind* (London: Holder and Stoughton, 1949), 145.

<sup>413</sup> Briggs, *History*, 242.

<sup>414</sup> Briggs, *History*, 242.

see that educational programming would suit the immediate scope of listeners.<sup>415</sup> “We are securing,” writes Reith, “the co-operation of experts in several departments of activity, either in the form of advisory committees, as by more direct participation.”<sup>416</sup> By “direct participation” Reith alludes to the broadcasts by experts on their area of specialisation: “Talks on popular lines by eminent scientists, chemists, astronomers, have already been found eminently acceptable.”<sup>417</sup> However, Reith equally recognised that new discoveries were often “couched in a language which the average man cannot understand, and in a form which is devoid of interest to him.”<sup>418</sup> The form in which these talks were presented was enormously important to their reception, hence his emphasis on ‘talks on popular lines’. Stefan Collini touches upon this problem of presenting specialised knowledge to a wide audience in *Absent Minds*:

No research scientists would expect the publications in which their most recent findings were announced to be read by any but a highly specialized readership. The same scientists may, in some cases, also publish works of popular science that reach a wide non-professional readership, but this involves practising two clearly distinct forms of writing.<sup>419</sup>

Reith recognised that not every expert possessed the powers of popular exposition required to make a successful broadcast talk. He argued that where experts and specialists failed to exhibit “that flair for selection and presentation”<sup>420</sup> essential to broadcasting, there was an essential need for a general layman who could offer a “translation of the importance of the result into terms which the average man can understand and appreciate”<sup>421</sup> The idea of hiring a scientific reporter, a “go-between” between the world of the expert and the generalist, appears in his *Broadcast over Britain*, in which he writes, “The story of many wonderful experiments and

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<sup>415</sup> Ibid. 242.

<sup>416</sup> Reith, *Broadcast*, 34.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid. 152.

<sup>418</sup> Reith, *Broadcast*, 152.

<sup>419</sup> Collini, *Absent Minds*, 465.

<sup>420</sup> Reith, *Broadcast*, 145.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid. 152.

discoveries, vast in their potentiality, are to-day too frequently confined to the deliberation of select groups of experts and meetings of learned societies.”<sup>422</sup>

Reith believed that radio had “broadened and humanised” the role of the teacher and had the power to “stimulate the disciplined specialist to the broader outlook which was essential”<sup>423</sup> to appeal to its audience of unspecialised individuals. Heard used his radio programme to offer a humanised account of scientific facts and to situate these facts within a larger context, namely that science was a progressive and constructive tool. Just as the B.B.C. empowered the public by widening the scope of public opinion, science also bestowed greater powers upon the same populace, and, like stronger but ill-informed public opinion, was dangerous if employed carelessly: “Science does not [...] ask, before it opens its magic storehouse, that we should understand. It would destroy us as indifferently as it endows us.”<sup>424</sup> Heard therefore believed that there was “no more urgent task before us to-day than the task of educating ourselves with this new and terrible responsibility.”<sup>425</sup>

Heard echoes Reith’s sentiment that radio should provide more than popular entertainment, developing the “knowledge, experience and character” of its listeners. The medium of radio also became for Heard a tool for social cohesion, as he believed that the radio “illustrates better than any other advance of applied science the way that science is pulling the world together.”<sup>426</sup> Falby remarks upon the B.B.C. in particular as utilising this medium of cohesion to advance “the engagement of private citizens with the public domain.”<sup>427</sup> The radio drew the world together by its power to reach a wider audience than hitherto possible and united individuals by providing a common

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<sup>422</sup> Ibid.

<sup>423</sup> Reith, *Wind*, 145.

<sup>424</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” *The Listener*, V.111 23 February 1931: 332.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid.

<sup>426</sup> Heard, Gerald. “This Surprising World.” *The Listener*, VII.156 6 January 1932: 28.

<sup>427</sup> Falby, *Between the Pigeonholes* 26.

programme of significant ideas, events and people into the ‘public’ sphere. Heard’s radio broadcasts are not only an exercise in scientific exposition, but are also attempts to educate and instruct the listener, first by making them aware of their power as listeners, and second by steering this opinion into constructive channels. As Heard’s broadcasts also illustrate how the challenge of science to remain aware is analogous to our evolution, and encourages the listener to participate in scientific change, if only by developing an interest in it.<sup>428</sup> Most importantly, scientific advance provided Heard with a model for his conception of ‘super-consciousness,’ the over-arching psychological state he believed connected each individual. By developing our knowledge of ourselves and the world around us, we would observe patterns in the world, hitherto underlying invisible connections between seemingly disparate elements; much in the way radio waves connected a disparate population and drew them together as a community of listeners, so too did Heard believe humans were inextricably linked by scarcely perceived psychological ties. The same power that enables us to relate seemingly disconnected matter and information to produce a new understanding could, if transformed socially, enable us to discover a scientific basis for society, a way of life which accounts for the needs and desires of each individual constituent and offers each the chance to feel fulfilment and satisfaction in being a part of that society. Heard’s broadcasts fit neatly within the B.B.C’s - and notably Reith’s - ideology of community service, and also greatly supplement Heard’s own philosophy.

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<sup>428</sup> In *Science in the Making* (1935), Heard recommends that individuals take an active personal interest in the world of science and create a diary of new developments; “Anyone who cares can keep such a diary for himself,” he writes. “[T]he information is to hand in expert periodicals, and after a very short time the collector, like any other naturalist, learns to pick up the trail he is watching and to piece together the clues, until not a day ever passes but he has some development to note, some advance to write up.” (14)

However, Heard reported such varying and often abstruse discoveries so as to be comprehensible to the average listener, believing like Reith that the common man was often prevented from understanding science because of its highly specialised nature. In so doing, he also elevated the generalist to a level of supreme importance as one who could ultimately direct and control the ends to which science was applied. He argued that the scientific specialist, buried from public view in their research, was “a sort of intellectual ‘truffle-hound’ - a creature specialised to scent out and root up hidden facts and then turn them over to someone else to digest.”<sup>429</sup> Heard was greatly concerned that average individuals “pay no attention to the steps which lead to discoveries.”<sup>430</sup> In a broadcast of 1931, Heard again argues that the lay person who feels he has no role to play in scientific discovery and research has a “completely wrong notion about science; in fact, that is a notion that is dangerous to us and dangerous to science.”<sup>431</sup> Heard felt that scientists “never cease sending back into our everyday world stuff that not only changes our lives completely but may even destroy them.”<sup>432</sup> The responsibility to “digest” and direct scientific discoveries “comes to rest with the unspecialised, with ourselves.”<sup>433</sup> Heard believed that while the task of the scientist was to discover new facts, it was the responsibility of laymen to employ these discoveries properly:

The scientist is not there to tell us. He has other work to do, he has to follow the trail wherever it leads. It is for us to look ahead. That is our responsibility. Otherwise the same absence of mind of the expert, which made this modern world possible, may just as unintentionally make it impossible.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> Ibid. 331. In the introduction to *Time and Tide*'s university supplements of 1935, Heard would echo this statement, calling the university, which increasingly produced scientific specialists, as “a kennel for producing intellectual truffle hounds, creators who obediently dig up facts and hand them over to their masters,” and comment upon the danger of being “efficient in means, and completely unadvised and blind as to Ends” (XVI.17 27 April 1935: 33).

<sup>430</sup> Heard, “Humanising,” 807.

<sup>431</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” *The Listener* V.111 23 February 1931: 331.

<sup>432</sup> Heard, “Humanising,” 808.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid. 331.

<sup>434</sup> Heard, “Humanising,” 808.

Heard remarks most strongly that “Science is a Samson,” which having had “to work blindly [...] is now making not only England, but civilisation, totter.”<sup>435</sup> In order to avoid what Heard felt certain would be a crash, “our one chance now is to grasp what is going on and to go in and get the controls in order.”<sup>436</sup> Falby suggests that Heard’s attempted to create “a class of generalists who would critique new technologies at the national and international level.”<sup>437</sup> We can see, however, that Heard felt a scientifically aware ‘class’ could move beyond simple critique to action.

Heard echoes the same call to the unspecialised to take responsibility for the development of science in his 1935 book *Science in the Making*; “The expert and the scientists have undoubtedly made science as it is to-day,” he writes, “but they are, because of their higher and higher specialisation, less and less concerned with what science as a whole is becoming, and even less aware of what science as a whole is doing.”<sup>438</sup> “This,” he asserts, “is quite natural. The specialist is a specialist and therefore his job is to specialise, and not to generalise.”<sup>439</sup> But as Heard had argued more strongly in 1930, the problem of specialisation was that it excluded not only the ‘general’ public but also specialists within different fields, contending that “scientific journals are not only quite incomprehensible to ourselves, the men in the street, but specialisation has become so advanced that even the specialist can only understand those parts which deal with his own subject.”<sup>440</sup> Here we might consider Heard as offering a dramatic example of Collini’s contention that “each generation persuades itself that specialization has reached a particularly acute, even terminal, stage in its

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<sup>435</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World.” *The Listener*, 26 August 1931. VI.137: 340.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>437</sup> Falby, *Between the Pigeonholes*, 26.

<sup>438</sup> Gerald Heard, *Science in the Making* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935), 11.

<sup>439</sup> Heard, *Science in the Making*, 12.

<sup>440</sup> Heard, “Humanising,” 807.

own time.”<sup>441</sup> Heard felt the solution to a terminally acute specialisation was for the average, generalised individual to take an active interest in directing the course of science:

[S]omeone has to generalise, and to apply. The unpleasant conclusion is that that part of the task is ours. [...] We lay folks must then get a general view of science, for science is daily increasing both in power – and therefore giving us new capacities of choice and burdens of responsibility – and also – because it is not grown by one directive mind, or board of minds, but specialists – in irresponsibility, and therefore our responsibility becomes daily more inescapable and urgent.<sup>442</sup>

It is also worth considering what Collini refers to as “the call for intellectuals to act as a counter or antidote to the damage caused by specialisation.”<sup>443</sup> As a generalist, Heard took this task upon himself. But at the same time, we can see that Heard believed the responsibility lay with the public he was seeking (to mimic Heard’s construction) not only to inform, but form. Collini also remarks on the nature of a ‘genuine’ public that “anyone with the requisite degree of literacy and interest may constitute part of such a public.”<sup>444</sup> By translating the language of the specialist into a vernacular a generally literate public could understand, we can see how Heard was indeed capable addressing a wide and open public at large.

The only other condition of membership Heard required of this general audience was the requisite scientific curiosity and outlook to make an attempt to understand. Although his broadcasts were intended to be factual and impartial reports of new scientific thought, Heard contextualised these facts within his own theories of evolution and progress. The qualities of adaptability and sensitivity which Heard believed made evolution possible are essential to science, and therefore the cultivation of a scientific mindset renders us more observant of and less resistant to change. As

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<sup>441</sup> Collini, *Absent Minds*, 459.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.* 12.

<sup>443</sup> Collini, *Absent Minds*, 465

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.* 55

Heard remarked in a broadcast of 1930, “[s]cientific discovery is supremely good because it requires of us a constantly extending outlook, a constant preparedness to face and encounter new perils, and to transform them into opportunities, a constant increase in courage.”<sup>445</sup> Science therefore forces upon us the same courageous attitude possessed by our first ancestors, and demands that we be brave enough to face it. “Progress,” writes Heard, “is no law of life. It belongs only to those creatures which have the power, in the face of trying conditions, continually to produce fresh resources.”<sup>446</sup> The spirit which keeps scientific discovery alive, “that divine curiosity, that power of being interested in anything, that wish to understand regardless of the consequences,”<sup>447</sup> is not unlike the evolutionary “Force” that demands an ever mutable and adaptable nature of its subjects. Falby argues that Heard believed scientific advance “consisted both of lay education and self-transcendence; psychological change, in other words.”<sup>448</sup> We can see in Heard’s broadcasts how an interest in science provided the ideal basis for his conception of “super-consciousness.” For example, Heard considers our manipulation of the invisible and lethal force of radiation. “Our eye responds to just one octave out of a known total of almost eighty such octaves,”<sup>449</sup> he writes, but this has not prevented us from experimenting with that which we cannot see. Heard argued that our senses are “animal senses, [...] evolved to warn us against perils ordinarily met with in the natural world,”<sup>450</sup> and that “we cannot dismiss the other waves we do not see as ripples we can brush aside like a hippo, wading through a stream.”<sup>451</sup> Rather, we use our mind to develop tools, to measure, contain and utilise these forces. As a result,

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<sup>445</sup> Gerald Heard, “Research and Discovery,” *The Listener* IV.77 2 July 1930: 19.

<sup>446</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” *The Listener* IV.79 10 July 1930: 99.

<sup>447</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” *The Listener* IV.83 8 August 1930: 260.

<sup>448</sup> Falby, *Between the Pigeonholes*, 26.

<sup>449</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” *The Listener* IV.93 22 October 1930: 659.

<sup>450</sup> Gerald Heard, “Research and Discovery,” *The Listener* IV.77 2 July 1930: 18.

<sup>451</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” 22 October 1930: 659.

Heard believed “we are moving into a super-animal, we may even say super-human, world” and must therefore develop “our super-animal powers to tell us where and what we are up against.”<sup>452</sup> Science therefore necessarily demanded the development of ‘super-consciousness,’ and further demonstrated how greatly we controlled our evolution. “Our conscious intelligence,” writes Heard, “co-operating with our nature” allows us to develop “extra joints and lenses [...] to give ourselves a wider grasp and range of this world.”<sup>453</sup> Our “conscious intelligence” allowed us to effect unnatural evolutionary advances through the extension of our current senses and the development of entirely new ones. Heard also envisions a future where we might be increasingly able to incorporate our technological advances into both our psyche and bodies. At the time Heard wrote, however, he believed that there was a general tendency to see scientific advancement, however useful, as utterly foreign to humanity. Heard believed instead that technological advance “adds to our stature and helps to make us the supermen which we now need to be.”<sup>454</sup> He foresaw a future in which new technologies which “we do not quite think of as part of ourselves”<sup>455</sup> would become “so intimate that they may come to share some of that identification which we make between ourselves and our clothes.”<sup>456</sup> Heard’s reference to clothing is immediately reminiscent of his first book, *Narcissus: An Anatomy of Clothes* (1924), in which he argued that our changing sartorial fashions were “homologous with [our] physical evolution.”<sup>457</sup> Here he equates technological advance as being homologous with our psychic evolution. Heard felt that without cultivating the proper scientific attitude and intelligence we had the potential to abuse the gifts science

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<sup>452</sup> Gerald Heard, “Research and Discovery,” 2 July 1930: 18.

<sup>453</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” 22 October 1930: 659.

<sup>454</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” *The Listener* V.107 28 January 1931: 146.

<sup>455</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” 22 October 1930: 659.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>457</sup> Heard, *Narcissus*, 15.

offers. Heard believed that “physically and emotionally we are still the men of the Stone Age, though we find we have transported ourselves into a machine age, a machine age so delicately adjusted and so highly charged that if we blunder about in it like cavemen we shall wreck it and electrocute ourselves.”<sup>458</sup> Heard argues in *The Source of Civilization* that the advance of society has always depended upon a balance between human intelligence and outward developments, such as technology:

It is on sustaining this balanced advance of inner and outer powers--always keeping the subjective progress from falling behind the objective progress--on preserving an equal consciousness the reality of values as his consciousness of his means grew [. . . .] [O]n the self same balance, depends whether civilisation shall continue and man survive.<sup>459</sup>

For Heard, scientific study was the appropriate means by which to advance, offering simultaneously the potential for the advance of applied science, and also an ever increasing mental curiosity and sensitivity in the general public which would in turn spawn other inward advances.

Although Heard predicted many benefits from scientific pursuits, he also foresaw the potential for science, carelessly applied, to result in disaster. The populace who would apply the discoveries of science, therefore, had both to understand the scientific attitude and the implications of the potentially constructive or destructive powers of new scientific discoveries. Heard observed that the average individual regarded science as a means to an end, toward a state of rest and complacency. “If science simply means that everything is to be done for us,” writes Heard, “we shall find civilisation a very boring thing.”<sup>460</sup> Just as Reith believed the potential for growth and change radio offered could be perverted by broadcasting too much light entertainment, Heard believed the potential of science could be reduced to the purely superficial entertainment benefits and comforts afforded by advances in

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<sup>458</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” 10 July 1930: 99.

<sup>459</sup> Heard, *Source*, 126.

<sup>460</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” 8 August 1930: 259.

physical science. The physical benefits of scientific discovery have the potential to render us complacent, providing us with comfort and security that make us disinclined to progress; expending our scientific energy in adapting our environment to ourselves meant risking the loss of that fundamental mutability which allows us to progress. Heard therefore suggests that the leisure time science affords us must be reinvested in further discovery; as Heard writes, “the cure for applied science is pure science.”<sup>461</sup> In a broadcast of 1931, Heard makes a similar statement when he asserts that “only more science [...] can teach us the technique of handling these powers [....].”<sup>462</sup> Here Heard stresses the importance of the constant cycle between inner and outer advance, between the comforts of applied discovery and the need to continually develop beyond what we have achieved. However, what role was the average individual to play in directing the course of science, especially without any specialist knowledge? The role demanded of the lay person was to be “a Scout of the main army of science,”<sup>463</sup> assisting its growth by being of a sympathetic mind. Heard suggested in *Narcissus* (1924) that the evolutionary ‘force’ found in our minds a receptive medium, a “wireless valve”<sup>464</sup> which amplified the spirit of evolution working through us. In the context of broadcasting, Heard’s metaphor of a “wireless valve” takes on a literal significance: the medium of radio allowed for the transmission of new ‘force’ in the form of scientific knowledge to shape the human mind. Similarly, he imagined that average individuals could adapt their minds to appreciate and to facilitate the progress of science. Heard believed that there was no reason why a layperson could not contribute more significantly to the cause of science: “science is not art,” writes Heard, and therefore “any intelligent layman can be made into a scientist if he wishes

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<sup>461</sup> Ibid. 259.

<sup>462</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” *The Listener*. V.119 22 April 1931: 674.

<sup>463</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” 8 August 1930: 260.

<sup>464</sup> Heard, *Narcissus*, 19.

enough.”<sup>465</sup> Heard also reflects upon the “number of discoveries [that] have been made by men who ventured to take an interest in what was really not their proper subject.”<sup>466</sup> The very birth of scientific discovery, and similarly the germ of human evolution, is the quality of pioneering, or being able to look outside what is of immediate use and studying that which seemingly has no purpose; as Heard argues in *The Source of Civilization*, the largest distinction between us and those creature which did not evolve was their possession of “an outlook which only sees what it can use.”<sup>467</sup> For Heard, the solution was simple; we must force our own advance through scientific curiosity, or else fall prey to the decadence which inevitably affects those who refuse to evolve. The scientific ‘outlook,’ hitherto confined to a minority of scientists and specialists, necessarily had to become the interest of all. Heard offered his audience both scientific facts and his conviction in science as a progressive force waiting to be tapped.

Although Heard was largely concerned with the development of a psychological and social life through scientific planning, he also suggests in these broadcasts, for the first time, the need for a practicable social and economic plan guided by scientific progress; “We have used the scientific spirit to revolutionise production,” he writes in a broadcast of 1933, “but have refused to let it plan consumption.”<sup>468</sup> He argues that our political and economic systems must be revamped according to scientific principles because the progress of science is exceeding our power to control it. Heard likens the situation of scientific production in a society which is not scientifically minded to a ramshackle train being pulled by a streamlined locomotive; “The engine of production and power which is now thrusting

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<sup>465</sup> Gerald Heard, rev. of *Man Against Death*, by Paul de Kruif, *The Listener* IX.216. 1 March 1933: Early Spring Book Supplement, XI.

<sup>466</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” 8 August 1930: 260.

<sup>467</sup> Heard, *Source*, 71.

<sup>468</sup> Gerald Heard, “Science In Industry.” 18 March 1933. B.B.C. W.A.C., microfilm tape 203.

forward,” he writes “must push this hopeless clutter and jam of antiquated compartments, in which we insist on remaining shut up, clean off the rails and over the edge. And the engine of science and all the obstructing tangle of small interests and blind nations will go crash.”<sup>469</sup> Heard concludes with a warning about the dangers of letting science continue unchecked by society:

How long are we going to keep apart the two sides of our activity, production and consumption, means and ends – the way in which we use our means? [...] Either we must be scientific all the way through – plan production and consumption, scientifically study ourselves and our needs [...] there must be a complete smash.<sup>470</sup>

This marked shift in Heard’s thought away from the psychological and spiritual towards direct action is fascinating when one considers that this is the first time that Heard attempts to address the problems of society through direct action. This is not to say that Heard abandoned the idea of improving society through the application of psychology; if anything, Heard suddenly recognises the need for an amalgam of sciences to affect social change. For example, in a broadcast of 1 April 1933, Heard asserts the need for psychological self-awareness as a necessary prerequisite to social change, arguing that once we understand our psychology (which Heard believed would demonstrate that human nature is essentially co-operative and not competitive)<sup>471</sup> we would be able reorganise our society sensibly and scientifically. “We have got to get equal knowledge over ourselves,” he writes, “[...] because our present danger is due to the fact that our physical power has grown so greatly beyond your power of self-control,” but acknowledges that although it may be easy to observe the world rationally, “it is naturally hardest to see ourselves with

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<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

<sup>471</sup> In this broadcast, Heard writes that the spirit of science is a reflection of our better nature, an “attempt to understand and co-operate with the nature and life that is around [us], outside.”

detachment.”<sup>472</sup> Once we have “master[ed] the natural forces within us,” Heard believes it will possible to “be able to plan our food supplies so that they give us plenty instead of glut and our power supplies so that they give us freedom and endless opportunities instead of making us live meanly in growing fear of our lives.”<sup>473</sup>

By the mid-1930s, Heard’s interest in social planning finds its expression in two ways. First, Heard began discussions in earnest with Aldous Huxley on the subject of social reform. In July 1936, Huxley wrote to Victoria Ocampo to say that he would “probably try to collaborate with Gerald Heard this winter to produce a kind of synthesis, starting from a metaphysical basis and building up through individual and group psychology to politics and economics.”<sup>474</sup> The result of this collaboration was Huxley’s *Ends and Means* (1937). Yet the degree to which Huxley’s book, which he described as “a kind of practical cookery book of reform,” was the result of a collaborative effort is difficult to tell. But while it is interesting to look for evidence of Heard’s influence in *Ends and Means*, it is more worthwhile considering Heard’s book of the same year, *The Third Morality*. Like Huxley, Heard intended his book to be a new and dynamic solution to the world’s problems rather than a rehashing of established philosophies. Heard uses the word “morality” to suggest a dominant paradigm of human thought. For example, the preceding two “moralities” in Heard’s mind were anthropomorphism, the conception of the universe as “an expression of individual persons” and mechanomorphism, the conception of the universe as a machine. Both of these, Heard believed, had been proven to be false by advances in human knowledge. Heard’s “third morality” was therefore intended to be a comprehensive new paradigm for society which incorporated all human knowledge,

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<sup>472</sup> Gerald Heard, “Science in Industry,” 1 April 1933. B.B.C. W.A.C., microfilm tape 203.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.

<sup>474</sup> Aldous Huxley, Letter to Victoria Ocampo, July 1936. Grover Smith, ed., *The Letters of Aldous Huxley*. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1963), 403.

proposing a new direction for human endeavour and suggesting techniques by which this could be achieved. Heard describes *The Third Morality* as a “threefold essay” early in the first chapter, consisting of

a cosmology, a co-ordinated outline of contemporary knowledge as far as it is known to this writer [...]: an ethic, an outline of the conduct which follows the outline of knowledge: an exercise, an outline on training so as to induce action to conform with information.<sup>475</sup>

In essence, Heard is similarly interested in ends and means. Heard writes about the need for a new system of living, arguing established philosophies such as Capitalism or Marxism were “not contemporary;” Heard objects to Marxism as being obsolete because it is “based on science almost a century old.”<sup>476</sup> “These systems,” writes Heard,

may allow you to live for a little while with the sense of being part of a complete process and believing you are in co-ordinated purposive action with your conditions, but they will break down, because they omit, as they must, the important facts discovered since they were formed.<sup>477</sup>

Heard’s main objection to “mechanistic cosmology,” however, is that it restricts human evolution. He argues that, having become complacent and satisfied with the easy power and comfort science provides, mankind ceases to progress; the human race, Heard argues,

failed to realise that all modern science with its mechanistic cosmology (based on a study of natural phenomena which omitted life and mind) could do was to add more power and greater means to animal passion. The mechanistic cosmology was erected to justify the machine, not to enlarge the mind, to increase means for carrying out more completely, more fully, the old ends dictated by the animal passions, greed and fear.<sup>478</sup>

Heard’s proposed synthesis would continually amalgamate new information and experience into a coherent and complete way of living. The path Heard suggests entails a fundamental change in the human mind. Each individual under Heard’s plan

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<sup>475</sup> Gerald Heard, *The Third Morality* (New York: William Morrow, 1937), 9.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.* 147.

would aim to live “in co-operation with the purpose of life.”<sup>479</sup> To accomplish this, each individual would be expected “to act and think that we become increasingly aware of our extra-individuality--that is, the common life which unites us with our fellow creatures, with all life and the universe.”<sup>480</sup> Heard reasserts his claim that society is “an organism, a vast unlimited liability concern”<sup>481</sup> and that each constituent must learn to realise his or her organic ties to others; the “general aim” of Heard’s plan is “the individual’s realization of his unity with all life and being.”<sup>482</sup> In order for this system to work, Heard warns of the need for “applied action” to bring it about, suggesting such “practical aims” as the abolition of war and violence and the promotion of love and “mutual concern.”<sup>483</sup> In short, the third morality seeks “to set men free of fear and greed,”<sup>484</sup> removing the only obstacles which prevent us from realizing our unity with one another. Heard stresses the need for practical and scientifically practicable aims, offering a menu of practicable ideas, ranging from defences of birth control and euthanasia to the abolition of petitionary prayer (for, as Heard argues, “when anthropomorphism goes, it must go”<sup>485</sup>). The most practical and most lucidly discussed suggestion Heard makes is with regard to training individuals to realise their extra-individuality, asserting that “we can change ourselves and our circumstance immeasurably.”<sup>486</sup> Heard considers “self-training exercises” to be “supremely important”<sup>487</sup> and stresses the importance of meditation. Heard ultimately concludes that changing the individual, merging his or her consciousness with the

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<sup>479</sup> Ibid. 186.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid. 187.

<sup>483</sup> Ibid.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid. 210.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid. 241.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid. 238.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

overarching universal order, is the only way to change society and reach that third morality.

Huxley similarly writes of the need for a new synthesis in *Ends and Means*. After cataloguing a series of “contradictory ideals”<sup>488</sup> for human behaviour (ranging from the chivalric ideal of mediaeval Europe to the “sheep-like social man and the god-like Leader”<sup>489</sup> of the early twentieth century), Huxley dismisses all these as obsolete. “We shall choose none,” Huxley argues, because they are all “the fruit of particular social circumstances.”<sup>490</sup> However, Huxley notes that some “thoughts and aspirations” are far less dependent on social circumstances than others. Those ideals of human behaviour “formulated by those who have been most successful in freeing themselves from the prejudices of their time and place” are sustaining because they result from the “practice of disinterested virtues” and, belonging to no particular ideology, offer “direct insight into the real nature of ultimate reality.”<sup>491</sup> It is the “non-attached” individual alone who can divine such an ideal; free from desire and greed, the non-attached individual can see “the existence of a spiritual reality underlying the phenomenal world”<sup>492</sup> and work towards realising it. Like Heard, Huxley agrees that “‘unchanging human nature’ is not unchanging,” and doubts the efficacy of “large-scale manipulation of the social structure”<sup>493</sup> without first affecting changes in the individuals who must inhabit that structure.

The change which Huxley thought it most important to affect was the transcendence of personality. The “super-personal level”<sup>494</sup> Huxley describes is identical to Heard’s conception of “superconsciousness.” Through meditation,

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<sup>488</sup> Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), 2.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid. 4.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid. 24.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid. 325.

Huxley argues, an individual can experience a “double consciousness,” wherein the individual is both fully self-conscious, “having a complete knowledge of, and control over, his sensations, emotions and thoughts,” and simultaneously “more than a personal being, in continuous intuitive relation with that impersonal principle of reality.”<sup>495</sup> For both Heard and Huxley, such experiences contain the seeds of a new society.

Heard’s power of synthesis was formidable; he was able to incorporate the disparate realms of social science, physical science and humanism within his vision of the future. However, it was his role as a broadcaster which allowed him the opportunity of educating the public, and to actively disseminate his faith in science as the key to human survival. Heard did not simply report scientific discoveries to the public, but brought something of the spirit of scientific curiosity, awareness and understanding into the homes of the masses. His broadcasts were an extension of the body of his own philosophy, and in a strange way the very medium of radio was suited to Heard’s philosophy. Further, the B.B.C. and its ethos of community service and public education represented a pioneering curiosity of the sort Heard idealised. The medium of radio was still quite new, and the policy of the B.B.C. to educate rather than simply placate its audience even newer still. C. A. Lewis, one of the first two programming directors of the B.B.C., reflected in his *Broadcasting from Within* that the new organisation was “a democracy of pioneers,”<sup>496</sup> innovating and developing in a new and uncharted medium. The pioneering spirit of the B.B.C. was not unlike Heard’s, who believed that “the world is divided into routineers and pioneers. The faster the world moves, the less place there is for the routineer, the

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>496</sup> Quoted in Briggs, *History*, 186.

more opportunity for the pioneer.”<sup>497</sup> Heard offered a pioneering vision and spirit to the public, inspiring the same spirit of wonder and discovery in them. Heard’s ideas, augmented by the medium of radio, represent an attempt to apply his philosophy and impress upon the minds of the public a hope for a better future through co-operation and awareness, and most importantly expanding curiosity.

Heard’s career with the B.B.C. represents another example of Heard’s attempts to find a means of both disseminating and enacting his philosophy of a new life made possible by an ever-increasing awareness. As Falby writes, “Heard endeavoured to awaken listeners to their interconnectedness.”<sup>498</sup> His role as a broadcaster provided him with a level of cultural authority and prominence from which he could begin to advance his own ideas more assertively. It also provided him with a ‘public’ of his own construction, one that ostensibly had the mental outlook Heard felt was a prerequisite for the sort of change he envisioned. Heard’s scientific broadcasts also show a shift in his life from mere prognostication into the realm of action. By 1936 he was increasingly drawn towards social planning, making a leap from theory (hitherto his mainstay) to practice. Heard began to consider the potential for designing a society whose production, distribution and sustainability is scientifically sound. It remained for Heard to develop a ‘cosmology’ or spiritual praxis to which this outlook could be applied, and thereafter a social model conducive to committed living. The following two chapters will examine how Heard went on to define both at Dartington Hall and through his involvement with the pacifist movement of the 1930s.

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<sup>497</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” 10 July 1930: 99.

<sup>498</sup> Falby, *Between the Pigeonholes*, 37.

## Chapter IV

### From Theory to ‘Praxis’: Heard and “The Dartington Experiment”

Dartington is almost impossible to define. Definition is limitation and you cannot limit growth or potentiality.

Gerald Heard, “The Implications of Dartington Hall, to a Visitor,” *News of the Day, Dartington Hall*. Supplement to the 500th number, 13 March 1934.

This chapter focuses on an important and hitherto unexamined part of Gerald Heard’s life, namely his association with Dartington Hall. Dartington was a multi-faceted experiment in rural regeneration and modern education begun in 1925 by Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst. Leonard was an ex-missionary who had helped to revive farming communities in India and, with Rabindranath Tagore, had helped begin two schools whose modern outlook and methodology would become the cornerstone of Gandhi’s educational policy. Dorothy, a wealthy, widowed American philanthropist, bankrolled Leonard’s vision of a similar experiment in his native England. Heard, both a friend of Leonard Elmhirst and a familiar and popular figure in his own right because of his B.B.C. broadcasts, was hired as lecturer in Current Events. However, his role as a lecturer was secondary to his efforts to establish what he would call a “‘generating cell’”<sup>499</sup>, a group of like-minded individuals who, through quiet meditation and reflection, sought a form of *agape* – what Heard would regard as ‘superconsciousness’. Heard’s experiments at Dartington reaffirmed his faith that an open and enquiring mental outlook as he insisted (especially in his career at the B.B.C.) was a prerequisite to social change. Further, Elmhirst’s self-sufficient estate (which incorporate many ideals of the Co-Operative Movement with which

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<sup>499</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 1932, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. Dartington Hall Archive, High Cross House, Totnes, Devon. (Hereafter HCH).

Heard was familiar) provided a working model for the small, self-sufficient communes Heard felt could provide a new social and economic basis for society.

It was in 1924, while secretary to Sir Horace Plunkett, that Heard first met the Elmhirsts. Leonard had written to Plunkett for advice on beginning an experiment in rural co-operation and regeneration on similar lines to Plunkett's own work in Ireland. Although Elmhirst's first letter to Plunkett has not survived, Heard's reply, as secretary to Plunkett, of 20 June 1924 may be found in the Dartington archive. Heard promises to "read its account to H[orace] P[lunkett]" and describes Elmhirst's plan as "an interesting [and] as useful a combination not nearly common as it should be."<sup>500</sup> Heard had seen first-hand the success of the Irish co-operative movement in restoring rural areas impoverished both in wealth and community spirit, and believed that the co-operative ethos was an essential part of any social reform. In his reply to Elmhirst, Heard asserts his belief that "cooperation is the immediate need of the world, but we want a lot of psychological knowledge as to the proper size of groups & the types of constitution which are needed [...]."<sup>501</sup> As we will see, Elmhirst was primarily interested in the practicalities of turning Dartington into a self-sufficient estate. However, from his very first correspondence with Elmhirst, we can see that Heard's interest lay in the constitution of those who would inhabit it. Dartington was to become, for Heard, a means to discover "psychological knowledge" of individuals and their attachment to communities. He felt Dartington had the potential to be more than an experiment in education and rural regeneration. "Dartington is only the outward form at best," he would write in 1932, "and as it is but a provisional experiment of a Vita Nuova, must in the end, if it is not to be a mirage, be a Vita

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<sup>500</sup> Gerald Heard to Leonard Elmhirst, 20 June 1924. LKE General 17 E. HCH.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

Aeternitas.”<sup>502</sup> For Heard, Dartington represented an opportunity to develop ideas about an economically and psychologically viable model of larger social importance.

In 1932 Heard became an occasional lecturer in Current History, making roughly fortnightly trips to Totnes.<sup>503</sup> Heard’s visits to the school from London were frequent; the Visitor’s Book at Dartington Hall shows that he stayed at the Hall eleven times in 1932, thirteen times in 1933 and three times in 1934.<sup>504</sup> While Heard was very supportive of Leonard Elmhirst’s agricultural and economic reforms, he was all the more interested in examining the power of psychology and mysticism to add meaning and depth to the economically sensible foundation of Dartington. Heard had a vision of creating, from the Elmhirsts’ private microcosm, “a complete psycho-economic way of living.”<sup>505</sup> In this pursuit Heard developed a great friendship with the spiritually-inclined Dorothy Elmhirst; as Michael Young writes, “it was not so much to Leonard as Dorothy that he responded.”<sup>506</sup> With her support (and that of Dartington’s head of the ‘Girl’s Section’, Margaret Isherwood – no relation to Christopher) Heard would begin a small group that met regularly to achieve some form of psycho-mystical *agape*, developing a technique to break-down individual protectiveness and allow each member of the group to share in the psychological communion Heard called “superconsciousness.” Victor Bonham Carter, an early historian of Dartington Hall, describes the meetings as an event which attracted “a complete cross-section of Dartington Society.”<sup>507</sup> The meetings, held on roughly thirty Sundays a year for twenty years, were “an occasion when heads of departments

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<sup>502</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 17 December 1932, DWE Correspondence General 6a – Unsorted, Isherwood/Heard. HCH.

<sup>503</sup> William Curry to Gerald Heard, 20 July 1932, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 2. HCH.

<sup>504</sup> Michael Young, *The Elmhirsts at Dartington* (Totnes, Devon: Dartington Hall Trust, 1992), 206.

<sup>505</sup> Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 6 September 1933, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>506</sup> Young, 206.

<sup>507</sup> Victor Bonham Carter, *Dartington Hall: History of an Experiment* (Phoenix House Ltd, 1958), 124.

and others could talk about their work”<sup>508</sup> or else were “devoted to the kind of subject and interest that lay outside the daily life of the estate”<sup>509</sup> which included “concerts, lectures, debates, recitals and practically every kind of intellectual and artistic performance”<sup>510</sup> Heard however saw these meetings and the ideologically free atmosphere of Dartington as an opportunity to explore his belief that the potential for *agape* lay in small like-minded groups gathered in a reflective and meditative spirit. His attempts at Dartington to develop this ‘praxis’ marks not only his first tentative steps towards achieving that psychological unity about which he had so long theorized. Heard’s later involvement with H. R. L. Sheppard’s Peace Pledge Union pivots on the idea of pacifist “cells,” groups of like-minded individuals who can achieve some form of *agape* and who, by living communally, can offer a viable alternative to competition and aggression. Trabuco College, Heard’s ‘prayer college’ in California, founded in 1941, also bears traces of the lessons Heard learned at Dartington, and the principles of communal living and psychological unity remain the same. However, an understanding of Dartington’s importance to Heard and his later development is of crucial importance.

For what was to be a formative experience in Heard’s life, it is remarkable that the letters and papers pertaining to his involvement at Dartington Hall have gone largely unexamined. Alison Falby, in her thesis *Gerald Heard and British Intellectual Culture Between the Wars* (2000) and her 2008 book *Between the Pigeonholes: Gerald Heard, 1889-1971*, gives only a brief consideration of Heard’s establishment of a religious group which “highlighted the importance of individual-to-individual confession as a preliminary step toward fellowship”<sup>511</sup> at Dartington.<sup>512</sup> Even Michael

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<sup>508</sup> Ibid. 124.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid. 125.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

<sup>511</sup> Falby, *Between the Pigeonholes*, 53.

Young's comprehensive study of the Dartington, *The Elmhirsts of Dartington*, makes little mention of the Sunday Evening Meetings over which Heard often presided, and in which he first tried to achieve the psychological *agape* central to his philosophy. Although there are some letters to Leonard Elmhirst and a few to the school's headmaster, William B. Curry, the large majority are letters from Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst and Margaret Isherwood which illustrate both the progress of the group at Dartington, his own spiritual development and the growth of his own philosophy of human community. This chapter will draw largely on the letters at the Dartington archive to illustrate what Heard did at Dartington and why he left, disheartened, in 1935. It also seeks to define, with reference to actual descriptions of what this 'generating cell' did, what proves to be largely ineffable in Heard's works; what did 'superconsciousness' look like, and what was the technique that could bring it about? More importantly, how does Heard's work at Dartington suggest a conflict between his role as a generaliser of specialist knowledge and an increasing specialisation on his part?

The success of Dartington Hall is attributable to the ideas and tenacity of the Elmhirsts themselves. But who were the Elmhirsts? And where did their common interest in education arise? Leonard Elmhirst (1893-1972) was the son of clergyman William Heaton Elmhirst. He was educated until the age of 14 at St. Anselm's in Bakewell, Derbyshire. He then transferred to Repton to complete his education, an experience he thoroughly hated and one which would prejudice him against public schooling. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1912 at the age of 19, studying History under the supervision of G. Lowes Dickinson and received a 3<sup>rd</sup> class degree

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<sup>512</sup> For Falby's accounts of Heard at Dartington, see Chapter 4, "Heard's 'Pauline Psychology' and Religious Groups," "Gerald Heard (1889-1971) and British Intellectual Culture between the Wars," D.Phil diss., Oxford, 2000, 175-178, and *Between the Pigeonholes*, 52-53.

in 1914.<sup>513</sup> The early lives of Heard and Elmhirst display remarkable similarities; Heard began his education at Gonville and Caius in 1908, studying History. He also wrote his History Tripos under the supervision of G. Lowes Dickinson.<sup>514</sup> Heard took his Theological Exhibition in 1911 and remained as a Candidate for Holy Orders until 1913<sup>515</sup>, when he suffered a nervous collapse after the loss of his Christian faith.<sup>516</sup> Like Heard, Elmhirst was expected to follow in the footsteps of his father and take Holy Orders; he completed his Divinity Testimonium in 1915 under The Rev. F. A. Simpson.<sup>517</sup> He also worked with the YMCA in Cambridge with an eye to becoming a missionary. Elmhirst underwent a crisis of faith which prevented his taking orders. According to Young, G. Lowes Dickinson acted as a “catalyst of doubt”<sup>518</sup> for Elmhirst, challenging him to question the validity of organised religion. As Michael Young explains,

Goldie, as he was known, had grown sceptical long before Leonard became a member not of his college – Goldie was at King’s – but of his university. He had also learnt what a profound shock it could be to young men who had it to lose their faith; he therefore refrained from anything that might bring on such a crisis.<sup>519</sup>

Examining the influence of Dickinson upon Elmhirst, one wonders if Dickinson was equally a catalyst for Heard’s loss of faith. But if, as Young claims, Dickinson was a catalyst for Elmhirst’s growing doubts, he was equally a catalyst in Elmhirst’s decision to apply himself to this task of developing some sort of “inspiration” outside of the context of organised religion. Dickinson introduced Elmhirst to Graham

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<sup>513</sup> Young, 20.

<sup>514</sup> Heard would remain close friends with Dickinson until his death in 1932, sending him a draft of the first book in his trilogy, *The Ascent of Humanity* as early as 1927. Dickinson ultimately wrote the introduction to the finished book.

<sup>515</sup> E. S. Roberts and E. J. Gross, *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College* Vol. IV. (Cambridge: CUP, 1912.) Beneath his entry, a handwritten note reads “Resident until June 1913 as Candidate for Holy Orders.”

<sup>516</sup> Stawell Heard, interview with author, October 2000.

<sup>517</sup> Young, 20, 21.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid.* 21.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*

Wallas' book, *The Great Society* (1914), as it was required reading for his lectures in Political Science.<sup>520</sup> Wallas' ideas would have appealed to Gerald Heard, most particularly his belief that people are happiest in small communities in which one can enjoy a sense of "unlimited liability" and that psychology could lead the way to a new society. Elmhirst found the book a challenge to his own faith, but also took it very much to heart. Michael Young discusses the importance of the book to Elmhirst, who wrote to Dickinson to ask "what the difference was between Wallas' conception of a common humanity shared by all individuals and the general principles laid down by the Gospels for the Kingdom of God."<sup>521</sup> Goldie replied that the "rigid orthodoxies" of religion were "out-of-date" and that "a new and much more sensible form of rational and religious behaviour must be found for the whole of human society to live by if man was to survive."<sup>522</sup> During the war, Elmhirst (who escaped the draft owing to poor health and the fact that he was "labelled would-be priest"<sup>523</sup>) continued to correspond with Dickinson over his own doubts about Christianity. In a letter of 6 May 1916 to Elmhirst, Dickinson writes

The Christian churches will not, I believe, ever recover any influence, nor do they deserve to. The greatest crisis in history has found them without counsel or feeling or guidance, merely re-echoing the passions of the worst crowd. Civilisation is perishing and they look on passive and helpless. Not from such comes the inspiration men are waiting for. If there is to be a religion in the future it will grow up outside the Churches and be persecuted by them – as indeed is now the case at home.<sup>524</sup>

Elmhirst would seem to have taken this advice quite seriously. Doubting that he could enter the church, but still feeling strongly committed to pursuing what Dickinson called "inspiration," Elmhirst ultimately abandoned the idea of entering the church; he explains his decision to his mother in a letter of 1917, writing that "when

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<sup>520</sup> Young, 22.

<sup>521</sup> Note written by Leonard Elmhirst in 1974, quoted in Young, 23.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid.

<sup>523</sup> Young, 24.

<sup>524</sup> G. Lowes Dickinson to Leonard Elmhirst, 6 May 1916, quoted in Young, 23.

one has to work out a whole new philosophy of life, one tends to be destructive at first rather than constructive.”<sup>525</sup>

In 1916 Elmhirst became a missionary for the YMCA, travelling to India in February that year. It was in India that Elmhirst met two individuals whose influence would guide him towards what would become the experiment in education at Dartington Hall. The first of these two was a fellow missionary, Sam Higginbottom, who had become a teacher of English and Economics at the Allahabad Christian College in the early 1900s.<sup>526</sup> Faced with the poverty of the community, Higginbottom concluded that a programme of agricultural training would be of equal or greater benefit than the courses he was teaching. In 1909, Higginbottom left India to pursue a degree in Agriculture at the Ohio State University, and soon returned to Allahabad to begin an agricultural institute which utilized modern techniques to improve and modernise farming. Elmhirst had seemingly found his calling, but owing to the fact that he was “not a firm enough Christian,”<sup>527</sup> Higginbottom’s Mission would not sanction his employ at the Institute in Allahabad. Higginbottom encouraged Elmhirst to pursue a similar course independently, and in 1919 Elmhirst enrolled in a degree course in agriculture at Cornell University.<sup>528</sup> Elmhirst, like Higginbottom, had something of the spirit of Sir Horace Plunkett about him, a belief that through agricultural self-sufficiency and co-operation, one could do the greatest service to a community. As Plunkett was able to improve the agricultural communities of Ireland, so too did Higginbottom and Elmhirst believe that modern techniques and practices could restore to a poor community prosperity and self-sufficiency.

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<sup>525</sup> Leonard Elmhirst to Mary Elmhirst, 15 April 1917, quoted in Young, 27.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid. 29.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid. 65.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid. 69.

It was during his time at Cornell that Elmhirst would meet that second influential individual, Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941), the Indian poet and wealthy descendant of Indian nobility; he was, as Young observes, “the son of a Maharishi [and] grandson of a Prince.”<sup>529</sup> Tagore was also similarly interested in education as a means to social improvement, having started an experimental school at Santiniketan, one of his family’s estates, in 1901, and Visva-Bharati, a centre devoted to the study of Eastern cultures.<sup>530</sup> However, Tagore was perplexed by the problem of India’s rural communities. Like Plunkett, Tagore came to the conclusion that some kind of rural regeneration was necessary through both improved agricultural techniques and a sense of community; again, like Plunkett, a landed aristocrat, Tagore felt a sense of *noblesse oblige*. Elmhirst and Tagore first met in March 1921.<sup>531</sup> Elmhirst would later recall the content of their first conversation, and Tagore’s immediate enthusiasm for his assistance in an agricultural experiment:

[Tagore:] I have been for some years looking for someone who would be willing to go and live on the farm who would begin to diagnose their village troubles, and perhaps give them tools, and perhaps the ideas, whereby they could re-establish their economy, their social balance and their creative arts. Would you be interested? Yes? Then would you come back to India with me tomorrow?<sup>532</sup>

Elmhirst, who had yet to complete his course, declined the offer for the immediate present, but would join Tagore in India in November of 1921.<sup>533</sup> However, after his first meeting with Tagore, Elmhirst wrote to an American friend, Mrs Dorothy Straight, both to relate his enthusiasm for the proposal, and to seek financial assistance to further the project; Elmhirst, who had arrived at Cornell with 50 pounds

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<sup>529</sup> Ibid. 64.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid. 79.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

<sup>532</sup> L. K. Elmhirst, *The Straight and its Origin* (Ithaca, NY: Willard Straight Hall, 1975), 21.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid. 67; 76.

to his name<sup>534</sup> and took numerous jobs to sustain himself,<sup>535</sup> realised that the project would require financing beyond his means.

The same Dorothy Straight was later to become Dorothy Elmhirst. Dorothy Payne Whitney Straight was, at the she met Leonard Elmhirst, thirty-one years old (seven years Leonard's senior) and a recent widow; her husband, aspiring journalist Willard Straight, had died in the influenza pandemic of 1919.<sup>536</sup> Straight was exceedingly wealthy, the daughter of William Collins Whitney, an influential politician (most notably Secretary of the Navy under President Grover Cleveland) and a multi-millionaire in the 'robber baron' tradition of J. P. Morgan or John D. Rockefeller. Dorothy's interests were highly philanthropic, and her wealth enabled her to be a generous benefactress. For example, Dorothy was a member of the Junior League, an organisation comprised of "fashionable young women from New York Society,"<sup>537</sup> which sought to improve the condition of the poor, and also "became active in organisations of an increasingly radical nature, like the suffragettes and the Women's Trade Union."<sup>538</sup>

Leonard Elmhirst had known Dorothy Straight for almost a year before his meeting with Tagore; Elmhirst had first been introduced to her with an appeal to fund an international student's society, the Cosmopolitan Club, at Cornell University.<sup>539</sup> The two remained in contact, beginning what became a protracted and difficult courtship. They shared the same desire to apply themselves to a worthwhile cause. Straight shared the same enthusiasm felt by Elmhirst for Tagore's offer, and donated

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<sup>534</sup> Ibid. 69.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid. 70.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid. 56.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid. 45.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid. 61.

\$25,000 to the project.<sup>540</sup> In November of 1921, Elmhirst joined Tagore in India to start their experiment.

The site for their experiment was a farm near the village of Surul, itself near Tagore's estate in Santiniketan. Tagore later named the farm Sriniketan, or Abode of Grace.<sup>541</sup> Young describes the agricultural situation which would have confronted Elmhirst and Tagore:

Surul and other nearby villages were in obvious decline, like so many in India. Irrigation used to be well looked after; by 1921 it was not. Mixed crops once sustained a good diet; by then the attempt to specialise and grow some cash crops had lowered instead of raised the quality of agriculture. Firewood used to come from common grazing grounds and forests; by then there was almost none left, and the soil erosion resulted from denudation. Rivers that once flowed freely had silted up. Handicraft manufacture which used to flourish had been destroyed by the competition from England. A rich cultural life had been fragmented.<sup>542</sup>

The task ahead of them was as multifarious as it was daunting. To revive and modernise agriculture and, further, restore a feeling of community amongst individuals – each element in itself would prove difficult, and yet each was dependent on the others for success. The principles which they proposed to follow share much in common with those employed by Plunkett in Ireland. Plunkett similarly saw that rural communities in Ireland needed both practical improvements and social regeneration. By modernising agriculture, Plunkett was able to improve the material situation of farming. By the promotion of both co-operative farming, and revival of social life within each community, Plunkett was able to restore a feeling of worth and purpose to each constituent, a sense that in some way each individual was an important and integral part of a larger whole. Tagore and Elmhirst followed a similar plan. In the two years Elmhirst would remain at Sriniketan, he and Tagore established a co-operative store, opened a weekly market for farmers and worked to revive the

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<sup>540</sup> Ibid. 81.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid. 79.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid. 80. Dorothy continued to subsidise its progress until 1947.

rural craft industry as a means to improve the economic situation. Failing cash-crops were replaced with vegetable crops, and modern farming techniques improved the output of the soil. Better breeds of animals were introduced, as were modern techniques of husbandry, and a local co-operative dairy (the landmark of Plunkett's success in Ireland) was established.

By 1923, Elmhirst left the community to continue on its own.<sup>543</sup> The reason for his leaving, Young claims, was that both Elmhirst and Tagore wanted to apply a similar approach to education. At Sriniketan, Elmhirst and Tagore had found a way to instruct a community in self-sufficiency, having provided them with the hope and conviction that they could improve their situation by their own works. Similarly, they believed that an education system which promoted the same values could be developed, one in which learning was not merely the inculcation of facts and figures, but an experience which enabled its students to grow and learn by and for themselves. With this idea in mind, Tagore founded a boarding school which he called Siksha-Satra (Seat of Instruction), and with Elmhirst worked out a prospectus which incorporated the lessons learned at Sriniketan.<sup>544</sup> Tagore and Elmhirst believed that, as with their agricultural experiment, education should draw on the latent interests and abilities of each student. As a result, a school must offer to each student the freedom to be guided by their interests and abilities and offer a wide-ranging curriculum. The prospectus to Siksha-Satra makes this point very clearly:

The aim, then, of the Siksha-Satra is [...] to provide the utmost liberty within surroundings that are filled with creative possibilities, with opportunities for the joy of play that is work – the work of exploration, and of work that is play – the reaping of a succession of novel experiences; to give the child that freedom of growth which the young tree demands for its tender shoot, that field for self-expansion in which all young life finds both training and happiness.<sup>545</sup>

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<sup>543</sup> Ibid. 82.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid.

<sup>545</sup> Prospectus, quoted in Young, 83.

The success of the experiment at Sriniketan depended on engendering in each individual a sense of their own power to affect change, that sense of hope their efforts could improve their material and social condition. In the same way, Tagore and Elmhirst believed that education must elicit the same sense; “to ‘open wide the mind’s caged door,’” continues the Prospectus, “[...] is the most vital service that it is in the power of one human being to render to another [...]”<sup>546</sup> That same “vital service” was rendered at Sriniketan by helping individuals to help themselves. The strongest principle on which Siksha-Satra was to be founded was that same potential for enabling individuals to participate and ultimately control their own development; as Tagore and Elmhirst write, “Freedom for growth, experiment, enterprise and adventure all are dependent upon Imagination, [...] that function of the mind on which all progress depends.”<sup>547</sup> By tapping the imagination and latent curiosity of each mind, Tagore and Elmhirst believed they had arrived at an antidote to “the parents’ or professors’ sin of repression and deprivation, of rod and ironbound rules”<sup>548</sup> of conventional schools.

Siksha-Satra was a success, and its aims and practices would ultimately be taken as “the kernel of Gandhi’s educational policy.”<sup>549</sup> But Elmhirst’s experience at Siksha-Satra would also lead him to conduct a similar experiment of his own on English soil. In a draft letter of July or August 1924, Elmhirst writes that

The method of Surul is right, and if I had the energy and health I would dearly love to carry Surul ideas and spirit into England. It would be a school such as has not happened yet, drawing on India, America, China, again a concentration, again a fellowship of a few men of ideas and spirit.<sup>550</sup>

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<sup>546</sup> Ibid.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.

<sup>549</sup> Ibid. 84.

<sup>550</sup> Quoted in Young, 93.

This idea was to prove the catalyst for Leonard and Dorothy. In July 1924, Dorothy wrote to Leonard “if we should ever get married, I would be quite ready to leave all the money behind, as it were, to be dispensed by a group of people over here, and you and I could start the great experiment in England empty-handed as you say.”<sup>551</sup> On 28 September, Dorothy accepted “not just marriage, but England.”<sup>552</sup>

It was also in the summer of 1924 that the first correspondence between Heard and Elmhirst began. What survives of the earliest correspondence between Heard and Elmhirst illustrates Heard’s early support of and sympathy with the Elmhirsts’ plans. From the very start, however, Heard expresses interest in the chance to put his own ideas into practice; “cooperation is the immediate need of the world,” he writes, “but we want a lot of psychological knowledge as to the proper size of groups & the types of constitution which are needed [...]”<sup>553</sup> Heard believed that social reforms based solely on economic revolutions were doomed to fail because they did not account for the psychological needs of individuals. In *The Ascent of Humanity* (1929), Heard was to write that human progress would, in future, “become less economic and more psychological,” and that “progress will be more directly in man himself, in his psyche and not in his work.”<sup>554</sup> Heard believed that Elmhirst’s experiment could potentially form the basis of a psychologically and economically sound way of life: working together in a common task, he felt, provided a model for the correct relationship between individuals in society, uncovering the subconscious ties that bind all individuals, and making inevitable a co-operative economic system. Writing to Dorothy in 1932, Heard would continue on this line, arguing that, of all the abundant schemes and plans for social regeneration, Dartington alone suggested “the structure

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<sup>551</sup> Dorothy Straight to Leonard Elmhirst, 31 July 1924. HCH.

<sup>552</sup> Young, 92.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid.

<sup>554</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 3.

for a complete philosophy of life.”<sup>555</sup> Even the best plans, he writes, are “partial and incomplete” because

most of them are completely at the mercy of the economic subsoil (one can't call it a foundation) of our present blind systems and structures, and if that 'settles,' down they must come. Then there are many small substructures up and down the world, which are economically deep but have no superstructure; they don't lead and point to any end and so the better means they promise to provide can only be used for the ruinous ends of reaction, nationalism or other superstitions. Dartington alone seems to have a foundation which can make it stand safely and also a structure which gives meaning to that foundation.<sup>556</sup>

While Heard was greatly interested in Elmhirst's ideas, he felt that any such venture held greater potential than Elmhirst realised; “I think you did harshly to turn down my drastic suggestion of a real colony,”<sup>557</sup> Heard would write in a letter of 11 November 1924. For the first time, Heard believed he had found a clue to the psychological development he felt essential to social growth, and pledged himself a willing disciple. In the same letter, Heard pledges his support to Elmhirst's project, writing that “you are one of the few who 'came eating & drinking' while I must either to the desert or not move at all, I want you to give a lead I could follow – that'd throw up every thing [*sic*] with the sense of relief that comes when after much casting a course is at last laid.”<sup>558</sup> It is interesting that Heard, who was to become a guru to so many, was at this point following another's direction.

Writing in 1969, Elmhirst would recall that he began the search for his future estate in March of 1925, recounting the story of his first encounter with the estate agents at Knight, Frank & Rutley in London. When asked what sort of property he was looking for, Elmhirst responded

“It must be beautiful, we're starting a school. We expect to make farming pay, it must have a reasonably productive soil and climate, and as much variety as

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<sup>555</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 18 September 1932. HCH.

<sup>556</sup> Ibid.

<sup>557</sup> Gerald Heard to Leonard Elmhirst, 11 November 1924. LKE General 17 E: Gerald Heard. HCH.

<sup>558</sup> Ibid.

possible, woods, forest, orchards, etc. and if you can give me all those, then historical associations thrown in. Yes, and in Devon, Dorset or Somerset.”<sup>559</sup>

In a letter of 15 December 1924, Heard responds to Elmhirst’s recent decision as to where the school would be established: “So it is to be Devonshire not Dorset. Well I know both. There are plenty of houses on the market.”<sup>560</sup> Of the forty-eight estates offered to Elmhirst, he decided on Dartington Hall. The estate, and in particular the hall itself, were in a terrible state of disrepair; as Michael Young observes, the estate “had been running down for centuries.”<sup>561</sup> Elmhirst found the estate ideally suited to his plan, but he did not purchase the estate until Dorothy had first seen it. He secured an option on Dartington and returned to America for Dorothy. In April of 1925, Leonard and Dorothy were married at Dorothy’s home in Westbury, New York. They left America on the *S. S. Majestic* on 20 May and arrived at Southampton on 29 May.<sup>562</sup> Within weeks of their arrival, the Elmhirsts had purchased the estate for £30,000. As the estate was not in a condition to be inhabited, the Elmhirsts took up temporary residence at the Seymour Hotel in Totnes. As early as 12 June 1925, Heard expressed great eagerness to see the estate; in a letter on Plunkett Foundation letterhead, he wrote “I’d love to see your new ‘Earth finding’ in Devonshire.”<sup>563</sup> By October of 1925 the Elmhirsts had rented a small house called ‘Elmsleigh’<sup>564</sup> and began renovations on the estate and commenced planning for the school.

Dartington Hall is, as even Heard acknowledged, “almost impossible to define,” but it was to be a model of rural community. “Long gone,” writes Michael Young, “were the days when estates like this had been self-sufficient at a decent

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<sup>559</sup> L. K. Elmhirst, ‘Looking Back: Private Forestry.’ (paper delivered to the Society of Foresters in Britain, January 1969). *50 Years On* (Oxford: OUP, 1969), 23.

<sup>560</sup> Gerald Heard to Leonard Elmhirst, 15 December 1924. LKE General 17 E: Gerald Heard. HCH.

<sup>561</sup> Young, 106.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid. 107.

<sup>563</sup> Gerald Heard to L. K. Elmhirst, 12 June 1925. LKE General 17E: Gerald Heard. HCH.

<sup>564</sup> Young, 108.

standard, with their own food and their supply of wood for burning, their own saw-mill and their own cider press.”<sup>565</sup> Elmhirst, like Plunkett, sought to make agricultural communities not only viable but profitable. Borrowing heavily from the principles of the co-operative movement, Elmhirst restored the 1,600 acre estate to a new standard of self-sufficiency by introducing new agricultural techniques and effectively running the estate as a co-operative. Elmhirst applied the same methods at Dartington that he had first used in India. Scientifically sensible farming techniques restored the land to productivity and profitability, and programmes of handiwork and craftwork within the estate not only made Dartington self-sufficient but helped re-develop aspects of rural industry that had long been neglected, or else become the remit of manufacturers in the cities of England. In a 1934 address to the Agricultural Economics Society at Oxford, Elmhirst would highlight specific industries that Dartington sought to re-establish as part of a versatile rural economy through modernisation:

Tanning, saw-milling, and wood-working, specialised woollen fabric weaving, furniture making, the canning and preserving of fruits, vegetables and meats, all belong by right to rural areas. Many of these do survive in country districts, but too often they have failed to move with the times.<sup>566</sup>

Though the agricultural reforms at Dartington were an important aspect of the Elmhirsts’ experiment, the most significant development (Heard referred to it as the “keystone”) was the school. Welcoming its first students in 1926, Dartington’s progressive school offered an education as modern and varied as Dartington’s outlook and ethos. As Michael Young writes,

Its essence was that it was not to be a school at all of the sort that most people would recognise. There were to be children in it, but it was not to be an institution of the book. Its classrooms were to be ‘a farm, a garden, workshops, play grounds, woods and freedom,’ its main book the book of nature. [...] Quite how the farm and garden, forests and freedom were to be used for education could be left unstated. The intention to have them at all,

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<sup>565</sup> Ibid. 106.

<sup>566</sup> Quoted in Young, 291.

not just as the setting for the school but as an essential part of it, meant there would have to be on hand much besides chalk and talk. This intention committed them to include in the experiment many of the features of a rounded society.<sup>567</sup>

The Elmhirsts created a school whose platform was largely “unsketched,” and they themselves were encumbered with “only the lightest ideological baggage.”<sup>568</sup> Leonard Elmhirst would later admit that much of the policy at Dartington was “an expression of protest”<sup>569</sup> against his own schooling; “New and experimental schools,” he writes, “are generally started by people who have been miserable at school themselves.”<sup>570</sup> However, one can draw inferences as to the aims of the school, both by considering the interests of both Leonard and Dorothy prior to this undertaking, and with reference to the Prospectus for the school and a more comprehensive statement of the school’s philosophy, *Outline of an Educational Experiment*, both written in the summer of 1926, only months before the school was to welcome its first students.<sup>571</sup> The Elmhirsts shared the belief that the key to social regeneration was through an education which *au fond* would promote community, and would make clear to each individual their importance to the whole. Their school, accordingly, was co-educational, and offered a holistic education, from the vocational to the academic; Dorothy Elmhirst was a patroness of the arts, particularly drama and visual arts, while Leonard outfitted Dartington Hall with a pottery and pioneered scientific agriculture on its experimental farm. Students would follow a loosely organised curriculum, their study governed largely by their interests and abilities. However, Leonard placed great emphasis on the development of pragmatic skills. In the *Outline*, Leonard writes that the school must be perceived as a “village community of earlier times, which was in

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<sup>567</sup> Young, 98.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid.

<sup>569</sup> Leonard Elmhirst to M. A. Strickland, 21 April 1943.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid.

<sup>571</sup> Dartington received its first students, four boys and two girls, on 24 September 1926; Dorothy’s three children from her previous marriage to Willard Straight brought the total to nine (Young, 130).

many respects self-fulfilling” and the students must therefore be expected to “engage in many practical enterprises” to sustain it.<sup>572</sup> Teachers at Dartington were to be regarded not as authorities but as colleagues, and discipline was to be everyone’s responsibility; many of the rules and punishments were devised entirely by the students.

Young defends his vague description of what comprised a Dartington education, claiming “there has never been any full statement of what Dartington is about.”<sup>573</sup> However, there are some very helpful contemporary essays which describe the school and its philosophy. The first such essay was written by W. B. Curry (Headmaster of Dartington from 1931 to 1956) and published in Trevor Blewitt’s 1934 collection, *The Modern Schools Handbook*. Blewitt collected short essays from the heads of twenty-one schools who fit three criterion of modern education; “firstly, the rejection of some of the ideals of the conventional public school system, secondly, the insistence on the needs of the individual child, and, lastly, a belief in a changing world.”<sup>574</sup> The criteria read very much like a mission statement for Dartington.

The tone of Curry’s piece is largely philosophical, describing loftily the outlook of the school, and yet gives perhaps the clearest picture of the practical methods employed at the school which differentiated it from traditional schools. Curry states that the school is based on a “definite social philosophy,”<sup>575</sup> namely “that the economic system must evolve away from *laissez-faire* and in the direction of greater co-operation.”<sup>576</sup> He becomes passionate about the need for political and

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<sup>572</sup> Quoted in Young, 138.

<sup>573</sup> Young, 98.

<sup>574</sup> Editor’s Foreword, Trevor Blewitt, *The Modern Schools Handbook* (London: Gollancz, 1934), 9.

<sup>575</sup> W. B. Curry, “Dartington Hall,” Blewitt, 58.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.* 59.

economic change “if Western civilization is not to perish,”<sup>577</sup> but is ultimately optimistic that changes can be made to stem the tide:

The old loyalties, political, social and religious, have no longer the old compelling force. The decay which they are visibly undergoing may culminate in complete disintegration; it may, on the other hand, be the prelude to a new and better world-order.<sup>578</sup>

One can begin to understand from Curry’s statements why Heard was very much interested in Dartington, especially when one compares passages from Heard’s own writings. Like Curry, Heard shared a belief that western society had lost its “vision,”<sup>579</sup> those things which once gave a solid foundation to society. He argued that society, lacking what Curry considered loyalty, “cannot call out sufficient devotion from its constituents and it must disintegrate.”<sup>580</sup> His conclusions are similar to Curry’s; “the essential requirement [...] and [...] chief need of society [...] is to find access to a force which will give individuals the power to act socially.”<sup>581</sup>

For Curry, a fundamental shift in thinking was a necessary precursor to social improvement. “If a better social and economic system is to be devised,” he writes, “we shall need a different type of men and women to run it.”<sup>582</sup> Education could play a vital role in this change, producing a generation of children who could scarcely conceive of a society that was not *au fond* co-operative; “[i]f adult society is to be co-operative rather than competitive then so must be the schools.”<sup>583</sup> Curry’s position, and that of Dartington, was an extension of Oundle School’s progressive headmaster

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<sup>577</sup> Ibid. 57.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid.

<sup>579</sup> Heard, “Religion” 6 February 1932: 145.

<sup>580</sup> Ibid.

<sup>581</sup> Ibid.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid.

<sup>583</sup> Ibid. 59.

Frederick William Sanderson (1857-1927), that a school ought to be “a mini-copy of the world as we would love to have it.”<sup>584</sup>

Elmhirst objected to the cruelty and rigidity of teaching which had marred his own education. Dartington was largely founded in reaction against traditional education, which both Curry and Elmhirst felt to be contributory to the problems of modern society, and offered no way forward; the “point of view inculcated by the traditional school,” characterised by jingoism, competition and punishment, “constitute[d] an obstacle to these changes.”<sup>585</sup> Echoing his earlier assertion that a school was a model for the world one would desire, Curry argues that adults of his generation “have been habituated to the notion that the ordinary world of the school, as of the world, is on a competitive basis and that you can only co-operate with your fellows when they are engaged in conflict with some other herd, whether in athletics or in war.”<sup>586</sup> By contrast, Dartington aimed “to produce a type of human being who takes to co-operation more naturally than the products of our present schools.”<sup>587</sup> As Elmhirst described Dartington as an experiment, so Curry refers to it as a “research station”<sup>588</sup> which would develop a technique of education to match their high ideals; “only experience will show,” he continues, “whether the methods themselves are successful and whether the philosophy itself will be part of the outlook of the new world which is being born.”<sup>589</sup>

Curry also discusses, albeit with less fervour than the philosophical outlook of the school, some of the methods employed at Dartington. There was nothing doctrinaire about Dartington. The relationship between teachers and students was to

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<sup>584</sup> Ibid.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid. 57.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid. 57.

<sup>588</sup> Ibid. 58.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid.

be “simple and informal”<sup>590</sup> and discipline was exceedingly different than at traditional schools; “rules,” as Curry explains, “were never introduced without being fully explained beforehand and the children [...] given every opportunity to criticize and amend them.”<sup>591</sup> Dormitories were co-educational, and each student had his or her own room. The school also had no set curriculum; Curry explains that “the school has no fixed course of study, since we do not believe any one curriculum is best for all children.”<sup>592</sup> Although most “ordinary school subjects” were taught, classes were “correlated with each other and with the interests of the child and the possibilities of the environment.”<sup>593</sup> The course of study for each student was worked out individually. “As to method,” Curry writes, “it is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules,” but teachers were expected to be *au fait* with modern methods of teaching; in fact, Curry explains that Dartington housed a department for the training of teachers. Students were encouraged to balance their academic pursuits with many of the trades, including a school farm, a pottery and a woodworking shop. In addition, there was a particular emphasis on “discussion groups, lectures, cinema shows, concerts”<sup>594</sup> and the dramatic arts.

Curry summarises Dartington as “a cosmopolitan co-operative Commonwealth,”<sup>595</sup> a phrase reminiscent of the Elmhirsts’ description of it as a “self-governing Commonwealth.”<sup>596</sup> Curry explains his use of the word ‘cosmopolitan’ as meaning that students were “encouraged to think of themselves first of all as human beings and only secondly as members of a particular country.”<sup>597</sup> Rather than

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<sup>590</sup> Ibid. 60.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid. 65.

<sup>593</sup> Ibid.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid. 69.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid. 57.

<sup>596</sup> *Outline of an Educational Experiment*, 1926. Quoted in Young, 139.

<sup>597</sup> W. B. Curry, *The School and a Changing Civilisation* (London: John Lane, 1934), 65.

imbuing students with a narrow nationalist fervour, Dartington promoted a “sense of social obligations”<sup>598</sup> without borders “through the habit of co-operating in groups in work which is necessary to the life of the community.”<sup>599</sup> At Dartington, both the liberal outlook of the teachers and the emphasis on non-academic work were intended to produce individuals fit for a new world order.

Curry’s emphasis on education to promote human community without restriction upon devotion touched upon an import aspect of Heard’s philosophy, namely the need to re-enlist the devotion of individuals to their society. For a commonwealth to function there must be a loyalty to the group that transcends individual interest, a point argued most passionately by Heard in his 1932 essay “Religion and the Problems of Modern Society.” He argues that the strongest human loyalty, or “real devotion,”<sup>600</sup> is to be found within families. Heard harks back to his central argument, that human community is an extension of a prehistoric, pre-individual “co-consciousness.” “[W]hen the community was utterly rudimentary, family and community may have been co-terminous.”<sup>601</sup> This would have been when humans were “almost at ape level,”<sup>602</sup> marking perhaps the earliest origins of human society from biological necessity. “Now,” he argues, “the community must transcend the family.”<sup>603</sup> Heard regarded an undue attachment to one’s family, or making the family one’s primary social unit, a threat to society at large. Attachment to one’s family, for Heard, is an essential and rudimentary step in becoming a social creature. “But,” he cautions,

if the family is permitted to outgrow its biological units and to become the social unit, i.e. if, when rearing of the children is over, the familial

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<sup>598</sup> Ibid.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid.

<sup>600</sup> Heard, “Religion and the Problems of Modern Society,” *Time and Tide* 13 February 1932: 168.

<sup>601</sup> Ibid. 168.

<sup>602</sup> Ibid.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid.

organization is maintained, then the new generation is to some degree infantilised.<sup>604</sup>

The family is the strongest site of devotion because it offers a real reciprocal relationship and unconditional acceptance; “It considers him as part of its life and he yields unquestioning service.”<sup>605</sup> But Heard believes familial devotion pre-empts a stronger attachment to society:

In the family, the individual has found a certain emotional reciprocation, and finding that, has been prevented from seeking a higher emotional social relationship with community. The community therefore can only be looked upon as something alien, something purely utilitarian or authoritarian, and so, sooner or later, it cannot call out sufficient devotion from its constituents and it must disintegrate.<sup>606</sup>

The challenge was to find a way of shunting some of this innate emotional capacity into a larger channel. For Heard, the “[t]he supreme need of the world today seems to be this: a new religion, a religion world-wide, built up of the experience with humanity as with all life, which individuals can obtain in groups of the right size.”<sup>607</sup> He concludes that, “from such groups, in which alone the individual can be *solved*, a

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<sup>604</sup> Ibid.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid. Heard’s concern with social stability and the dangers of family attachment invites an interesting and unavoidable side-line into his long-standing friendship with Aldous Huxley. 1932 also saw the publication of *Brave New World*, a novel in which the family has been superseded by an overarching social structure which not only manufactures children, but also educates them so as to feel equally attached to their community as to a family. In a 1963 article in the *Sewanee Review*, Heard claims to have been with Huxley in Sanary when he was writing the novel, although outside Heard’s claim there is no supporting evidence. However, there are unmistakable similarities in thought which do suggest Heard’s influence. In the novel, one of the ten World Controllers, Mustapha Mond, teaches a group of young students about the horrific consequences of the family unit to society. “Try to imagine what ‘living with one’s family’ meant,” (40) he asks, before launching into a litany of the unsavoury aspects of family life from the perspective of a society wherein our values are considered bad taste:

Family, monogamy, romance. Everywhere exclusiveness, everywhere a focussing of interest, a narrow channelling of impulse and energy.

‘But every one belongs to every one else,’ he concluded, citing the hypnopaedic proverb. (45)

In that proverb and Mond’s revulsion against the ‘focussing’ and ‘narrow channelling’ of one’s social energies is the germ of Heard’s argument. Mond’s conclusion on the “primal and the ultimate need” (49) for social stability is also similar to Heard’s; “No civilisation without social stability. No social stability without individual stability,” (48) Mond trumpets, neatly summing up Heard’s outlook.

<sup>607</sup> February 20th, 1932 (#6) ‘Religion and the Problems of a Modern Society.’ Part 4 of 4: 197-198.

psychological backing for the economic associations in which the world will have to be organized.”<sup>608</sup> Dartington presented the first such opportunity Heard saw to form a group which could not only form both the economic and, more importantly, the psychological basis for a new society; as he wrote to Dorothy Elmhirst on 18 September 1932, Dartington suggested “the structure for a complete philosophy of life.”<sup>609</sup>

The first attraction of Dartington for Heard was its emphasis on agricultural co-operation as a psychologically and economically viable model of society. Working with Plunkett, Heard had seen the potential for shared labour and a co-operative spirit to make an “unlimited liability company”<sup>610</sup> of small, socially bankrupt communities. Elmhirst drew, in large part, ideas from Plunkett in setting up his English “experiment.” Heard believed improvements to rural life demonstrated under what social conditions individuals could best achieve a sense of their super-personal connection to others. Co-operation was simultaneously pragmatic as well as conducive to the psychological outlook upon which social ties were predicated. Any hope for greater social change was, for Heard, predicated upon a successful restructuring of rural life. In 1934, he wrote an article for the *Architectural Review* entitled “The Dartington Experiment.” in which he extolled the merits of the Elmhirsts’ project.<sup>611</sup> Heard comments on the relationship between rural and urban regeneration, and the necessity of re-inventing rural England. “[T]he city,” he writes, “is really not nearly as easily re-planned as is the country;” it is for that reason, he asserts, that “[a]ny national planning which is not to make confusion worse and only

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<sup>608</sup> Ibid. 198, my emphasis.

<sup>609</sup> Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 18 September 1932. HCH.

<sup>610</sup> Gerald Heard, "University Supplement: Leviathan. Introduction," *Time and Tide* 16 November 1935: 1665.

<sup>611</sup> On 4 May 1934, Heard wrote to Leonard Elmhirst to say he was “delighted to hear you have approved the Arch. Rev. article. It is always difficult to make an outline of a growing thing – doubly difficult when oneself is so interested.” (LKE General 17 E. HCH.)

confirm abuse must begin with country planning.”<sup>612</sup> Without an established foundation to provide a proven, viable social and economic model for the future, no meaningful social changes could be affected. Heard’s view was shared by the Elmhursts; “The problem of civilization as it appeared to the founders of this original experiment was this: Must you not build the social structure from the foundation up, continually combining economic efficiency and emotional satisfaction?”<sup>613</sup> This question is certainly one which Heard had considered of paramount importance in his own work. As we have seen, Heard advanced the need for “a psychological backing for the economic associations in which the world will have to be organized”<sup>614</sup> in *Time and Tide*. In *The Source of Civilization* (1935) he argues more passionately for the need to balance an economic system against psychological understanding to stem social collapse; “A society which advances economically [...] must become unstable unless, through an equal advance in psychology, it can give a proportionately self-conscious knowledge of its inner nature”<sup>615</sup> The symptoms of collapse he envisions for a society which fails to “make and continue to make religious discoveries as radical as its material discoveries”<sup>616</sup> is as much a reflection of the time in which it was written as a prediction for the future; any such society, he writes, “will generate increasingly neuroses, ill-will and violence; and must finally (if it can so long escape internal anarchy and ruin) become wholly militaristic, devote itself to destruction and collapse.”<sup>617</sup> In Dartington, Heard saw hope for the formation of a dedicated group to create a psychologically informed ‘religion’ which could counterbalance the excess of

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<sup>612</sup> Heard, “The Dartington Experiment” *Architectural Review*, April 1934.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid.

<sup>614</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 197.

<sup>615</sup> Heard, *Source*, 136.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid.

materialism. Writing to Elmhirst on 12 January 1932, Heard confirms their common interest in establishing a group to pursue this end:

The first part of the problem is this – to raise psychological capital & that, I now see you are right, can only be done by some sort of group organisation for that specific purpose. Without a new religion, a new spiritual technique, a new way or recharging the will to trust, no one can have the power either to believe in others or in his own nature.<sup>618</sup>

At the same time, Heard stresses the need for a complementary economic structure to support and sustain such a group, and

[W]hen these Groups are forming then they will need planned thought just as much as a brain & a heart needs a skeleton & muscles. The trouble has so often been that when the heart was reading as with Prim[itive] Christianity & with the Franciscan outlook there was no economic plan ready which the enthusiasm trust & conviction of these movements could have run – they were therefore largely dissipated instead of conceived.<sup>619</sup>

In “The Dartington Experiment,” Heard highlights the Elmhirst’s commitment to develop a balanced social outlook, capable of incorporating both the material and the psychological; “Unless we face this problem of planning widely and deeply – as widely at least as the national frontiers, as deeply as the needs of men, beyond their economic requirements down to their psychological needs – it is hard to understand what is being done at Dartington.”<sup>620</sup> Dartington, he argues, advanced a holistic approach to social reform:

Dartington is a double experiment, an attempt to co-ordinate economic efficiency with social satisfaction. It is therefore an experiment which all civilisation must make, but which can only succeed if every constituent of the experimental group can show a double capacity, economic ability and social devotion.<sup>621</sup>

He further explains his concept of “double capacity,” describing the life at Dartington as “simultaneously an economic proposition, a thing that pays its way here and now

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<sup>618</sup> Gerald Heard to Leonard Elmhirst, 12 January 1932. LKE General 17 E. HCH.

<sup>619</sup> Ibid.

<sup>620</sup> Heard, “Dartington Experiment.”

<sup>621</sup> Ibid.

[...] so that it may also support and become a way of living wherein men may find a real civilisation, a living democracy, a creative relationship with their fellows.”<sup>622</sup>

This sentiment is echoed in an article Heard contributed to the Dartington newsletter, *News of the Day*, on 13 March 1934, in which he argued Dartington was borne from a “new realisation” that “human relationships and occupational co-operation may be integrated.”<sup>623</sup>

There is no mistake that Heard believed the lessons learned at Dartington would be of universal application. In the same article, he claims that Dartington was “an attempt to construct the new manor which may be the unit of the new England.”<sup>624</sup> Heard invokes the Medieval image of a feudal land arrangement wherein tenants paid fealty to the lord of an estate. The newness Heard suggests is in the co-operative outlook of the Dartington experiment and the ‘unlimited liability’ shared by its members. “We realise,” Heard puns, recalling his Wykeham, “that manors are an essential part in the making of men.” He then proceeds to situate Dartington within the context of current social, political and economic movements in what makes for an interesting comparison and equally jarring contrast between Dartington and the rest of the world; “We ourselves, Rooseveltian America, Fascist Italy, Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, all realise that you must first ‘nucleate’ men if they are to combine to build a planned nation. Dartington aims at the new manorial nucleation.”<sup>625</sup> Heard is by no means suggesting a similarity in ends, but only the common means by which each movement sought to establish a social core around which individuals could rally and about which they could feel fervently. As Heard would later reflect, all individuals possess a thwarted longing for some sense of social

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<sup>622</sup> Ibid.

<sup>623</sup> *News of the Day*, Dartington Hall, 13 March 1934. HCH.

<sup>624</sup> Ibid.

<sup>625</sup> Ibid.

purpose, waiting to be tapped by those who offered a cohesive vision of society; “Leave millions in modern communities without any purpose in their lives, save getting or failing to get a living, any cause for which they may count will be vapidly espoused.”<sup>626</sup> Heard runs the gamut from Roosevelt’s America to Hitler’s Germany in order to illustrate various manifestations of the same thwarted social impulse, and to suggest obliquely the need for a positive model to direct this energy.<sup>627</sup>

Heard never faltered in his belief that agricultural co-operativism would provide the correct economic model for an utopian society. But Heard was always less interested in the economic side of any such venture; although he would happily proselytise, the work to make Dartington a model of agricultural co-operation was left to Leonard Elmhirst. Heard was instead devoted to developing a psychological technique which would complement the development of a co-operative society. In his first visits to Dartington, Heard expounded his ideas towards developing such a technique. On 24 January 1932, Heard delivered his first paper at Dartington School as part of their regular Sunday Evening meetings; he would become a frequent guest at these meetings between 1932 and 1933. The original untitled, typewritten manuscript of Heard’s paper (with handwritten corrections and marginalia by Heard) exists in the archive of Dorothy Elmhirst’s correspondence. The subject of the paper is greatly reminiscent of his 1929 book *The Ascent of Humanity*. Heard reiterates his understanding of history as “the vision of a process, of working something out—of a gigantic pattern.”<sup>628</sup> This pattern, Heard explains, is of the evolution of human consciousness, and the socially detrimental results of self-consciousness. “The earliest society,” he writes, “appears to have been held together by magic, by

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<sup>626</sup> Gerald Heard, “Men and Books,” rev. of *Ethics of Power*, by Philip Leon and *We Europeans*, by J. Huxley et. al, *Time and Tide* 21 December 1935: 1907.

<sup>627</sup> Heard’s position on nationalism is discussed at greater length in Chapter V in relation to his career as a pacifist in the late 1930s.

<sup>628</sup> Untitled paper, January 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

suggestibility – no implements of war.”<sup>629</sup> Heard is describing what he describes in *The Ascent of Humanity* as a state of co-consciousness in which it was psychologically impossible to think of one’s self outside of the group. As individual self-consciousness displaced our initial co-consciousness, and with it our “inherent power of co-operation,”<sup>630</sup> the problem of how to bind individuals in a community became acute, and the solution crucial. Heard’s reference to the lack of implements of war in prehistoric societies takes on more significance when considering his 1935 book *The Source of Civilization*. In this book, Heard argues that when we were co-conscious “social values were self-sanctioning;”<sup>631</sup> that is, community was natural and unavoidable. Lacking this psychological tie between individuals, the self-conscious society employs violence or the threat thereof as a “sanction,” ultimately forcing individuals to relinquish their autonomy to the greater whole. But as Heard asserts, “man’s agreements, co-operations, self-subordinations, loyalties and devotions, the natural values of human life, are not ends preserved at the sad price of violence.”<sup>632</sup> The “pattern” which Heard observes in history is an on-going struggle to find an effective means of re-integrating the individual with his peers without the use of violence, or in Heard’s own phrase, a “self-sanctioning civilization.”<sup>633</sup>

In his address to Dartington School, Heard argues that “we are faced with the same problem—how can we create a democracy that will keep itself going. How can individuals really hold together a society.”<sup>634</sup> He claims that the “dominant idea” of liberal democracy, “that the state can be kept going by giving everyone a good time,” is “psychologically wrong” because it only serves to cement the individual in his or

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<sup>629</sup> Ibid.

<sup>630</sup> Gerald Heard, *The Source of Civilization* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935): 224.

<sup>631</sup> Ibid. 137.

<sup>632</sup> Ibid. 22.

<sup>633</sup> Ibid. 196.

<sup>634</sup> Untitled paper, January 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

her individuality and does nothing to tap the potential extra-individuality within each individual. Heard's solution is perhaps his most clear formulation of his ideas on group living:

The hope of society today lies with the rise of specific religions—of a new group sense in experience which [*sic*] enables people to serve their group. All religions commence with small groups in which people feel intense loyalty to each other—“because you love the brethren you have passed from death to life”—you are no longer an isolated human being. This is the force that has kept religions together—this sense of loyalty which springs from a region back of the mind—from heart and will, in a state of suggestibility. The self-regarding instincts, greed, malice and fear, tend to make impossible the experience of the group [*sic*] which is an expansion of personality to an interest outside ourselves.<sup>635</sup>

In another undated address, Heard explains more fully what he considers to be “the force that lies behind the organization of groups meeting together with a common aim.”<sup>636</sup> Heard cites, as examples, the Quakers and the Moravians who “discovered the power of the group as a means of recharging” themselves so as to “give to others love, joy and abundant vitality – the promise of religious life.”<sup>637</sup> It is not so much faith, he argues, but the communion of individuals which is essential to religion, and the small group best calculated to arouse a feeling of community amongst individuals. The individual “loses himself within that community and has an experience which he can have nowhere else.”<sup>638</sup> This is a sentiment Heard would express to Margaret Isherwood in a letter of 23 November 1932; “The churches are too individualistic and authoritarian to direct men's lives any longer to adequate social enterprise.”<sup>639</sup> What was required, as Heard continues in his lecture, was the development of that sense of extra-individuality which gave religion its true power:

I believe people have the energy to serve their neighbour and can only have it if they have in a small group learnt what this inspiring love is, which is called

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<sup>635</sup> Ibid.

<sup>636</sup> Heard, undated address, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>637</sup> Ibid.

<sup>638</sup> Ibid.

<sup>639</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 23 November 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

by the Christian name of charity, “charitas”. It was not desire, it was not possessiveness; it was this immense power of infinite giving, of being one of the children of God. That power, I believe, can be generated and has been generated again and again but always through the experience of mutual devotion, the living, organic relationship of a group.<sup>640</sup>

Although the actual groups as Heard envisioned them would necessarily be quite small, Heard believed that they held the solution to the problems of modern society:

The essential thing for civilization today is that it shall contain unions strong enough to generate a force of good-will sufficient to counteract the forces of dissolution. What human society needs is a force that will make people capable of a great endeavour and a great risk.<sup>641</sup>

Having thus recharged themselves in a group, Heard argues that each individual could re-enter society-at-large with a sense of belonging and purpose:

Evidence does exist that out of small groups meeting together in a spirit of devotion and equality, there can be got a devotion which gives not only the power of service in the outer world but gives that because it settles the needs and difficulties of the individual. They have passed from death to life because they love the brethren. The fear of death is lost because they have had direct experience of an ever living life.<sup>642</sup>

In a 1932 article in *Time and Tide*, Heard asks an important rhetorical question: “Is, then, society to break down until it has reached groups of this absurdly small size?”<sup>643</sup>

His answer, both in his address to Dartington and in *Time and Tide*, is that these small groups would ‘recharge’ individuals and empower them to act socially:

Drawing upon that eternal life they have the power of giving life more abundantly to all those around them. So I believe if we make this discovery even our sick civilization may completely renew itself and rediscover that it has been within it dynamic power and dynamic life.<sup>644</sup>

This same sense that the technique they were evolving at Dartington was not so much an original discovery as a renewal of an evolving social instinct appears in his correspondence with Margaret Isherwood. In the same letter of 23 November 1932, he

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<sup>640</sup> Heard, untitled address, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>641</sup> Ibid.

<sup>642</sup> Ibid.

<sup>643</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 198.

<sup>644</sup> Heard, untitled address, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

makes the case for both developing a means of breaking down individuality and constructing a functioning group which could lead others by its example:

[W]e are bound again (for it has been tried before) to attempt a new equality in mutual help, what I call sometimes psychological communism, sometimes democratic confessionalism, i.e. that we own to each other that we live for the same idea, believe in the same method, and are up against the same problems as to how to make ourselves effective examples of it, and to commend it by our behaviour to those who doubt or deny it.<sup>645</sup>

Heard's description of *agape* as a precursor to social regeneration shows, for the first time, Heard's first steps beyond theory to practice. Heard believed he had found the way to 'superconsciousness' through some kind of group association, and began to put his plan into action at Dartington.

In another undated address (but ostensibly from 1932, given its context) delivered at Dartington, Heard expands upon his idea of "recharging" the individual's social batteries through group association. Heard begins by examining "the force that lies behind the organization of groups meeting together with a common aim and under the inspiration of religion[.]"<sup>646</sup> That underlying force, he concludes, is this power to reaffirm one's social ties. Heard discusses the Quakers and the Moravians as examples of two religious groups who "discovered the power of the group as a means of recharging so that they were able to give others love, joy and abundant vitality – the promise of religious life."<sup>647</sup> Within such groups, individuals alone can gain that experience of *agape* which re-fuses the individual with the group; "The individual loses himself within that community," Heard writes, "and has an experience which he can have nowhere else."<sup>648</sup> "That power," he continues, "[...] can be generated and

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<sup>645</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 23 November 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>646</sup> Undated address, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid.

has been generated again and again, but always through the experience of mutual devotion, the living, organic relationship of a group.”<sup>649</sup>

In such an experience, Heard argues, is the only hope for human society. Quoting the Idealist philosopher Josiah Royce, Heard asserts that it is “the devotion to the beloved community” which constituted “the driving force of primitive Christianity.” It was this same “immense power of infinite being” which, in the past, could merge each individual within the greater life of the whole community. Again, Heard’s arguments parallel some of the arguments he puts forth in his *Time and Tide* article “Religion and the Problems of a Modern Society,” published in 1932. In this article, Heard asserts that “in religious communion the constituents had direct sense of the union with their community and through it with eternal life.”<sup>650</sup> The individual then experiences the “direct sense that his individual isolation is not the absolute” and gains “direct experience of a life which is supra-personal and unlimited,” ultimately achieving what Heard calls “at-one-ment.”<sup>651</sup> The end result of that experience is to provide “a force which [gives] individuals the power to act socially.”<sup>652</sup> In his Dartington address, Heard makes a very similar argument that individuals will not want to serve their communities “until their deepest needs have been rewarded.”<sup>653</sup> Individuals can avail themselves of the “energy to serve their neighbour” only if they have first, “in a small group learnt what this inspiring love is.”<sup>654</sup> Again, Heard reiterates the points he makes in *Time and Tide*, arguing that the experience of the

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<sup>649</sup> Ibid.

<sup>650</sup> Gerald Heard, “Religion and the Problems of a Modern Society,” *Time and Tide*, 6 February 1932: 145.

<sup>651</sup> Ibid.

<sup>652</sup> Ibid.

<sup>653</sup> Gerald Heard, undated address, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1.HCH.

<sup>654</sup> Ibid.

“eternal life” of the community, individuals can derive “the power of giving more life to all those around them.”<sup>655</sup>

Heard concludes with an appeal to his listeners. “The essential thing for civilization today,” he asserts, “is that it shall contain unions strong enough to generate a force of good-will sufficient to counteract the forces of dissolution.” The idea is one which Heard would make central to his philosophy of pacifism, that “in cells or teams, active peace-lovers can have a realization which will [...] permit them to live a life of unlimited liability with their companions - a true co-operative commonwealth based surely on psychology.”<sup>656</sup> What Heard proposes in his address, however, represents his earliest attempt to create such a group at Dartington.

In a letter to Dorothy Elmhist that, although undated, must follow closely on the above lecture, we can see evidence that Heard succeeded in establishing such a group as he described. He writes that he is “delighted that there is now a ‘generating cell’ in Dartington.”<sup>657</sup> We have seen in his first address to the school that Heard makes frequent use of the concept of individuals becoming recharged, and so his reference to a ‘generating cell’ is merely a variation on a theme; in the same letter, Heard makes reference to certain “dynamic characters” (namely Leonard Elmhist and the headmaster, William Curry) who can “‘recharge’ themselves,” but for the average individual, who can easily become “exhausted and discouraged,” Heard stresses the importance of a group. He includes himself and Dorothy within that category of average individuals:

We must, I think, have some way of reaffirming our belief that life has the large meaning which at times we know it has but which in the immediate

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<sup>655</sup> Ibid.

<sup>656</sup> Gerald Heard, “The Significance of the New Pacifism,” *The New Pacifism*, ed. Gerald K. Hibbert (London: Allenson, 1936), 18.

<sup>657</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhist, 1932, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

pressure and strain of ordinary “close up” daily workings we cant [*sic*] help at times losing sight of.<sup>658</sup>

The group began as essentially a focussed discussion group, meeting each Sunday after the customary Sunday Evening Committee lecture, of which Heard delivered many. However, the group developed, and it is interesting to follow the growth of Heard’s experiment.

Heard’s initial lectures met with such success that the school formally engaged Heard as a visiting lecturer. Although Heard was offered a position as teacher of History by Leonard Elmhirst as early as December 1928<sup>659</sup>, his official connection with the school is documented in a letter from the Headmaster of Dartington, William Curry, written on 20 July 1932. “What I suggest,” writes Curry, “is you come to us also every other Saturday, so that we alternate with the B.B.C.”<sup>660</sup> Curry says that, “for official purposes,” Heard would be called the “visiting lecturer in Current History” splitting his visits between the Junior and Senior school at a salary of 7 guineas per trip.<sup>661</sup> Heard agreed, and in a letter of 9 September 1932, Curry writes that he will look forward to Heard’s first official lecture on 7 October.<sup>662</sup> To his friend W. J. H. Sprott, Heard wrote not long after “I visit Devon once a fortnight, alternatively with my BBC talks, lecturing on current Europe [...] at this communist school.”<sup>663</sup> Heard’s perception of Dartington as “communist” will take on relevance as this chapter progresses.

On 10 October Heard writes to Dorothy Elmhirst expressing his great enthusiasm and high hopes for the school:

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<sup>658</sup> Ibid.

<sup>659</sup> The offer is discussed in letters from Gerald Heard to Leonard Elmhirst, 9 December 1928, and Leonard Elmhirst to Gerald Heard, 21 December 1928, LKE General 17 E. HCH.

<sup>660</sup> William Curry to Gerald Heard, 20 July 1932, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 2. HCH.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid.

<sup>662</sup> William Curry to Gerald Heard, 9 September 1932, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 2. The Visitor’s Book at Dartington confirms that Heard was there between Friday 7 and Monday 10 October.

<sup>663</sup> Undated letter to W. J. H. Sprott. King’s College Archive, Cambridge.

You're not going to get the conventional thanks but I must tell you that though Dartington has always been to me the best thing in life no visit has been better than this one. For one feels Dartington is growing so fast now. It's sitting up and taking notice and soon it will be speaking and showing its distinct character.<sup>664</sup>

Such was Heard's enthusiasm for Dartington that he became a proselytiser for it, inviting various friends and notable figures in various fields to see visit, lecture or, in the cases of Aldous Huxley and Naomi Mitchison, enrol their children in the School. As we learn from Mitchison, it was Heard who first mentioned Dartington to Huxley. Mitchison, citing a letter from Huxley which she discovered too late for inclusion in Grover Smith's edition of *The Letters of Aldous Huxley*,<sup>665</sup> makes this evident:

Give my love to Gerald if you see him and tell him he said he'd write to me about that school in Devonshire – Dartington, isn't that the name?<sup>666</sup>

She recounts in her autobiography, *You May Well Ask*, that Heard mentioned Dartington as a potential school for her own two children in a letter shortly after its inception:

He goes on to tell me about the Elmhirsts about to start Dartington School and looking for pupils who are to learn all the theoretical through the practical. Would I be interested?<sup>667</sup>

Mitchison also contends that Huxley "must have been convinced by Gerald Heard"<sup>668</sup> his to send his son Matthew there in 1934.<sup>669</sup> Aldous Huxley was another that Heard

<sup>664</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 10 October 1932, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>665</sup> "I kept dozens of letters from Aldous. [...] When I was asked to help with *Letters of Aldous Huxley* I found some of them but others turned up later." (Mitchison, *You May Well Ask*, 95.)

<sup>666</sup> Aldous Huxley to Naomi Mitchison, quoted in *You May Well Ask*, 99.

<sup>667</sup> Naomi Mitchison, *You May Well Ask*, 108. She was, in fact, not interested: "I felt," she writes, "that if I was going to school myself it would be lovely but not what any of my children wanted and needed" (Ibid. 99).

<sup>668</sup> Ibid. 99n.

<sup>669</sup> Matthew remained at Dartington until 1936, when he was withdrawn, rather abruptly, by his father. Michael Young claims that he was removed owing to an inordinate fondness for woodworking; his father considered this was "not in line with family tradition and he said as much to Matthew who thought that he had been getting on very well with his woodwork" (Young, 173). However, there were other, and more legitimate, reasons for his removal which have not been considered. In the Dartington archive, there are hastily scribbled minutes in Gerald Heard's handwriting of a meeting between Heard, Huxley, Leonard Elmhirst held at 42 Upper Brook Street, London (dated "3-4 November 1935").

introduced to Dartington, which Huxley once described as “an experiment which may, I think, turn out to be something very remarkable.”<sup>670</sup> Huxley was also “persuaded” by Heard “to give one of the Sunday evening lectures at Dartington Hall as the Elmhursts had asked him to do.”<sup>671</sup>

In the same letter<sup>672</sup>, Heard mentions once again the “generating cell,” and in particular the complaint of one member that the formation of such a group was merely propaganda. He dismissed the suggestion; “I thought perhaps she was taking the line Auden takes when he maintains that any sense of the Group is lost if it becomes conscious and so maintains it only really exists in a public school team playing a game!”<sup>673</sup> This reference to Auden’s doubts about *agape* in 1932 is interesting in and of itself, considering how his own position would change by 1934, with the publication of “The Group Movement and The Middle Classes.” However, this comment takes on greater significance when one considers Heard was an extremely important early influence on the young poet. On 27 November 1931, Roger Fry wrote to G. L. Dickinson to recommend Gerald Heard’s new book, *The Social Substance of Religion*, having found it “full of moving and inspiring suggestions” which “almost ought to have been written in poetry.”<sup>674</sup> Fry’s belief in the poetic potential of Heard’s work is fascinating when one considers their importance to Auden, who would make great use of not only Heard’s “suggestions,” but would quite often

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Huxley outlined in six vague points additional reasons that must have contributed to his decision to withdraw Matthew from Dartington, of which five are legible:

1. Language study thorough, Matthew’s desire
2. Test showed M relatively behind age standard – not really M’s desire but A’s desire.
3. M’s own letters in depth of despair
4. School fails to train character, staff not setting proper example
5. Oscar etc. – if person told, any but conventional sex ALWAYS wrong then teachers should be impeccable in this respect.

<sup>670</sup> Sybille Bedford, *Aldous Huxley, A Biography*, Vol I. (London: Collins and Chatto & Windus, 1973): 264.

<sup>671</sup> *Ibid.* 292.

<sup>672</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 10 October 1932, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>673</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>674</sup> Fry, *Letters*, 665

rework what Edward Mendelson describes as Heard's "woozy sentences"<sup>675</sup> into poetry; as Mendelson writes, Heard "provided Auden with a cluster of phrases and implications that he applied in his own way."<sup>676</sup> Auden was first introduced to Heard by Naomi Mitchison in 1929. At the time of their meeting, Heard was then the literary editor of a short-lived review, *The Realist*, whose editorial board boasted such names as Aldous and Julian Huxley, Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells, Rebecca West and Mitchison's brother JBS Haldane. Mitchison, already close friends with Auden, approached Arnold Bennett with some of his poetry and the two arranged with Heard to publish a selection of Auden's poems in *The Realist*. The journal, however, went bankrupt before Auden's poems were published.<sup>677</sup> From their first meeting, however, Auden grew to regard Heard as a sort of guru. Auden most openly admits his respect for Heard in a poetic fragment (first published by Lucy McDiarmid in 1978) entitled "In The Year of My Youth. . . ." Harold Nicolson notes the subject of the uncompleted poem in his diary entry of 4 August 1933; "The idea," Nicolson writes, "is Heard as Virgil guiding him through modern life."<sup>678</sup>

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<sup>675</sup> Mendelson, *Early Auden*, 26n.

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>677</sup> Benton, Jill. *Naomi Mitchison: A Life*, 62. Heard's earliest letters to Leonard Elmhirst suggest that he had tried to persuade Elmhirst to purchase *The Realist* and use it to promulgate the new thinking coming out of Dartington; on 3 October 1929, Heard wrote a personal letter (i.e. not on his official *Realist* letterhead) to say "Yesterday I saw Read, Catlin and Arnold Bennett. They all agree to accept your offer, should you make it definite: - i.e. to offer Conway Davies to take over the *Realist*, and, failing that, (should he refuse to give it up) to carry on with the Editorial Board, under a new name. I have written to Carr Saunders, Gregory, Haldane, Laski, Mrs. Mitchison [Mrs Mitchison has given me a better assenting.], Sullivan and Wells asking them whether they will do the same." (On 12 October, Heard mentioned that Wells seemed particularly keen; Wells reportedly "knew Dorothy & would welcome you two 'warmly into *Realist* affairs', adding 'I don't want to waste time in hypothetical talks but perhaps we might all meet.'). Elmhirst's replied on 4 October to say "The situation seems to be rather complicated besides having some rather ugly aspects. I had rather hoped when first hearing about it that a sum not greater than that for which promises are supposed to have been given would have been sufficient to assist the enterprise on its feet." He also expressed reservations about the paper's profitability; "From my own experience in America profit from such a paper even in the third year would be doubtful." By 12 October, it would appear that the deal had fallen through, with Heard writing to Elmhirst "*The Realist*, as it has been, I think can now be said to be dead." (LKE General 17 E: Gerald Heard, HCH.)

<sup>678</sup> Nicolson, *Diaries*, 153.

In his 1932 fragment “In the Year of My Youth . . .,” Auden borrows heavily from Heard’s *Social Substance of Religion* in order to discuss the social implications of this psychic rift. The speaker of the poem, led through modern London by his friend Sampson (a model of Gerald Heard), observes men and women who live like automatons, working but without purpose or satisfaction. Sampson attributes this to a division between motivation and “executive” power. The speaker of the poem questions Sampson about this division:

“What did you mean when you mentioned the limen?”  
 I asked. “The barrier,” he answered, “which divides  
 That which must will from that which can perceive,  
 Desire from Data; the watershed between  
 The lonely unstable mad executives  
 We recognize in Banks and restaurants as our friends  
 And that lost country across which  
 Dreams have made furtive flights at night  
 To reconnoitre but have never landed  
 Where dwells the unprogressive blind society  
 Possessing no argument but the absolute veto.”<sup>679</sup>

In her commentary on this fragment, Lucy McDiarmid acknowledges that Auden borrows the word “executive” from Heard’s 1932 book *The Social Substance of Religion*. Heard uses the word to describe the rational, conscious mind which sees only what it can use. In Auden’s poem, the executive mind is personified by those “lonely unstable mad” individuals, those we “recognize in Banks,” their reason and personal greed emblemized by their economic ambitions. McDiarmid also notes that his use of the word “unstable” is a direct reference to *Social Substance of Religion*, where Heard attributes tangible human achievement to the “growth of the outer, executive, unstable side of man’s nature.”<sup>680</sup> The outer side of our nature is unstable because it changes and grows as we learn and develop. Heard goes on to say

<sup>679</sup> Quoted in McDiarmid, Lucy “In the Year of my Youth...” II.150-160.

<sup>680</sup> Heard, *Substance*, 30.

that our inner nature is “unadapting, unalterable;”<sup>681</sup> “the subconscious,” he writes, “is completely resistant to change in its circumstances, and remains unaltered by the outward economic modification of its environment.”<sup>682</sup> By “denying [the subconscious mind] those expressions natural to it,” our condition is one of “profound distress;”<sup>683</sup> while advancing outwardly, we have no inner conception of what it is we work towards. Unaware of the potential for real unity that exists within us, we work to further isolate ourselves from one another by listening to the demands of the “surface mind.”<sup>684</sup> Writing in 1935, Heard would again use the word “unstable” to describe a society that “advances economically” without matching this outward growth “proportionately [with] self-conscious knowledge of its inner nature.”<sup>685</sup> The problem for both Heard and Auden was that the subconscious mind, the realm of “desire” which ultimately governs our social behaviour, was isolated and ignored, while the conscious mind, the world of “data,” was made invincible. Auden, who describes the subconscious mind as “possessing no argument but the absolute veto,” is simply reworking Heard’s conception of the subconscious, “possessed of an absolute veto but shut off with equal absoluteness from the argument.”<sup>686</sup> Like Heard, Auden believes we must rediscover that “lost country” which still exercises its blind influence over our actions, and consciously channel the energy it offers.

Auden’s “Writing” essay (published alongside Heard’s “History of Ideas” in Mitchison’s *Outline* in 1932) shows how closely his conception of the subconscious social self resembles Heard’s. For example, Auden discusses the “continuously

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<sup>681</sup> Ibid.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid. 25-26.

<sup>683</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>684</sup> Ibid.

<sup>685</sup> Heard, *Source*, 136.

<sup>686</sup> Heard, *Substance*, 30.

present group life”<sup>687</sup> of our pre-individual ancestors that preceded language, and, like Heard, posited that this “continuously present” group sense was akin to a kind of telepathy. As evidence, Auden cites W. H. R. Rivers’ example of Melanesian rowers who acted in concert without any apparent communication.<sup>688</sup> “There was no discussion as to who should stroke or steer,” writes Auden; “All found their places as we should say by instinct.”<sup>689</sup> This connection has been noted before by Katherine Bucknell, who in her commentary on Auden’s essay, remarks that “the fact Auden does not give the exact source of the story suggests that he may have been recalling it from Heard’s telling in *The Ascent of Humanity*.”<sup>690</sup> Auden’s familiarity with Heard’s *Ascent* is further supported by his argument for the dissolution of this co-consciousness and the birth of self-consciousness. “At sometime or other in human history,” writes Auden, “man became self conscious, he began to feel, I am I, and You are Not I; we are shut inside ourselves and apart from each other.”<sup>691</sup> Self-consciousness, as in Heard’s scheme, meant that each individual constituent of a society became aware of him or herself as an individual entity first, and a part of the group second; Auden describes this initial state of self-awareness in which each constituent of a society perceived itself as “an individual thing, different from other things, but without meaning except in its connection with other things.”<sup>692</sup> Ultimately, Auden argues, individual autonomy supplanted this feeling of unity entirely. As Auden writes, “a part begins to work not only as if it were a whole (which it is) but as if there were no larger wholes.”<sup>693</sup> “The more this feeling grew,” argues Auden, there was an increasingly greater need “to bridge over the gulf, to

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<sup>687</sup> Auden, “Writing,” 43.

<sup>688</sup> The exact reference can be found in Rivers, W. H. R. *Instinct and the Unconscious*, 95.

<sup>689</sup> Auden, “Writing,” 40.

<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*, 40n.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.* 40.

<sup>692</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>693</sup> *Ibid.*

recover the sense of being as much part of life as the cells in his body are part of him.”<sup>694</sup> Whereas Heard argues that civilisation was constructed as an artificial means of reassuring the “part” that it belonged to a “larger whole,” Auden suggests that the more fundamental development of language was developed by self-conscious individuals as a means to recover the lost sense of co-consciousness. The origin of language, argues Auden, goes back to the noises of excitement made during intensely social activities enjoyed by a co-conscious group. Before the loss of our co-conscious unity, Auden writes, when early humans were “doing things together in a group, such [as] hunting; when feeling was strongest, [. . .] the group had made noises, grunts, howls, grimaces.”<sup>695</sup> “If he made the noise,” Auden asks, “could he not recover the feeling?”<sup>696</sup> By using language, individuals attempted to “bridge” the rift between the individual self and a larger whole. Auden describes language as “a tunnel under which the currents of feeling can pass unseen.”<sup>697</sup> David Izzo, in his *W. H. Auden and Aldous Huxley: On Language*, explains Auden’s conception of the duality of language, which exists in the “individual mind *in part*” but also within “a collective unconscious that unites each individual--a world mind.”<sup>698</sup> Auden illustrates this concept by highlighting the numerous unconscious “currents” which are to be found in a simple conversation between two strangers on a train:

Man. Its very cold for this time of year

Girl. Yes it would be warmer if the sun were to come out.

What is really going on it something quite different, something like this

Man. What a nice looking girl you are. I hope you don’t mind my speaking to you like this but I should like to know if your voice is as pretty as your hat.

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<sup>694</sup> Ibid.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid.

<sup>696</sup> Ibid.

<sup>697</sup> Ibid. 40-41.

<sup>698</sup> Izzo, David Garret. *W. H. Auden and Aldous Huxley: On Language* (Locust Hill, NC: Locust Hill Press, 1993), 4.

Journeys are dull aren't they unless one finds someone nice to talk to. I expect you have your difficulties too, like me. We all have. Lets be friends.

Girl. You look nice but a girl has to be careful. You can never tell what men will be like if you encourage them too much. I hate trains too. Have you ever been in love. What was she like. Alright. We'll try and see how we get on.<sup>699</sup>

Auden acknowledges that language has a purely literal quality. The "sense" of language, which Auden characterises as "fat stock prices on the radio," is literal and indisputable; "sense" communicates pure data. But beneath this surface level, there are greater forces at work. The numerous undercurrents in a simple conversation demonstrate the presence of an unconscious social force. The quirky punctuation of Auden's subconscious conversation further suggests a mind ungoverned by the conscious mind, which imposes order and grammar on the information it receives from the subconscious. Language is a bridge between the two, the act of communication briefly connecting our individual mind to a greater whole. Language not only proves the existence of this subconscious social mind, but also presents a means by which self-conscious individuals can access it.

Auden began to look seriously for a means of uniting these two realms more concretely. The solution he suggested owes much to Gerald Heard's theories on group meditation and agape. In his 1934 essay "The Group Movement and The Middle Classes," Auden discusses the potential for "a group of very moderate size, probably not larger than twelve" in which it would be possible for an individual to "lose himself, for his death instincts to be neutralized in the same way as those of the separate cells of the metazoa neutralize each other in the body."<sup>700</sup> Auden's cellular imagery is a recapitulation of his argument in "Writing," in which he argues that early individuals sought some means to "recover the sense of being as much a part of life as

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<sup>699</sup> Auden, "Writing," 41.

<sup>700</sup> W. H. Auden, "The Group Movement and The Middle Classes" in R. H. S. Crossman, ed. *Oxford and the Groups* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1934), 98.

the cells in his body are a part of him.”<sup>701</sup> Auden’s reflection that group activities can suspend the individual’s “death instinct” bears much resemblance to Heard’s description of group meditation, especially when, in “Religion and the Problems of Modern Society,” Heard claims that religion potentially has the power to demonstrate to each individual that “he is eternal, if he dares to step out of his individuality into the common life that flows about him sustaining him.”<sup>702</sup> Auden believed that such experiences could only be perceived subconsciously; in “A Summer Night” (1933), and his later commentary on the experience of *agape* in “The Protestant Mystics,” Auden illustrates this point clearly. Writing “The Protestant Mystics” in 1963, Auden would describe how on that summer night in 1933 he had “quite suddenly and unexpectedly” found himself “invaded by a power” which made it possible for him to know “what it means to love one’s neighbour as oneself.”<sup>703</sup> Auden has successfully stepped outside himself into the larger life, and transcended his fear of individual death; as he writes in “A Summer’s Night,” at the height of his experience “Fear gave his watch no look” and “Death put down his book.”<sup>704</sup> The individual’s sense of self-preservation and fears of death vanish with this experience of a greater eternal life of which he or she is a part. This experience, however, he knows to be fleeting; “I also knew that the power would, of course, withdraw sooner or later and that, when it did, my greeds and self-regard would return.”<sup>705</sup> Heard believed quite strongly that what resided in the subconscious could be experienced, brought to consciousness and be fixed in the conscious mind. The group could make or manifest that shared subconscious experience and prevent the return of greed and self-regard.

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<sup>701</sup> Auden, “Writing,” 40.

<sup>702</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 145.

<sup>703</sup> Auden, “The Protestant Mystics.” *Forewards and Afterwords* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 69.

<sup>704</sup> Auden, “A Summer’s Night,” Edward Mendelson, ed. *W. H. Auden: Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 103.

<sup>705</sup> Auden, “Protestant Mystics,” 69.

At Dartington, Heard continued to develop a psychological praxis which could re-join the subconscious and conscious mind permanently. In his correspondence to Margaret Isherwood (another teacher at Dartington who, like Dorothy Elmhist, was fascinated by the religious and social implications of Dartington's "generating cell."), Heard writes expressly about the need for a united psyche. On 5 August 1932, he wrote to Isherwood, lamenting that "I wish we understood how to bring about this reuniting of the 'mind' because I am sure at present it is sundered and all our difficulties can be traced down to that fissure."<sup>706</sup> But for Heard the potential to repair this figure is always at issue, and psychology is always the solution; in an undated letter to Isherwood he expresses his frustration with the lack of a psychological solution to the dilemma:

[M]y difficulty is that most of us, lacking fuller psychological knowledge, cant [*sic*] behave wisely, and the few that do, in consequence of irrational behaviour of the many, cannot attain the good. We shall have to find some way of making the ordinary man able both to conceive the welfare of the whole (and so a meaning of life) and also able to make himself aim at the conception and find that in that aim a happiness and a serenity which can lift himself above the most extreme assaults of accident. In this, I'm sure we need a far profounder mental hygiene both theoretical (knowledge of human psychology) and practical (rules of behaviour and psychological exercises) than we have today.<sup>707</sup>

Heard admits to Dorothy in a letter of 30 September 1932 that he is "increasingly assured" that some psychological hygiene was within reach. "[W]e have," he writes, "all the elements needed for making a sociological advance which will be as remarkable and far more useful than the great physical advances of the 19 century."<sup>708</sup> Heard feels that their "pioneering work" may well help others "when they feel the need of a technique of thinking and feeling things out."<sup>709</sup> Here we might be reminded of Heard's earlier division of the world into "routineers" – those who

<sup>706</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 5 August 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>707</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, undated. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>708</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 30 September 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>709</sup> Ibid.

perform routine tasks within an established order - “pioneers”<sup>710</sup> who advanced the frontiers of human knowledge. Just as Heard sought at the B.B.C. to cultivate in his listening audience a suitably ‘pioneering’ outlook bringing specialised scientific discovery into the public sphere, so too was Heard, in a group of unspecialised but receptive individuals, cultivating a psychological and mystical outlook.

In an uncharacteristically passionate passage, Heard expresses his excitement at the potential discovery within their grasp:

I must tell you that I never thought I should ever have such happiness & hope about anything on this side of Reality. When I think of the irrelevant ‘hole-in-corner’ lives the vast majority have to live I feel I must at any cost – whether one bores or makes angry – make the friends you give me the opportunity of unity with realise what an unique chance we have of at last attaining a way of living which can make an invaluable contribution to civilisation & can give to each of us a source of value & worth which will give complete meaning to our lives.<sup>711</sup>

It is difficult to reconcile this conviction with the Gerald Heard who identified himself in *The Ascent of Humanity* as “one of the public, general but concerned”<sup>712</sup> with the problems of modern society. Perhaps for the first time Heard had found something to which to attach himself, something in which he could believe wholeheartedly and pursue practically. He had lost his Christian faith at Cambridge, but perhaps here at Dartington Heard found that form of religion whose existence he had hitherto hypothesised, that underlying religious impulse which had to power to offer that “at-one-ment” he sought.

In September 1932, Heard wrote with some concern to Dorothy Elmhirst regarding the perception of the group amongst others at Dartington. Heard had learned, in September, that Leonard Elmhirst was proposing to establish what Heard

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<sup>710</sup> Gerald Heard, “This Surprising World,” *The Listener*, 10 July 1930: 99. (See Chapter III, 114, for further discussion.)

<sup>711</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 30 September 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>712</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 13.

called “interdepartmental discussions of Dartington as an economic unit.”<sup>713</sup> He had written to Dorothy to suggest that, “to complement the economic planning,” some consideration be given to the “sociological planning,” namely his group at Dartington, which he felt “would lead naturally to the clearing of mind as to the best way of psychological cooperation and so to what would be called Religion without using that tabu word.”<sup>714</sup> Heard believed what they were “working out” at Dartington was exceedingly important, and was rather hurt to discover later that Leonard Elmhirst regarded his plans as “too empty and too much like uplift”<sup>715</sup> to have any practical merit. From the rest of Heard’s letter, one sees that Leonard was more interested in pursuing immediate and practicable social action than in Heard’s group exercise. Heard recounts a recent meeting where he felt incapable of challenging Elmhirst’s point of view or defending his own adequately:

I do with all my heart believe in a spiritual reality, am sure that we can get in touch with it and that if we don’t we go dead and, however efficient, our work is then valueless. I believe too that we can only fully understand how to get into touch with it if we search for it together. But when Gerry [Leonard] puts the immediate problem of our [ . . . ] getting in touch with others, our doing practical social service, then I feel like a cripple still talking about orthopaedic devices when a fit and whole man has leapt over the wall and is running to help people up the hill. I feel I delay and confuse him with my anxiety that we should first be sure of our strength before we try and recharge others; and so when I felt he wanted to speak of social services I did not venture to pull back and bring us into our personal circle again. I know you must feel it was weak of me and it was, but [ . . . ] when I feel he does not grasp what I am driving at, because of my feeble way of putting it, then I feel I confuse him and make him doubt whether there is anything to be said for that point of view and it seems better to let him direct our thought, not on how we may help each other and how we may recharge our wills, but on how we may help other outside the group.<sup>716</sup>

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<sup>713</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 30 September 1932, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>714</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, September 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>715</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 7 November 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>716</sup> Ibid.

Heard suggests that there are exceptional “sociological extrovert[s]”<sup>717</sup> in the world who, by sheer force of character can “recharge their wills without having to set time aside for it;” consider his earlier letter above, where he claims that Leonard Elmhirst is a human dynamo. But Heard objects to the myth of the truly strong man; “I am sure that we have arrived at a time when the confessor is no longer suited to us. We have to be equals here too and the helper, if he is to be a real helper, must be able to be helped as well.”<sup>718</sup> To Dorothy, Heard makes an impassioned defence of the group: “[W]hen we are together in mutual help,” he writes, “we are helping to create something which can make each of us a new being and make us begin to be conscious of that larger complete life which finds its death not its eclipse but its expansion and release.”<sup>719</sup>

On 21 November 1932, Heard wrote again to Margaret Isherwood to discuss the progress of the group. “It is clear to me,” he writes, “it’s beginning to make progress now and I don’t know how far it mayn’t go, as far as the latent capacity of its member and no one knows what that may be.”<sup>720</sup> Despite his frustrations with the mechanics of the group, Heard expresses his conviction that the project is “an essential part of the sane life.”<sup>721</sup>

Although Heard was obviously hurt by the perception that the ‘mutual help’ group was not practical, by December of 1932 the group had apparently achieved its first really meaningful experience together. In a letter of 12 December (to which Leonard Elmhirst later added the marginal comment, “after fourth meeting of group”), Heard gives details of the first marked success. Heard reflects that what is holding

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<sup>717</sup> Ibid.

<sup>718</sup> Ibid.

<sup>719</sup> Ibid.

<sup>720</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 21 November 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid.

back the group is the reluctance of its members to submit to one another; “People still say ‘Oh, I couldn’t trust so many people’ – ‘ Oh, I cant [*sic*] give myself away’ – or ‘I cant [*sic*] get away from my own problem.”<sup>722</sup> The only solution Heard can see is for individuals to be more like-minded; “I am feeling that only faith – a common faith – can unite people. If one person believes that life has meaning and another cannot so believe, -- well the gap that separates them is enormous, the greatest in the world. [...]. [They] cannot meet as equals and so a group, in the right sense, is impossible.”<sup>723</sup> However, at this one meeting, Heard claims he felt something, as though the group was beginning to trust in itself and barriers between individuals were yielding:

At the end it started, like a frequently ‘cranked up’ engine, turning over, but then it was time to stop. But I am sure we are learning and not a moment too soon. If this slow and to some people painful preliminary work has been able to have been done considerably earlier we might have saved the smashes and wrenches.<sup>724</sup>

In the wake of this success, Heard would write to Dorothy later that month that the *sine qua non* of their “mutual help” sessions was absolute trust in one another; “[A]s soon as we really get to know each other,” he writes, “our confidence in what the Group gives us may grow so strong that we’ll even be able to sit recollected and yet relaxed, communicating and yet conversationless in the silence which, through the supreme technique of a group, is I believe quite probably it’s most powerful means of rechargement.”<sup>725</sup> The experience, however brief, served to reassure Heard of the vital importance of the group; the development of this “supreme technique of the

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<sup>722</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 12 December 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>723</sup> Ibid.

<sup>724</sup> Ibid.

<sup>725</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, December 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

group,” he writes, was “worth any cost and any amount of experiment,” and “so necessary if Dartington is not to fail.”<sup>726</sup>

To Margaret Isherwood, Heard writes with similar conviction and excitement:

I am sure that all of us today are on the threshold of a new way of living, of living with that deadly possessiveness and fear of loss taken from us. Economically we are being led to it and psychologically we need it, we must have it. Personal individual love is a necessary step, a first step, but it cuts one off from life if it doesn't lead to the next step, the love of the group. If one gets on to that then I find one sees as the step beyond a new awareness of one's relationship not merely with the group and not even stopping with humanity but with life under all its forms.<sup>727</sup>

Heard seems, for the first time, to have found a tenable example for his conception of a psychological expansion from self-consciousness to superconsciousness. Beyond self-love and the limiting love of another exists the possibility of an all-encompassing love that is essential communion with everyone and everything. Although Heard does not express this possibility in mystical terms, as he would come to do later, there is in his psychological approach an inherently mystical quality.

In another letter to Dorothy Elmhirst from December 1932, Heard reveals his excitement at the potential for the group; “I keep on thinking about it and how we may make it of further use.”<sup>728</sup> Further, based on the success of the group, Heard was keen to introduce new variables to the experiment. “I must say,” he writes,

I greatly like [...] Gerry's suggestion, two sittings ago, that perhaps some day there might be a recollecting room where people who wanted to be quiet with themselves might go and know they would be undisturbed. We know how, as a psychological fact that only when we “black out” or neutralise the rush of outer impressions, can the inner constructions come through – that the real spirit of judgement can only speak when silence is first called. And Dartington which is both so stimulating (so much going on) and so experimental (so much needs thinking out) is a place where above all a spot is needed where out of the crowd one can stand back to see the plan as a whole and how it develops, just as when excavations are going on there has to be a tall scaffold up which the diggers go every now and then to make sure the digging is going right and uncovering not mutilating the plan they are trying to

<sup>726</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 12 December 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>727</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, December 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>728</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, December 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

lay bare. That being the aim of our recollection I think we can keep our mutual help on the right lines by all agreeing that each personal problem has its right to be brought forward not for personal reasons but because of the bearing it has upon the Dartington idea and because it illustrates the problem of intensive and progressive social life.

Although Heard's "mutual help" group met with some scepticism, his lectures on Current Affairs were quite successful and popular. However, it would appear that there were concerns at Dartington that Heard was indoctrinating students rather than educating them, expressed in a letter of 14 February 1933 from Heard to William Curry. The letter follows on a lecture delivered at a Sunday Evening Meeting by A. S. Neill, the headmaster of Summerhill. Neill was a friend of Curry's and, by Michael Young's reckoning, rather envious of Curry's school and of Curry in general.<sup>729</sup> Based on Heard's letter, it would appear that Neill objected to the group, or in some way felt that Heard was allowing his enthusiasm for group experiments to interfere with its objective, educative purpose. Heard took Neill's criticism quite seriously, tendering his resignation to William Curry:

I am writing to say that after this term I would wish to give up my school classes. Probably you were not anyhow thinking of extending them but since Neale's [*sic*] talk it's become quite clear to me that I am not the sort of person who should teach in the school. I have heard youngsters [moan?] & others on the position Neale [*sic*] holds & is it plain that anyone who is prejudiced cannot, with the best will in the world, help deforming characters which [...] must be left to develop without any influencing from an [*illegible*] source. I had wondered about this for some time & now I am sure. After 40 years one is incurable. I've enjoyed the classes & found them bracing but am relieved to be able to stop short before much harm can be done.<sup>730</sup>

Curry's reply of the following day is exceedingly conciliatory and encouraging, suggesting that Neill's sentiments were not those of the majority at Dartington. Indeed, Curry suggests that Heard's enthusiasm and ideas were essential to the success of his lectures:

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<sup>729</sup> Young, 175.

<sup>730</sup> Gerald Heard to William Curry, 14 February 1932. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 2. HCH.

I don't think it is possible to talk about current events with children without allowing one's sympathies to appear. I should only think it a pity if the children felt unable to disagree with you, either because of your wrath or the weight of your superior dialectic, or if I thought you were far more concerned to enrol the children under a particular banner than to get them into the habit of thinking about political and international affairs, but I am sure that neither of these is the case.

At all events the children have nothing but enthusiasm for your classes, and you remember the horror you inspired last term by suggestion that they might be discontinued. Personally I have nothing but admiration for your work here, as also for yourself, my dear Gerald, and I should hate to think of the classes being discontinued.<sup>731</sup>

Heard replied with a tentative approval, and continued to teach throughout 1933. An indication that Heard felt he could continue beyond that comes in a letter of 3 August 1933, wherein Curry confirms that Heard was to make "three Sunday engagements in the Michaelmas term;"<sup>732</sup> the Visitor's Book at Dartington Hall reveals that Heard only visited Dartington three times in 1934.<sup>733</sup>

By 1935, Heard's visits to Dartington had, so far as the official record shows, ceased. There are several plausible reasons for Heard's abandoning Dartington. Perhaps Heard had grown frustrated with the progress of the group, and the continued feeling that there were those who doubted its usefulness. It is also possible that Heard, as he had felt sharply twice before, believed that Dartington was still overly interested in the material side of social reform without any real concern for developing the psychological counterpart he felt essential to social progress. Certainly as we have seen in his letter to Spratt, Heard felt it was a "communist school." an organisation therefore linked in Heard's mind with the pursuit of an economic ideal without any interest in a counterbalancing psychological advance. As early as 17

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<sup>731</sup> William Curry to Gerald Heard, 15 February 1933. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 2, HCH. The typewritten originals of many of Heard's papers exist in the Dartington Trust Archive, including papers on the subject of sleep, religious ecstasy, the conformity of clothing, and the false dichotomy between religion and mysticism.

<sup>732</sup> William Curry to Gerald Heard, 3 August 1933, T. School. 1931-57 2, HCH.

<sup>733</sup> Young, 207.

May 1934, Heard wrote to Dorothy Elmhirst expressing his view that Dartington had lost its way:

Dartington is materialistic, simply because it set up the economic standard of increase of means with no compensatory force. Of course that was not intended but it has happened. You may not intend that your pocket book should fall to the ground when it slips from your hand, but the force of gravitation will see to that. So a society without agreed moral principles, agreed to by all its inmates and clearly recognised, and without a method of recharging so that one may have some aid to living up to the principles [...] means materialism and can mean nothing else.<sup>734</sup>

In the same letter, Heard expresses his concern that Dartington merely amplified the same problems of self-interest he felt inimical to the success of any community proclaiming to be progressive, and fatal to his vision of purposive living:

Dartington is increasingly absorbed with personal questions. "Am I getting as good a house as so-and-so?" etc. These questions must be paramount if the wholly purposive life isn't being lived, for what else is there to live for, and the subconscious, like God, is not mocked with fine words and vague uplift. If life means nothing, and the universe and it are blind, then the reasonable men must take all the personal and physical satisfactions he can, and not care too much if some complain he's being greedy.<sup>735</sup>

Despite his initial shared interest with Heard to develop a 'religion' at Dartington, Leonard Elmhirst grew increasingly interested in the purely pragmatic and economic concerns, and less minded to fully appreciate and utilize the programme of "mutual help" Heard felt was a precursor to real social reform.

There is also, in Heard's correspondence to Margaret Isherwood, the suggestion that Heard was perhaps not so easily amalgamated into the group he had constructed as he would have wished. In a letter of 2 June 1934, Heard wrote to Isherwood "I feel like a piece of twisted flex and you as the dynamo; the flex can be used to link up the current but it's the dynamo which gives the power."<sup>736</sup> As we have seen, Heard often employed electrical metaphors in describing the group at

<sup>734</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 17 May 1934. DWE General 5 Gerald Heard. HCH.

<sup>735</sup> Ibid.

<sup>736</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 2 June 1934. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 2, HCH.

Dartington. But in identifying himself as a cable through which that power flowed, rather than the source of the power itself, Heard establishes in a role with which he was perhaps most comfortable, that of a transmitter rather than a generator of ideas. Most notably as a broadcaster, Heard coalesced and put ideas across the ether – an image of transmission which can be taken all too literally – and acted as a bridge between the realms of specialist scientific exploration and a ‘general’ public. Insofar as Heard saw himself as a ‘link’ between others, he once again established himself as a mediating force rather than a generative one. At the same time, however, he attempted to lead the lives of others. It is this uneasiness to adopt a stance one way or another which says something about his intellectual position. Heard took on the role of an intellectual generaliser because he felt that specialism contributed to the isolation of both knowledge and individuals, working against his sense of there being an underlying connection between all things. But in asserting that the group technique he was developing was the best answer to social discontent, Heard steps into the position of becoming a specialist. Those who participated in this group of Heard’s origination would have not unreasonably expected him to offer some level of expertise and leadership. Heard presents something of a paradox by attempting both to remain part of a general, unspecialised group seeking together to find an answer to an enlarged consciousness while simultaneously possessing the clearest vision of it. It is entirely conceivable that his being both a participant and reluctant leader of this group necessarily kept him outside of it, and limited the effectiveness of his experiment.

Another likely reason for Heard’s diminishing interest and involvement in Dartington is his growing involvement in the pacifist movement. By 1935 Heard was too deeply involved with H. R. L. Sheppard’s peace movement to spare much time for Dartington; although it has been suggested that Heard joined Sheppard in 1936 after

the creation of the Peace Pledge Union, a letter to Margaret Isherwood confirms that Heard had joined as early as October 1934.<sup>737</sup> By the late 1930s, Heard had grown to believe in pacifism as the most effective means of social change, a view not shared by the administration of Dartington. In a letter of 31 October 1935, Heard wrote to the headmaster, William Curry, of the necessity of pacifism. Curry's reply of 8 November is less than encouraging, calling pacifism "one part of sanity but not the whole of it," and suggesting that pacifist movement offers little to the problems of society; "I am not certain," writes Curry, "that the example of sanity is not even more needed in the world than the example of pacifism."<sup>738</sup>

Undoubtedly this combination of disappointments, doubt and a new interest in pacifism contributed to Heard's waning interest in Dartington. But perhaps the strongest catalyst for Heard's departure is more simple, and one shared by others who lost faith in the Dartington experiment late in 1935. A liberal school, Dartington had always contended with critics of its comparatively lax attitudes towards religious and moral education. Rumours abounded concerning sexual liberalism, no doubt compounded by the co-educational living arrangements for the students.<sup>739</sup> But these complaints came to head in that year when William Curry divorced his wife, having fallen in love with one of the housemothers at Dartington, Marsie Foss.<sup>740</sup> Curry left the Headmaster's residence, High Cross House, to his wife and began living with Foss in one of the student houses; Young claims Curry's "stated view" was that "the children should be able to see what a really happy marriage was all about."<sup>741</sup>

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<sup>737</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 23 October 1934. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 2, HCH.

<sup>738</sup> William Curry to Gerald Heard, 8 November 1935. Letters to William Curry, Headmaster, T. School. 1931-1957 2. HCH.

<sup>739</sup> Young, 177-179.

<sup>740</sup> Young, 177.

<sup>741</sup> Ibid.

Young's assertion, if true, becomes ironic when one considers a letter from Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst of 15 May 1935, in which he accuses Curry of having

moved from the position when he said how lucky it was that here was a progressive school where the headmaster was happily married and how though he might be attracted by the beauty of other women it was worth while not to pay attention because he knew it would harm the school if he acted irresponsibly and how the care of the school was full satisfaction for him.<sup>742</sup>

Michael Young considers this event was a watershed for Dartington; "Practically everyone on the estate took sides for or against Curry, almost all against."<sup>743</sup> Even so, a vociferous minority supported Curry and encouraged him to stay on as headmaster; "Gerald Heard and others," writes Young, "took the opposite view and did not come to Dartington again."<sup>744</sup> Certainly Heard was nonplussed by Curry's behaviour. However, his disappointment did not stem from moral qualms about infidelity or divorce, but from the sense that this was another example of the failure of Dartington to formulate a purposive way of life, and of the infectious materialism affecting Dartington; "We are seeing," he wrote to Dorothy Elmhirst,

not merely the realisation by Bill Curry that there is nothing in life which is fully real except the material world, and so a life must get its satisfactions, its meaning and purpose out of the three self-regarding emotions, out of appetites, passions and pretensions – this is what he calls taking an objective view of life and he is right in so acting if his premise is sound. But we are also seeing ourselves that is not enough and that there is something else beyond.<sup>745</sup>

There was much pressure on the Elmhirsts to take some action, particularly when news of the crisis at Dartington began to circulate around London. Although Heard's enthusiasm for the 'experiment' had diminished, Heard actively tried to prevent these rumours from harming Dartington. On 2 November 1935, Heard wrote a long letter, addressed to both Dorothy and Leonard, in which he expressed his concern at what was becoming an increasingly public crisis:

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<sup>742</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 14 May 1935. DWE General 5 Gerald Heard. HCH.

<sup>743</sup> Ibid.

<sup>744</sup> Ibid.

<sup>745</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 14 May 1935. DWE General 5 Gerald Heard. HCH.

I must let you know what has happened without delay. This morning a man called Lewis, whom I have only once met before, rang up and asked to see me. He tells me that he has two children at Dartington and that he has heard lately so many reports that there is bad trouble there that he has had to consider taking away his children. He asked me, as he had heard I was interested in the place and had tried to make its work known whether I could deny a number of rumours. Some I cannot substantiate; some I cannot deny. He asked me to take him to see Aldous [Huxley] to see what he knew and would advise as he knew Aldous had had a child there and had taken him away.<sup>746</sup>

This led to a meeting between the three, who felt strongly that some action needed to be taken by Elmhirst to clarify the situation, and confirm or deny rumours about the school:

We three had a talk and are agreed on the following points: We are all interested not merely in the children for which we are responsible but for Dartington and for all progressive and liberal education in the country. We feel therefore that it is unfair simply to take away a particular child but that we must have an interest in the experiment as a whole and on its influence.<sup>747</sup>

Heard was also deeply concerned that “unless a categorical denial can be given to the statements which are being made,” there would be “no doubt” that these rumours would reach “some paper like John Bull.” The allegations, he asserted, “must be answered or there is no doubt that when they are ‘featured’ in some popular paper the Home Office will make enquiries.”<sup>748</sup> Heard felt it was essential to address these problems without delay:

We feel that any delay now is very dangerous and that should a scandal break out then not only would Dartington suffer but liberal education and indeed all liberalism. [...] At the present time liberal and progressive methods are easily discredited and many people are anxious to make a case against everything which is advanced.<sup>749</sup>

Leonard Elmhirst came to London to meet with Heard, Huxley and journalist Felix Greene (1909-1985), then a colleague of Heard’s at the B.B.C., who shared an

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<sup>746</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy & Leonard Elmhirst, 2 November 1935. LKE General 17 E. HCH.

<sup>747</sup> Ibid.

<sup>748</sup> Ibid.

<sup>749</sup> Ibid.

interested in Dartington.<sup>750</sup> In the archives at Dartington, there are two pages of patchy and nearly illegible minutes of this meeting in Heard's handwriting. One can glean from these notes, however, that while Curry's marital troubles and adultery were of great concern, there were numerous other problems that Heard argued they could deny outright; these included rumours of promiscuity and pregnancy among the student body, and the provision of "birth control information" to "recognised couples,"<sup>751</sup> allegations that one housemother was a known morphine addict who discussed her problem with the children, and the wonderfully obscure line, "*Café Royale* – how answer." The minutes do not give a clear picture of the strategy they devised to cope with these problems besides outright denial of that which was untrue and quiet reassurance to concerned parties that Curry's capabilities as a Headmaster outweighed the complexities of his personal life.

Between November 1935 and January 1936, there are no letters from Heard to the Elmhursts, Margaret Isherwood and William Curry in the Dartington archive. But in this period Heard became further disillusioned with Dartington, a sentiment we can glean from his next letter to William Curry on 6 January 1936. Heard's tone is contrite. "I am writing to ask a favour," Heard begins:

Only a couple of days ago I was told that you felt I had acted toward you with great unkindness and injustice. I am naturally very anxious that you should not so feel, if anything I can do can remove the feeling.

I know we have differed – we differed long before the particular issue arose which has caused you the greatest difficulty. I do ask you now to believe that though we differ I have always wanted that difference to be impartial. I have always had a sincere admiration for your work & powers & the way you have advanced the causes I have at heart.<sup>752</sup>

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<sup>750</sup> Felix Greene to Gerald Heard, 18 October 1934. Contents of Rcont1, File 1: 1932-62. B.B.C. Written Archive Centre. Greene writes, "I am glad that you tell me Leonard and Dorothy are in town, as it is some time since I have seen either of them. It is a long time, too, since I have had a chat with you. May I come round one evening after work, and share your meal?"

<sup>751</sup> Minutes of a meeting at 42 Upper Brook Street, dated 3-4 November 1935. LKE General 17 Gerald Heard. HCH.

<sup>752</sup> Gerald Heard to William Curry, 6 January 1936. D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard II. HCH.

Curry replied on 10 January, saying it was a “pleasure” to receive his letter, “since while I have been very much puzzled by some of the things you are reported to have said about the school and myself.”<sup>753</sup> Curry admits of a mutual admiration for Heard; “I had, like you, always greatly enjoyed your visits here and our talks, and was very much disappointed when they were discontinued.”<sup>754</sup> Curry concludes his letter with an affirmation of their shared interests, but acknowledging their differences; “[S]ince we have so many aims in common,” Curry writes, “it would be a great pity if we ceased to think of each other as allies, even if we pursue the aims by different means.”<sup>755</sup> Heard did not return to Dartington again, although he did maintain a sporadic correspondence with Dorothy Elmhirst and Margaret Isherwood, focusing on their common spiritual yearnings, until his death in 1971.

Heard’s involvement with Dartington School was a significant chapter in his life. It not only afforded him an opportunity to test his ideas on co-operative living, as learned through his time with Plunkett, it enabled him to begin for the first time what would become the main drive in his life; the search for a means of achieving a spiritual and psychological connection with all individuals and ultimately all life itself. In the years immediately following his departure from Dartington, these ideas would manifest themselves in an approach to pacifism which would win the support of many, but confuse and irritate more still. An early indication of the life Heard sought is described in a letter to Dorothy Elmhirst of 9 August 1934:

“[A]re meat-eating alcohol, sexual experience, fighting possessions, all obstacle to illumination, and the remaking of the self into a being which lives entirely in the larger life of fulfilment through the service of others? [...] [C]ertainly anything which causes a person at my rudimentary stage fear, vindictiveness or greed, must be banished, or for us there is no illumination or

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<sup>753</sup> William Curry to Gerald Heard, 10 January 1936 (carbon copy). D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard II. HCH.

<sup>754</sup> Ibid.

<sup>755</sup> Ibid.

growth. If such beginners could attain growth then there would be no need to give up most of these things as far as I can see, and certainly if anyone can have growth without renunciation then we who still are weak enough to have to give up must admire those who are undoubtedly living the higher life.<sup>756</sup>

For Heard, Dartington became infected with the very materialism it set out to cure. As he had suspected as early as 1932, Dartington proved to be merely the “outward form”<sup>757</sup> of the “Vita Aeternitas”<sup>758</sup> he wished to create. But as “a provisional experiment,”<sup>759</sup> Dartington provided Heard with considerable results. Heard took away from Dartington a belief that *agape* was possible, but required a strict discipline to check our “self-regarding instincts;” “In short,” Heard writes, “if we get rid of possessiveness, then the real obstacle to a planned community is gone.”<sup>760</sup> In his career as a pacifist and beyond, he did not cease in his efforts to develop a psychologically and economically sound way of living communally. But after his experiences at Dartington, Heard would place greater emphasis on each individual, and a philosophy of life conducive to living in communion with others within the context of the pacifist movement of the 1930s.

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<sup>756</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 9 August 1934. DWE General 5: Gerald Heard. HCH.

<sup>757</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 17 December 1932, DWE Correspondence General 6a – Unsorted, Isherwood/Heard. HCH.

<sup>758</sup> Ibid.

<sup>759</sup> Ibid.

<sup>760</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

### “A Sort of Mutt and Jeff”: Gerald Heard, Aldous Huxley and the New Pacifism

Having first seen the potential for a new integrated way of life at Dartington Hall, Gerald Heard embraced the growing pacifist movement in England in the 1930s; on 23 October 1934, Heard wrote to Margaret Isherwood to say that he had “signed up with Dick Shepherd’s [*sic*] lot against war.”<sup>761</sup> As Heard became increasingly disillusioned with the potential to construct a new life at Dartington, he was encouraged by the growth of H. R. L. (Dick) Sheppard’s fledgling peace movement, which would become known as the Peace Pledge Union (P.P.U.) in May of 1936. Heard would make pacifism more than a means to prevent war, but an end in itself. He incorporated pacifist ideas into his own conviction that a psychologically and economically sound society was essential to the survival of civilisation, a conviction that grew only stronger as the 1930s drew to a close.

It was through his interest in pacifism and a disciplined way of living that Heard would become closely tied to Aldous Huxley. To Huxley, Gerald Heard was a teacher and guide, and was instrumental in Huxley’s adoption of pacifism in the mid-1930s. 1936 saw the publication of Aldous Huxley’s sixth novel, *Eyeless in Gaza*, which tells the story of a detached, self-assured intellectual’s embrace of pacifism and a philosophy of brotherly love. Heard had high praise for the novel; on 5 July 1935, Heard recommended the novel, as yet unpublished, to his friend Margaret Isherwood, saying “I think it is a moving book and because it sets out so harshly the evil, makes the good appear possible.”<sup>762</sup> The conversion of Anthony Beavis has often been

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<sup>761</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 23 October 1934. Dartington Archive, High Cross House, Totnes, Devon. (Hereafter HCH.)

<sup>762</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 5 July 1935. DWE Correspondence General 6a – Unsorted, Isherwood/Heard. HCH.

considered autobiographical, reflecting Huxley's own dissatisfaction with a life of intellectual detachment and a growing interest in pacifism, and contemporary critics were uniformly astounded by Huxley's metamorphosis from cynic to philanthropist.<sup>763</sup> Charles M. Holmes considers *Eyeless* to be "one of the most important statements of [Huxley's] life"<sup>764</sup>; Sybil Bedford remarks that "with Anthony's predicament Aldous had built a model of his own"<sup>765</sup>; and Gerald Heard writes that *Eyeless* was "begun before and finished after he had crossed his watershed."<sup>766</sup> Huxley's "watershed" owes much to the influence of Gerald Heard. On 31 October 1935, Heard wrote to Sheppard with significant news:

My dear Dick,

I have now something more [*sic*] to report. Aldous Huxley has joined the move. We have had a long talk this evening and it has been the culmination of a series. His mind is so clear and fertile that I don't mind passing on his request that we might meet – we 3 – and have a talk about policy. He is ready to write a small booklet of some fifty pages which would be a sort of pacifists' manual for debate and discussion and which of course would do brilliantly what I've [*sic*] wanted to see done. He is also convinced that the issue is as you say in your letter to me of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 'directly spiritual' and he therefore also wants to talk over with you the issue from this point of view and whether this whole movement is not the point and nucleation of a spiritual movement which may revive religion. I am sure he is right. His new novel is to end with that outlook made clear and as a sort of forerunner of what your movement will we believe become. He thinks that his ~~book~~ novel may be a sort of forecast or prophecy. [...] I feel that Huxley has a very distinct contribution to bring and he is ready to devote himself to it whole-heartedly.<sup>767</sup>

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<sup>763</sup> J. Donald Adams remarks that the Huxley of *Eyeless in Gaza* is "a more compassionate Huxley than the young man who wrote *Point Counter Point*, or even that more recent self who wrote *Brave New World*" (*NYTBR*, 19 July 1936: I, 20); Q. D. Leavis found it "cheering to see how the naughty nasty short-story writer of the 'twenties has become the earnest essayist of the 'thirties'" (*Scrutiny*, September 1936, v: 182); and Newton Arvin remarked that the Huxley of *Eyeless in Gaza* is "both story-teller and pamphleteer," proclaiming "the transcendental gospel of love, unity and peace" (*New Republic*, 19 August 1936, lxxxvii: 51).

<sup>764</sup> Charles M. Holmes, *Aldous Huxley and the Way to Reality* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1970), 97.

<sup>765</sup> Bedford, *Aldous Huxley, A Biography*, Volume I, 306.

<sup>766</sup> Gerald Heard, "The Poignant Prophet," *Kenyon Review*, XXVII.1 (Winter 1965), 49-70. (hereafter "Poignant".)

<sup>767</sup> Gerald Heard to H. R. L. Sheppard, 31 October 1935. Sheppard Papers, Lambeth Palace Ms. 3745.122.

Huxley's letters also confirm Heard's feeling that *Eyeless in Gaza* was written during a conversion; on 19 November 1935, Huxley wrote to Victoria Ocampo that, while working on *Eyeless in Gaza*, he was also "in the interval talking over ways and means, with Gerald, for getting an adequate peace movement off the ground."<sup>768</sup> Less than two weeks later, both Heard and Huxley presented papers at Friends House on 3 December 1935 in support of H. R. L. Sheppard's fledgling peace movement, and would become sponsors of the P.P.U. after its official foundation on 22 May 1936; Heard had introduced Huxley to Sheppard in 1935, just as Miller introduces Beavis to Purchas in *Eyeless*. Huxley and Heard became the chair and vice-chair, respectively, of the P.P.U.'s Research and Thinking Committee, responsible for writing the sorts of letters and pamphlets Beavis describes in *Eyeless in Gaza*:

For the most part, it was a matter of dealing with the intellectual difficulties of would-be pacifists. "What would you do if you saw a foreign soldier attacking your sister?" Well, whatever one did, one certainly wouldn't send one's son to murder his second cousin. Wearisome work! But it had to be done.<sup>769</sup>

Huxley's pacifist publications were exceedingly important to the movement. Many of his pamphlets, including "What are you going to do about it?: The Case for Constructive Peace," and his essay "Pacifism and Philosophy" are still issued by the P.P.U. today. In July of 1936, Huxley wrote to Victoria Ocampo to say that he "shall probably try to collaborate with Gerald Heard this winter to produce a kind of synthesis, starting from a metaphysical basis and building up through individual and group psychology to politics and economics"<sup>770</sup>; the result of their collaboration was *Ends and Means* (1937), and Heard's own complementary but less successful work *The Third Morality* (1937). Huxley would leave England for the United States, accompanied by Gerald Heard, to preach the gospel of pacifism in 1937. In a letter of

<sup>768</sup> Aldous Huxley, "To Victoria Ocampo," July 1936. Letter 401 of *The Letters of Aldous Huxley*, Grover Smith, ed. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), 398. (Hereafter *Letters*.)

<sup>769</sup> Aldous Huxley, *Eyeless in Gaza* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), 603. (Hereafter *Eyeless*.)

<sup>770</sup> Huxley, *Letters*, 408.

13 October 1937, Maria Huxley tells Roy Fenton that Aldous had “succumbed at last” to giving a lecture tour:

Gerald convinced him, quite rightly perhaps, that this was the moment or never to say what they had to say. And they are doing it together. A sort of Mutt and Jeff on war and peace and religion and so on.<sup>771</sup>

That Heard and Huxley were a “Mutt and Jeff” team is corroborated by Virginia Woolf, who remarks similarly in her diary on 20 June 1937 that “these two apostles of the inner life and peace and goodness are touring the states in duet. Lord lord! What an example for the soul.”<sup>772</sup>

Heard’s influence on Huxley’s literary output and thought has been broadly acknowledged.<sup>773</sup> To date, however, Heard’s thoughts on pacifism and mysticism, and their importance to Huxley, remain largely unexamined. Huxley’s conversion to pacifism marks an incredible shift in his thought; as David Bradshaw argues, Huxley, in joining the P.P.U., “publicly disavowed the authoritarian and aristocratic ideology which had hitherto been his mainstay in favour of a *weltanschauung* which is expressly libertarian, egalitarian and anarchistic.”<sup>774</sup> Although Huxley had been a conscientious objector in the First World War, labouring on the estate of Lady Ottoline Morrell, Huxley’s attitude towards pacifism was initially sceptical. For example, in his “Farcical History of Richard Greenow” (which appears in his 1920 collection of short stories, *Limbo*), Huxley objects to pacifism precisely because of its egalitarian nature. Huxley’s own aristocratic sensibilities are projected onto Greenow, who finds himself attached to a pacifist movement: “One lady suggested

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<sup>771</sup> Maria Huxley, “To Roy Fenton,” 13 October 1937. *Letters*, 398. “Mutt and Jeff” was an American cartoon created by Bud Fisher in 1907. It ran in syndication until 1982. The pair became synonymous with a certain *folie à deux* which Maria Huxley captures elegantly here.

<sup>772</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Diaries*, iv.95.

<sup>773</sup> For a concise summary, see David King Dunaway, “Literary Correspondence: Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard,” *Now More than Ever: Proceedings of the Aldous Huxley Centenary Symposium*, ed. Bernfried Nügel (Berlin: Münster, 1994), 29-54.

<sup>774</sup> David Bradshaw, “Flight from Gaza,” *Now More than Ever: Proceedings of the Aldous Huxley Centenary Symposium*, ed. Bernfried Nügel (Berlin: Münster, 1994), 11.

that it should be called the Everyman Club; Dick objected with passion. ‘It makes one shudder,’ he said.”<sup>775</sup> Huxley also railed against what he considered the fundamentally selfish basis for pacifism, questioning the value of making speeches to “earnest members of impossible Christian sects, pacifists who took not the faintest interest in the welfare of humanity at large, but were wholly absorbed in the salvation of their own souls and in keeping their consciences clear from the faintest trace of blood-guiltiness.”<sup>776</sup> However, by 1935, Huxley had come to understand pacifism as a means of affirming the unity of “humanity at large.” In “Pacifism and Philosophy,” his maiden speech on pacifism, Huxley expresses his belief in “a spiritual reality to which all men have access and in which they are united” and argues that “if enough people set out to experience the spiritual reality in which men are united, there will be peace.”<sup>777</sup> To Huxley, peace was “the by-product of a certain way of life”<sup>778</sup> in which human unity could be regularly affirmed. Gerald Heard provided Huxley with much of his philosophical outlook and justification for pacifism.

What has not been closely examined is how Heard’s influence converted Huxley, hitherto by his own admission an “amused, Pyrrhonic aesthete,”<sup>779</sup> into a committed pacifist and mystic. The connection is not made lightly, and is borne out by a tendency among their contemporaries to lump the two together philosophically. Most notably, C. E. M. Joad compressed the two into the single ‘Voice’ of ‘Mr

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<sup>775</sup> Aldous Huxley, “Farcical History of Richard Greenow,” *Limbo*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), 76. (Hereafter “Greenow”.)

<sup>776</sup> Huxley, “Greenow”, 72. In his book *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith* (Clarendon Press, 1980), Martin Ceadel argues that “the common pre-war assumption that pacifism was largely the preserve of small Christian sects had a considerable degree of truth in it” (43). For example, Ceadel classifies such groups as the Christadelphians, who were “willing to help with munitions production, provided only that its members were not placed directly under military discipline” (43), under the heading of “esoteric quasi-pacifism,” whose objection to war was “on grounds which do not amount to a universalizable, principled objection to war” (20).

<sup>777</sup> Aldous Huxley, “Pacifism and Philosophy,” *The New Pacifism*, ed. Gerald K. Hibbert (London: Allenson, 1936), 17. (Hereafter “Pacifism and Philosophy”.)

<sup>778</sup> Huxley, “Pacifism and Philosophy,” 17.

<sup>779</sup> Aldous Huxley, foreword, *BNW*, viii.

Heardhux' in his 1943 novel *The Adventures of the Young Soldier in Search of the Better World*. Through both an examination of Heard's thoughts on pacifism and a close study of their literary influence on Huxley, the degree to which Heard (often considered the lesser partner, owing to Huxley's comparative prominence) can be said to have served as a guru for Huxley becomes clearer.

Heard was not, of course, Huxley's first 'guru' figure; hitherto this role had been filled by D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930). However, it is worth considering how Huxley could swing from the 'Rampionism' of Lawrence to the committed and dedicated life Heard offered instead. The best explanation may be that Huxley had reconsidered his literary aesthetic. In his essay "Social Thought," which forms a chapter in *The Twentieth Century Mind: History, Ideas and Literature in Britain* (1972), Raymond Plant discusses Lawrence and in particular Christopher Caudwell's (1907-1937) criticism of him. Plant argues that Caudwell's admiration of Lawrence owed much to the latter's "brilliant diagnosis of the sickness of contemporary Western European society: he characterised its possessiveness, its acquisitive nature, its fascination with function, and its distortion of human relationships."<sup>780</sup> Huxley's satirical novels equally painted a sick society. In the character of Mark Rampion in *Point Counter Point* (1928), a thinly veiled portrait of Lawrence, we can see the extent to which Huxley saw an answer to these problems in Lawrence's philosophy. However, Plant summarises Caudwell's argument that Lawrence's "retreat into primitive forms of life and experience" was both "irrational and impossible."<sup>781</sup>

In the first place it undermines the artist's social integrity, for he does nothing to alleviate the situation which he has described, and secondly because he cannot, with a highly developed even though distorted consciousness, return in a complete way to primitive modes of life and forms of experience. The problems which Lawrence saw as characteristic of contemporary society can

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<sup>780</sup> Raymond Plant, "Social Thought", eds. C.B Cox and A. E. Dyson, *The Twentieth Century Mind: History, Ideas and Literature in Britain, Vol II, 1918-1945* (Oxford, OUP, 1972), 88.

<sup>781</sup> Plant, 88.

only be solved by changing social relationships, and the economic relations which underpin them: ‘Social Relations must be rebuilt. The artist is bound for the sake of his integrity to become a thinker and a revolutionary..... Social relations must be altered not so as to contract consciousness, but to widen it.’<sup>782</sup>

In rejecting Lawrence and adopting Heard as a new guru, Huxley sought to answer the question he would later pose to pacifists: ‘What are you going to *do* about it?’ Heard offered a philosophy of social adjustment dependent upon an expansion of consciousness and a redefinition of human relations, and as a guru helped lead Huxley to express it in his writing and ultimately in an expression of faith. *Eyeless in Gaza* does not only mark a philosophical ‘watershed’ for Huxley, but also a literary one. No longer content to remain apart from the world and the problems he identified in it, Huxley now sought to engage with the world and offer a solution to its problems.

For Heard, pacifism was a not simply an attempt to avert war but a means of making our spiritual unity tangible by means of social reorganization; writing for *Time and Tide* in 1936, Heard argues that “Peace must end in complete reconstruction, the recognition of continual awareness and adjustment of individual, social and national relationships.”<sup>783</sup> He was a proponent of what he called New Pacifism, a “thorough, dynamic, constructive [and] creative”<sup>784</sup> approach to securing peace through social reconstruction. Heard attributed war to the failure of human community, describing it as a “symptom of a diseased individualized civilization.”<sup>785</sup> As Heard explains in his 1929 book *The Ascent of Humanity*, war was an inevitable affliction for communities that no longer had a power of cohesion sufficient to

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<sup>782</sup> Ibid. Plant’s quotations are paraphrased from Christopher Caudwell, “D. H. Lawrence,” *Studies and Further Studies in a Dying Culture* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 64-5.

<sup>783</sup> Gerald Heard, “Notes Along the Way,” *Time and Tide*, 21 March 1936: 409. (Hereafter *Notes*.)

<sup>784</sup> Gerald Heard, “The Significance of the New Pacifism,” ed. Gerald K. Hibbert, *The New Pacifism* (London: Allenson, 1936), 16. (Hereafter “Significance”.)

<sup>785</sup> Ibid. 17.

provide meaning to its constituent members.<sup>786</sup> The only effective means to avoid war was to reaffirm human unity. Asserting that “diseased individualism and egotism [...] can only be lived down by a conviction equal to that force”<sup>787</sup>, Heard encouraged pacifists to construct a model of co-operative community as the forerunner of a “new, radically new way of life.”<sup>788</sup> Like Huxley, Heard objected to the sort of pacifism which manifested itself as “merely a protest and a refusal”<sup>789</sup> and believed that the pacifist had to work proactively rather than reactively to ensure peace; “Simply to say, War is mistaken; the peoples will not have war,” Heard wrote in 1936, “that is as little use as saying War is salvation. That pacifism, as Lord Lothian said, is not enough.”<sup>790</sup> Heard exhorted the pacifist to work proactively in the prevention of war. “We must take the initiative,” Heard argues; “We must, if necessary, show the governments what they can do.”<sup>791</sup> This is not to be considered an exhortation to “especial political action”<sup>792</sup>; rather, as he considered “If we go to the politicians [...] and say ‘Give us the reins,’ we shall do not better; because we shall have to work with the same material that they have to work with – a weak good will to the people we know and a profound suspicion of the people we do not know, but whom in this world we have to meet.”<sup>793</sup> He envisioned the establishment of pacifist communes as small communities in which shared responsibilities would engender a strong sense of interdependence. In addition to shared labour, Heard believed that regular group meditation was essential to breaking down the separateness of each individual. As a member of “a cell, or team, club or group,” pacifists would “constantly renew that

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<sup>786</sup> See Gerald Heard, *The Ascent of Humanity* (London, Jonathan Cape: 1929), 43.

<sup>787</sup> Ibid.

<sup>788</sup> Heard, “Significance,” 17.

<sup>789</sup> Ibid.

<sup>790</sup> Gerald Heard, “Rue With A Difference,” *Time and Tide* 8 February 1936: 175. (Hereafter “Rue”.)

<sup>791</sup> Ibid. 176.

<sup>792</sup> Gerald Heard, “Pacifist, Heal Thyself!”, *Fellowship*, December 1942, 200-201: 200.

<sup>793</sup> Ibid.

direct sense of *unlimited liability* and psychological communism which make war and competition irrelevant.”<sup>794</sup> Group meditation could provide “active peace-lovers” with “a realization” which would “permit them to live a life of unlimited liability with their companions--a true co-operative commonwealth based surely on psychology”<sup>795</sup> and would further provide them with an “absolute assurance of ‘the excellent way’ because [they had] actually experienced it.”<sup>796</sup> “The problem is, as I see it,” Heard wrote in 1942, “to create the power of cohesion. Without that peace treaties are not even worth signing.”<sup>797</sup> Huxley echoes Heard’s sentiments, arguing that our spiritual unity must be “experienced as a psychological fact, present at least potentially in every human being”<sup>798</sup> in order to affect wide-spread change. Heard was convinced that pacifist organizations along these lines would “give the world a demonstration of how free from anxieties and psychoses, how sanely economic and how free of all necessity for coercion such a social life can be.”<sup>799</sup>

Heard’s pacifist philosophy was an extension not only of his experience of communal and group living at Dartington Hall (which forms the subject of Chapter IV of this thesis) but of his on-going psychological and sociological attempt to understand “why it is that men manage to live socially.”<sup>800</sup> In the first book, *The Ascent of Humanity*, Heard develops an “outline of the evolution of consciousness,”<sup>801</sup> concluding that human sociability is a result of a latent social instinct begun with our earliest ancestors. Heard believed that pre-historic humanity associated on a tribal level at which there was no distinction between the group and its individual

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<sup>794</sup> Ibid. 17.

<sup>795</sup> Ibid. 18.

<sup>796</sup> Ibid.

<sup>797</sup> Gerald Heard, “Pacifist, Heal Thyself!”

<sup>798</sup> Ibid. 16.

<sup>799</sup> Ibid. 17.

<sup>800</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 29.

<sup>801</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 21.

constituents, possessed of a “co-conscious” awareness which precluded “any consciousness of individual separateness,”<sup>802</sup> and enabled them to partake in a “constant telepathic communication with the rest of the group.”<sup>803</sup> However, with the growth of knowledge and increasing awareness of the world, “co-consciousness” increasingly yielded to self-consciousness; as Heard argued in the third book of his trilogy, *The Source of Civilization* (1935), it was at the “period in his psychic evolution when he attained self-consciousness” that the early humans lost the “inherent power of co-operation”<sup>804</sup> which had hitherto been the natural sanction for society. Lacking this natural bond, early civilisations formed as an artificial means of inducing a feeling of community among independent, self-conscious individuals; as Heard writes, “Civilization is self-consciousness.”<sup>805</sup>

The second book of his trilogy, *The Social Substance of Religion* (1932), examines how early societies, whose small size made them largely communist in nature, achieved a communal sense through shared labour and ultimately through religious ceremonies, which enabled self-conscious individuals to transcend their individuality to feel unity with their peers. Religion originally served the same purpose Heard attributed to meditation because it was less concerned with ritual observances and more concerned with community. For example, in *The Source of Civilization*, Heard argues for the “psychological value” of ancient fertility religion, which

rouses the individual from his growing preoccupation with his calculated personal economic concerns [...], throws him back into the stream of life and chokes, at least for a moment, the growing anxiety rising from his fellow and his narrow concern as to what is going to happen to this precarious perishable self [...].<sup>806</sup>

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<sup>802</sup> Ibid. 21.

<sup>803</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>804</sup> Heard, *Source*, 224.

<sup>805</sup> Ibid. 87.

<sup>806</sup> Heard, *Source*, 204.

Over time, however, religion became increasingly “infected with the very thing it exists to cure--Individualism,” changing from an “exercise which gave men direct experience of the common, immediate life” to a means of concretising individuality, developing into “rites [...] intended to assure [the survival of] individuals after death.”<sup>807</sup> As religion failed to provide a picture of a “direct experience” of our “larger extra-individual life”<sup>808</sup>, philosophies evolved which posited the individual to be “final and insoluble,”<sup>809</sup> sociable only out of mutual self-interest. Specifically, Heard objected to the “Hobbesian outlook”<sup>810</sup> of modern politicians and thinkers, that “man is an individual, his communities only constructs of and for his personal convenience and that therefore you had only to satisfy his individual needs for him to become wholly amenable.”<sup>811</sup> Heard dismissed this perception of humanity as psychologically fallacious: “Society is not held together by each constituent coldly calculating his profit and loss in the arrangement,” Heard asserted in *Time and Tide* in 1932, but “was held, and still coheres, through subconscious forces.”<sup>812</sup> Some technique was required that could make us consciously aware of our subconscious instinct for community. Heard asserted that self-consciousness, far from being the final stage of our “vast psychic evolution,” was only a “growing pain or birth-pang”<sup>813</sup> of a larger “superconsciousness,”<sup>814</sup> a state in which we would be simultaneously self-aware and aware of our extra-individuality. Heard believed that the only way forward

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<sup>807</sup> Gerald Heard, “Religion and the Problems of Modern Society,” part 2 of 4. *Time and Tide* 6 February 1932: 145-146: 145. (Hereafter “Religion”.)

<sup>808</sup> Heard, *Source*, 206.

<sup>809</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 6.

<sup>810</sup> Gerald Heard, “Men and Books,” review of *Ethics of Power* by Philip Leon and *We Europeans*, by J. Huxley et. al., *Time and Tide* (21 December 1935): 1907 (hereafter “Men and Books 21 December 1935”).

<sup>811</sup> Gerald Heard, “Men and Books,” review of *Ancient Art and Social Ritual* by Jane Harrison and *The Sacred Dance*, by W. O. Osterley, (*Time and Tide* 26 October 1935): 1545 (hereafter “Men and Books 26 October 1935”).

<sup>812</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 115.

<sup>813</sup> Heard, *Source*, 11.

<sup>814</sup> Heard, *Source*, 6.

for society was to expand our consciousness, and argued that the frustrated, isolated individual would

be driven [...] to create a community in which he may resolve himself, compassing a real progress from the original co-consciousness (out of which his individuality is condensed) through the painful transition, that is that individuality, to the superconsciousness of a purely psychologically satisfying state.<sup>815</sup>

Heard discusses the value of group meditation as a means to realise our extra-individuality in a series of four articles written for *Time and Tide* in 1932, entitled “Religion and the Problems of Modern Society.” Individuals joined in “religious communion” could achieve self-transcendence, seeing their “supra-personal” relations to one another and experience a “direct sense of the union with their community.”<sup>816</sup>

Heard stresses the importance of mystical experience similarly in *The Ascent of Man*:

Individuals, psychology suggests and the spirit of man approves, grow by fusion. When two or three are gathered together in the spirit of the future it begins to dominate them, to break down their isolation, to confer new powers, and finally to deliver them into a new unity as real as their former separation.<sup>817</sup>

Heard argued that the “experience” of unity afforded by meditation could be “obtained by any group of like-minded people,” but that “the dozen seems to be the number which gives best results.”<sup>818</sup> Although he felt these groups were too “absurdly small”<sup>819</sup> to form the basis for a new society, Heard argued that “small groups meeting once a week for meditation” feel “an experience of precipitated power” that would last beyond their meditations. Heard also writes in *The Significance of the New Pacifism* that “small like minded groups trained in

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<sup>815</sup> Ibid.

<sup>816</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 145.

<sup>817</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 12.

<sup>818</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 146.

<sup>819</sup> Ibid. 146.

meditation” contained “the powers essential to curing conflict in the self, in society, and between humanity.”<sup>820</sup>

Huxley’s and Heard’s thought on pacifism were very much in line with pacifist thought in the 1930s. For example, pacifist communes are similarly described as the basis of a new social model in the P.P.U.’s 1938 *Peace Service Handbook*, an unsigned booklet outlining the pacifist position and suggestions for how concerned individuals can advance the cause of peace. “Communes,” it reads,

are voluntary attempts to express the spiritual, social and economic aspects of peace-making in terms of practical co-operation and service. Their foundation is the right relationship of individual with individual [...]. Living communally is the attempt to begin at the beginning of right human relation and so to build up a social order based on co-operation instead of competition, sharing instead of possessing, and service instead of self-seeking.<sup>821</sup>

The pamphlet owes much to Richard B. Gregg, whose 1934 book *The Power of Non-Violence* offers a similar description of the value of communes. Gregg’s book was a seminal and highly influential pacifist work; H. R. L. (Dick) Sheppard described the book as “the text-book of our movement”<sup>822</sup> while Aldous Huxley considered the technique of non-violent resistance to be “the only practical way of dealing with war.”<sup>823</sup> Heard, writing to H. R. L. Sheppard on 1 October 1935, also argues for the importance of Gregg to the P.P.U.; “I would like you to have at least a thousand of us at your disposal and you to know we were really in good enough training to do what Gregg in his book *The Power of Non-Violence* describes. That book is good stuff for us.”<sup>824</sup> The non-violent resister, by Gregg’s definition, is a peace-loving individual who opposes any acts of violence or aggression by refusing to retaliate. More importantly, however, non-violent resisters could work proactively to prevent war by

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<sup>820</sup> Heard, “Significance,” 21.

<sup>821</sup> *Peace Service Handbook* (London: Peace Pledge Union, 1938), 33.

<sup>822</sup> Quoted in Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, 250.

<sup>823</sup> *Ibid.* Quoted, 255.

<sup>824</sup> Gerald Heard to H. R. L. Sheppard, 1 October 1935. Sheppard Papers, Lambeth Palace Ms. 3745.121.

promoting “mutual tolerance, respect and goodwill” in their own social situations and stimulate the same qualities in others by their example: “The advantage of non-violence resistance,” writes Gregg, “is that it begins at home and can and needs to be practiced in all the small private relations between people as a preparation for the accompaniment of its use on a large scale.”<sup>825</sup> Just as Heard believed that the pacifist cell was a springboard to sweeping social reform, so too did Gregg believe that non-violent resisters could create a “world community” by applying the techniques of non-violence to modern social problems; “such a community,” says Gregg, “will best be created, in social practice, by the use of non-violence resistance for the righting of existing wrongs.”<sup>826</sup>

On the issue of “training,” Heard wrote to H. R. L. Sheppard on 1 October 1935 to express his view that training was essential to build strength not only inside the movement, but in approaching the outside world:

[J]ust because some like myself [,] though we wish with all our rabbit hearts [,] are so damned soft, I feel that we have to be put into training and face up to leading the rationed life both in order that we may be tough enough to follow you and also that we may steal the communist or any other social-conscience thunder that we may be lying about and be used against us if we don't bag it for ourselves.<sup>827</sup>

Between 1929 and 1935, as the popularity and strength of fascism grew, Heard became increasingly convinced of the necessity of action. The conclusion to *The Source of Civilization* and his articles for *Time and Tide* in and after 1935 express an urgency hitherto invisible in his works, and a plan of action. It was not solely the violence inherent in fascism that made Heard perceive it as a threat to society, but of its ability to make individuals unthinkingly feel passionately about their community. Fascism offered a sense of extra-individuality in the form of Nationalism, uniting

<sup>825</sup> Richard B Gregg, *The Power of Non Violence* (London: G. Routledge, 1935), 132.

<sup>826</sup> Ibid.

<sup>827</sup> Gerald Heard to H. R. L. Sheppard, 1 October 1935. Sheppard Papers, Lambeth Palace Ms. 3745.121.

individuals by a common cause and giving them a purpose within a military regime. In 1935, Heard quotes the Nazi motto “Nationalism *is* religion now”<sup>828</sup> to illustrate how militarism could afford the same sense of unity as religion once had regardless of how inimical it is to society. As Heard argues, “man has a necessity to count, to be worth something to his community [...]. This need is also [...] blind. Men need to count and will count ill or well.”<sup>829</sup> The danger of Fascism in Europe was that it alone offered the individual this strong community sense. Modern Western liberal democracy was only a materialist palliative to social problems, satisfying the material needs of the individual but ignoring his necessity to count socially. Heard argued that to “[g]et rid of the Means Test, give ‘every peasant a (free) chicken in his pot,’ every young lover his dress clothes as well as his day clothing.” was to address only half the problem; “There is the psychological man as well as economic man,” Heard writes, “and without satisfying those two sides, man is deranged.”<sup>830</sup> For democracy to survive, it had to offer a balance of psychological and economic forces; as Heard writes in *The Source of Civilization*,

a society which advances economically [...] must become unstable unless, through an equal advance in psychology, it can give a proportionately self-conscious knowledge of its inner nature.<sup>831</sup>

Heard continues in a similar vein, explaining the importance of matching inward and outward growth:

The society which does not make and continue to make religious discoveries as radical as its material discoveries, must rapidly increase in ill-distributed wealth and power; will generate increasingly neuroses, ill-will and violence; and must finally (if it can so long escape internal anarchy and ruin) become wholly militaristic, devote itself to destruction and collapse.<sup>832</sup>

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<sup>828</sup> Gerald Heard, “Men and Books”, *Time and Tide* 21 December 1935: 1907.

<sup>829</sup> Ibid.

<sup>830</sup> Ibid. 1908.

<sup>831</sup> Heard, *Source*, 136.

<sup>832</sup> Ibid. 136.

Heard believed the “socially vitaminless diet”<sup>833</sup> of Western democracy would lead inevitably to “destruction and collapse,” its adherents feeling overwhelmingly that “life after all means nothing, leads nowhere, and that at base, no one and nothing is really necessary or worthwhile.”<sup>834</sup> Heard considered each individual possessed a “balked will to count,” an instinctual desire to “to be worth something to his community.”<sup>835</sup> The popularity of Fascism in Europe could be explained by this need to count; “War,” argued Heard, “though fatal to civilization, is today the only condition in which a number of people can feel life is worthwhile.” For Heard, war was often “the only time when every vital person knows he is wanted [...] - if only by the police, if only by the recruiting sergeant;” “Leave millions in modern communities without any purpose in their lives, save getting or failing to get a living,” Heard argues, and “any cause for which they may count will be vapidly espoused.”<sup>836</sup> In Heard’s mind, the masses possessed a wealth of pent-up social energy which lay waiting to be harnessed. As a result, the growth of fascism was a very real threat; “All that dictators and tyrants have to do,” he wrote on 19 October 1935, “is to dig a pit and into this ditch their cast social energy plunges to drive like a blind Samson at the Philistine’s mill.”<sup>837</sup> It is tantalising to believe that Heard’s allusion inspired Huxley’s title. However, Heard’s phrasing suggests that, like Huxley, he too found himself at a watershed late in 1935; would he remain “eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves,” or would he apply his power of vision to free them? The answer would come less than a fortnight later, when Heard announced Huxley’s intention to join the P.P.U.

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<sup>833</sup> Heard, “Men and Books,” 21 December 1935: 1907.

<sup>834</sup> Ibid. 1908.

<sup>835</sup> Ibid.. 1907.

<sup>836</sup> Ibid.

<sup>837</sup> Gerald Heard, “Men and Books,” Rev. of *Sex and Culture*, by J. D. Unwin. *Time and Tide*, 19 October 1935: 1488-89.

Communal living and group meditation were only a part of Heard's scheme, however. Pacifists, trained in what Heard called "the initiative of social creativeness"<sup>838</sup> would be enabled to express their deep love and understanding for all individuals without fear for their own safety. They would be trained to identify smouldering social problems and help to design new social patterns intended to alleviate them. Heard considered pacifists to be intrepid humanitarians, likening them to "anthropologists making contact with strange and suspicious tribes: the tamer of wild beasts: the new practitioners in the recovery of the insane."<sup>839</sup> These are metaphors Heard frequently employed to describe the task of the pacifist, who believed that peace was "a psychological and anthropological issue."<sup>840</sup> For example, in *The Source of Civilization*, Heard explains how the anthropologist and clinical psychiatrist have much to teach the pacifist, and perhaps most importantly the foreign diplomat:

To-day anthropologists have yet to find a people which cannot be approached and associated with, if a defensive attitude is abandoned and the advance is obviously friendly. The homicidal lunatic may attack but he is much less likely to do so if whoever goes up to him goes with complete defenselessness [*sic*] and with complete interest, not in their safety, but in his welfare. He is nearly always a paranoiac longing to be protected.<sup>841</sup>

Heard likened countries preparing for war, particularly Japan, Germany and Italy, to lunatics, writing in 1936 that "[t]hese nations are hysterical, if you will paranoiac, arming desperately and leaving no doubt what they will do."<sup>842</sup> Rather than awaiting those "hysterical" nations to lash out, Heard advocated a "psychological policy" which "takes the initiative. It does not wait for trouble to burst. It forestalls."<sup>843</sup>

Having described these nations as psychiatric patients requiring care, Heard argues

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<sup>838</sup> Heard, "Significance," 17.

<sup>839</sup> Gerald Heard, "Over The Top," *Time and Tide*, 15 February 1936, 220-22: 221. (Hereafter "Over.")

<sup>840</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>841</sup> Heard, *Source*, 416.

<sup>842</sup> Heard, "Rue," 175.

<sup>843</sup> Gerald Heard, "Immediate Steps," *Time and Tide*, 22 February 1936: 253. (Hereafter "Immediate".)

that the treatment of such countries should be suited accordingly by reaching out and curing their hysteria. Those who would “cure” the paranoiac must do their utmost to avoid responding with violence; as Heard writes, this psychological brand of pacifism “does not expect the most hysteric to behave best but those least under strain.”<sup>844</sup> Heard argues by analogy that just as the psychologist “spends the invaluable hours or surface tranquillity analysing the patient’s mind, getting to the depth from which explosion will spring, and building up in those suspicion-haunted depths the proved faith that he is the patient’s friend,”<sup>845</sup> so too must the pacifist, in dealing with hostile nations, employ the same technique of understanding to “cure” the fear and paranoia that prompt those states to hostility. As Heard states explicitly in 1936, “[i]f we will use the method - and [...] courage - of an alienist helping and curing a paranoiac, we shall win.”<sup>846</sup> Heard makes a further comparison between the psychiatric patient and “paranoiac” nations in order to illustrate the unsuitability of violence as a means of quelling aggressive countries by looking at the history of psychiatric treatment:

The insane today are cured--who in the old days of the straitjacket [...] convulsed themselves into incurable mania--because, taking the risks which a scientifically taught staff can take, the lunatic is never bound but treated as though he were one of us seized by a convulsion which will pass and leave him.<sup>847</sup>

Heard’s analogy aptly describes the treatment shown to “paranoiac” states by the League of Nations. For example, the Treaty of Versailles effectively straitjacketed Germany, binding it with exorbitant war reparations, removing its military strength and much of its industrial might. Thus restricted, and further debilitated by the economic collapse of the Depression, Germany worked itself into the “incurable mania” of Nazism. The programme of disarmament and responding to the needs of

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<sup>844</sup> Heard, “Immediate,” 253.

<sup>845</sup> Ibid.

<sup>846</sup> Heard, “Over,” 221.

<sup>847</sup> Ibid.

paranoiac states is in reality an extension of the policy of appeasement, which Martin Gilbert describes as “the cornerstone of inter-war foreign policy.”<sup>848</sup> Appeasement was intended to redress the latent unfairness of the Treaty of Versailles by acceding to the demand for a redistribution of territories and resources made by those “Have Not” nations, most significantly Germany and Italy, who suffered as a result of its implementation. Gilbert also considered that, from the perspective of post-war generations, appeasing Fascist states seems “incredible.”<sup>849</sup> However, as Martin Ceadel writes, appeasement was considered to be a practical means of avoiding another war, “a policy of optimism and hope, [...] a noble idea rooted in Christianity, courage and common sense.”<sup>850</sup> Ceadel similarly describes appeasement as a “panacea” and as a policy which held “the broadest range of support in the peace movement.”<sup>851</sup> Heard was arguably an overt supporter of appeasement. In a *Time and Tide* article from 1936, Heard lends his support to a statement made by Lloyd George on 5 February 1936, and asks for “the less hysterical - the English, the Dutch, the Belgians, Portuguese and French” to surrender their territories for League redistribution, and “put their ‘possessions’ under International ownership and inspection, so proving to the conscience of mankind their *bona fides* for Peace and the new way to world order and plenty.”<sup>852</sup> However, for Heard, a redistribution of territories was not so much a question of political expediency, but the necessary first step toward the creation of an international community controlled by a single organization, and the debut of psychological politics.

Heard also argued that the pacifist must physically oppose war, and proposed, as a “solution to the problem of War–endemic areas,” the construction of

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<sup>848</sup> Martin Gilbert, *The Roots of Appeasement* (London: Wiedenfeld Nicolson, 1966), 54.

<sup>849</sup> Gilbert, 8.

<sup>850</sup> Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, xi.

<sup>851</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>852</sup> Heard, “Over,” 221.

pacifist “shock brigades”<sup>853</sup> under the auspices of the League of Nations. He explains that “activist anthropologists in a re-inspired League’s service”<sup>854</sup> could be “trained anthropologically, psychologically, linguistically and in all first-aids that will concern them”<sup>855</sup> in order to diagnose and resolve simmering social and political problems. Heard’s model greatly prefigures the role played by modern day peacekeepers of the United Nations, itself the League of Nations “re-inspired.” The risks taken by anthropologists in the name of science were no different than those a pacifist might undertake to guarantee peace, and Heard remarked on the similarity of technique: “When a tribe is in wild reaction from mishandling the modern anthropologist takes care to go unarmed, to sit outside the village inviting investigation and then explanation.”<sup>856</sup> By such a practice, Heard felt that trained brigades of pacifists could “treat the social disease before it spreads, and [...] also let the world know with impartial witness why the trouble was present.”<sup>857</sup> Clearly the pacifist was to be an individual of exceptional character, dedication and courage - perhaps qualities Heard believed would be naturally forthcoming in those who experienced a sense of spiritual and psychological unity with his fellows.

Given his seemingly unshakeable enthusiasm and faith in pacifism, it is difficult to explain Heard’s exodus to the United States in 1937. However, there are two plausible explanations. The first is Heard’s growing sense of frustration with activism. While Heard was a prolific theoretician, his attempts to aid the P.P.U. in practical matters went either unheeded or ended in disaster. For example, on 1 October 1935, Heard secured from his partner Chris Wood (accomplished pianist and heir to a small fortune in the form of a jam factory) a cheque for £2,500 towards the

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<sup>853</sup> Heard, “Immediate,” 255.

<sup>854</sup> Ibid.

<sup>855</sup> Heard, “Immediate,” 255.

<sup>856</sup> Heard, “Over,” 221.

<sup>857</sup> Heard, “Immediate,” 255.

P.P.U. The money was intended to stand the fledgling organization for its first year (with a guaranteed overdraft of an equal sum to run for 4 years), of which £600 was earmarked to hire an administrative secretary.<sup>858</sup> Over the course of six months of correspondence, there are glimmers of a protracted ordeal arising from Heard's attempt to hire a suitable candidate without proper authorisation from the subcommittee of the P.P.U. The result was an acrimonious dispute between the young man desirous of the post, referred to as Willoughby, and a settlement of £1,500 which Heard offered to pay from his own funds; the issue remained unresolved as late as 1937. One would not expect such mistakes from the former private secretary to Sir Horace Plunkett. However, the letter in which he best explains the disastrous affair to Sheppard bespeaks a certain naivety and innocence, one which may stem from his sudden and unshakable embrace of pacifist principles:

I had prayed & hoped so that [Willoughby] might be able, before a definite break came, not to look upon me as someone who had let him down but, a fool of course, who had through misunderstanding not made it clear to him that the subcommittee had & could have no powers except to make such provisional suggested arrangements at the full Cttee or the chairman - yourself - at very least could approve. This attitude of giving coat as well as cloak seemed & seems to be so central to dynamic pacifism that to win him back to where he could make that allowance for my mistake & allow there had been an honest misunderstanding & to heal his feeling of having been let down I would gladly sell every single [thing] I have & live on one meal a day.<sup>859</sup>

Heard's rush to act without approval might, however, be connected to Aldous Huxley's growing concern that, by February 1936, there were difficulties in securing a central London office for the P.P.U. Heard claims Huxley felt frustrated, as though the Movement was stalled, and with the combined pressure of finishing *Eyeless in Gaza*, Heard claims,

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<sup>858</sup> Gerald Heard to H.R.L. Sheppard, 22 January 1936. Sheppard Papers, Lambeth Palace MS 3745.125.

<sup>859</sup> Gerald Heard to H. R. L. Sheppard, 26 January 1936. Sheppard Papers, Lambeth Palace MS 3745.126.

he has to take his decision whether to work for peace or to withdraw. His wife wants him to go back to his house in France and he said to me yesterday that if he did or did not depended wholly on this peace work. If he could feel that it was going forward he would throw himself into it but if he felt he could not help then he would withdraw and go back to his old way of living.<sup>860</sup>

Sheppard and the other Sponsors were aware of his frustration, and had suggested that Huxley's own address serve as the official address of the P.P.U. In a handwritten postscript to the letter, Heard refers to those "suggestions that A.H.'s own address be given" as being of no use; "One of the reasons he is so anxious for a London room & help," explains Heard, "is that he cannot deal personally with the enquiries he receives as he has no secretary."<sup>861</sup> Heard was naturally concerned, not only for Huxley's own sake, but for the loss to the cause Huxley's withdrawal would occasion:

As you know he is finishing his big novel which is the greatest effort which he has made in his life, for in it, with great courage he is trying to describe the change of life from the old Huxley to the new. The book will have a great influence and, as he can only write what he has lived, how that book will end will depend on how he sees this peace effort going. So not merely for his own sake but for tens of thousands whom he influences I am acutely anxious that he should not be discouraged. I myself have done all I can to counsel patience and to discourage any premature action but I see now he cannot be held back without losing interest – the forces which advise him to give up being so strong.<sup>862</sup>

His seeming incapacity for the practical aspects of the job becomes apparent in a letter of 12 November 1936. In this letter, Heard rejects, for the second time, Sheppard's offer to make him a Sponsor of the P.P.U. Heard explains "why I am still going to say I'm not fit as a sponsor"<sup>863</sup>; "Here is a big active committee which already has character & a way with it. I am, on the other hand, quite unsuited to ctees. I know I'm a complete muff on them. Even when they are small & I understand their powers

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<sup>860</sup> Gerald Heard to H.R.L. Sheppard, February 1936. Sheppard Papers, Lambeth Palace MS. 3745.136.

<sup>861</sup> Ibid.

<sup>862</sup> Ibid.

<sup>863</sup> Gerald Heard to H. R. L. Sheppard, 12 November 1936. Sheppard Papers, Lambeth Palace MS3745.153.

& policies I'm no use."<sup>864</sup> In the same letter, Heard declaims his lack of "political organising sense," and argues that there are those on the committee are "far more practiced & efficient than I am."<sup>865</sup> Heard is left to reassert his conviction that the way to success, and the way he can offer most assistance, is with a scheme

(1) which will build up character in terms which accept for each other unlimited liability - a real spiritual way of living. (2) which will have its economic aspect in cooperation; for cooperation is pacifism working in business relationships & without that side the finance of the Movement must never be able to be sound.<sup>866</sup>

However, Heard recognises that there are those who see his ideas as impractical, admitting that "much more practiced minds – yours Sopers Ponsonby - think such a scheme wholly unpractical. So I am sure I ought to yield to expert advice."<sup>867</sup> He closes the letter with a reaffirmation of his support of the Movement, but regretfully declining Sheppard's offer; "I am absolutely in sympathy with P.P.U. & am always helping it with such capacities as I have & that I am really unsuited to be a sponsor."<sup>868</sup>

By late 1937, Heard's interest in the pacifist movement had cooled. In 1965, Gerald Heard wrote an article in memory of Huxley for the *Kenyon Review* in which he briefly reflects on their twin careers as pacifists. In this article, he offers an unusual story of the single practical plan he devised with Huxley. Fondly remembering Huxley's "apt, practical and immediate proposals" to slow or stop the militarization of Europe by means of "skilled economic pressure,"<sup>869</sup> Heard discusses a plan he claims the two presented to Neville Chamberlain. The plan, Heard explains, was to convince the British government to purchase a large shipment of Canadian

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<sup>864</sup> Ibid.

<sup>865</sup> Ibid.

<sup>866</sup> Ibid.

<sup>867</sup> Ibid.

<sup>868</sup> Ibid.

<sup>869</sup> Gerald Heard, "The Poignant Prophet," *Kenyon Review*, XXVII.1 (Winter 1965): 49-70. (Hereafter "Poignant").

nickel, much coveted by the Germans for the manufacture of munitions, for the price of one British Dreadnought-class ship. He recalls with bitterness that Chamberlain dismissed the plan as impractical - “the pet word of the purblind” - and claims that it was soon after this disappointment he and Huxley departed for America.<sup>870</sup>

However, it is more likely that Heard felt his ideas were of little use to the P.P.U., who were looking for politically practicable methods to prevent a war. Sheppard was frustrated by Heard’s convoluted thought; he even used Heard’s name as an adjective, commending a speech delivered by Aldous Huxley at an International Pacifist Conference in Brussels as “perfectly simple and not Gerald Heardy.”<sup>871</sup> But the largest example of Sheppard’s aggravation with Heard arises over a pamphlet Heard wrote, advocating the new way of life he advanced initially in *The Significance of the New Pacifism*. Writing to Lord Ponsonby in 1936, Sheppard expresses his frustration at a tract written for the P.P.U. The tract was Heard’s anonymous sequel to Huxley’s original “What are you going to do about it?” (entitled “What are you going to do about it? (II)”), in which Heard makes abstruse arguments for the same way of life he describes in *The Significance of the New Pacifism*. Sheppard had asked for something “simple,” arguably something practical and immediately useful to the aims of the P.P.U., but as he laments to Ponsonby, “obviously that is beyond him.”<sup>872</sup> The pamphlet (which was not carried by the P.P.U. beyond 1937), being anonymous, brings about a question of authorship. The style and content are unquestionably Heard’s; even the question of anonymity is not entirely surprising, considering his remarks to Dorothy Elmhirst on 15 July 1933 that “Thought, to be good enough must now be anonymous – anyone must be able to use it as a stepping stone. It comes from

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<sup>870</sup> Ibid. 58.

<sup>871</sup> H.R.L. Sheppard to Lord Ponsonby, August 1936. Ponsonby papers Bodleian Library, MS.Eng.Hist. C.678, F.116.

<sup>872</sup> H.R.L. Sheppard to Lord Ponsonby, August 1936. Ponsonby papers Bodleian Library, MS.Eng.Hist. C.678, F.108.

all and goes to all. That is even truer of vision, there can be nothing personal in it.”<sup>873</sup> Heard did see himself as a visionary, outlining a future open to many. Coupled with his reluctance to accept the title of Sponsor, we can infer a reticence on Heard’s part to attach his personality to something he felt important enough to be part of the public domain. According to the Honorary Archivist of the P.P.U., William Hetherington, this publication also led to a rethinking of the approval of publications by Sheppard and the other sponsors; it was poorly received by the leadership, and added to the perception of the peace movement as a haven of soft thinking and impracticable solutions.<sup>874</sup> Certainly Heard perceived a difference between his ideas on peace and those of others in the P.P.U. In one of his last letters to Sheppard, Heard wrote to explain that he felt somewhat of an outsider in the peace movement. Writing from California on 29 October 1937, Heard explained his position:

I am increasingly convinced that what is needed is not merely a political protest but another order & way of living. I do with all my heart support the pledge against war. It must go, but it will only go when another way of life is showed to people. There must be constant & deep charity in personal relationships & then pacifism in national relationships.<sup>875</sup>

The “withdrawal of the pamphlet on training & it not being replaced by another” was perceived by Heard as “clear recognition by the P.P.U. that the point of view which I believe to be the only possible way to peace was finally renounced.”<sup>876</sup> Heard felt strongly that the P.P.U. was not following what he saw as of paramount importance to the peace movement, and his disillusionment is palpable. In the same letter, Heard begins to sever his ties to the organization. He first discounts his value as an orator, as though acknowledging the doubts Sheppard expressed to Ponsonby in 1936: “I am not a good enough speaker to be worth while [*sic*]. This is not my own opinion but

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<sup>873</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 15 July 1933. DWE 17 General – Gerald Heard. HCH.

<sup>874</sup> William Hetherington, interview with the author, 2001.

<sup>875</sup> Gerald Heard to H. R. L. Sheppard 26 October 1937. Lambeth Palace, Sheppard Papers MS 3745.162.

<sup>876</sup> *Ibid.*

of competent observers.”<sup>877</sup> Secondly, Heard doubts his own ability to be much help to the movement until he has worked out for himself what exactly it will entail to live in the manner he advanced as central to pacifism. He outlines his own intended course of action, and expresses the importance of first achieving that life which makes pacifism inevitable:

I am increasingly realising that I can do nothing for peace or any form of goodness until I am far better my self [*sic*]. I feel increasingly sure that the spirit is calling one to a life of very much more thorough devotion. In some years I have fought shy of this; feeling it was higher but now I see that to me to attempt to help other people out of their difficulties & advise them to life the life of complete reliance on the spirit, until I was living such a life, was to serve no purpose but even to defeat one’s end. I am therefore giving up nearly all my time to this search & I believe that in the end I shall find. As soon as I have found I will tell but I must know before I say. I am sure that there is a peaceful power behind the universe but I must not talk about it before I have contacted it & before it has shown me how to express its power in every moment of my life.<sup>878</sup>

In beginning this search, however, Heard effectively cut himself off from the P.P.U. and from any form of direct or political action; although he declared himself “absolutely in sympathy with P.P.U.” and “always helping it with such capacities as I have,”<sup>879</sup> his contribution to peace would come in the form of seeking this new way of life, “a real search for which one is glad to give one’s life.”<sup>880</sup>

The difference in opinion between Heard and other pacifists, and his desire to pursue that life of “devotion” suggest two more reasons for his departure to the United States. However, a letter written to *The Week-End Review* on 18 November 1933 may offer the best explanation. Arguing for a final means by which pacifists could show their refusal to support a government intent on fighting a war, Heard suggested that

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<sup>877</sup> Ibid.

<sup>878</sup> Ibid.

<sup>879</sup> Gerald Heard to H. R. L. Sheppard, 12 November 1936. Sheppard papers, Lambeth Palace, MS 3745.154.

<sup>880</sup> Gerald Heard to H. R. L. Sheppard, 29 October 1937. Sheppard papers, Lambeth Palace, MS3745.162.

pacifists may undertake a second Mayflower voyage. Certainly that is an alternative far more attractive than staying on in an insane Europe, and it should be part of practical pacifism to draw up such a scheme as a final secessionary report [...]. But before this final step, surely pacifists owe it to their fellow-citizens to influence the government in every way toward peace.<sup>881</sup>

It is generally regarded, owing to his greater public profile and popularity, that Huxley led Heard to leave England for America in 1937. However, it was not so much Huxley's decision as Heard's, a view which is supported by Huxley's letters. Only a month before, Aldous Huxley reported in a letter to his brother Julian on 14 October 1933 that Heard, who had spent ten days visiting Huxley in Sanary-sur-Mer, had been "more pessimistic than ever, advising us all to clear out to some safe spot in South America or the Pacific islands before it is too late."<sup>882</sup> Sensing the inevitability of a war in Europe, and increasingly frustrated with activism, Heard departed from England in the spirit of a pilgrim, intending to start a new society as far away from the threat of violence as possible.

Huxley too was becoming "more and more firmly convinced that it is completely pointless to work in the field of politics in the ordinary sense of the word"<sup>883</sup> and reflected that the religious answer to peace which he and Heard sought could only be accomplished by the establishment of meditational communes:

It is obvious now that the religious teachers were right and that nothing can be achieved on the exclusively political plane except palliation and the deflection of evil [...]. Religious people who think that they can go into politics and transform the world always end up being transformed by the world. (E.g. the Jesuits, Pere Joseph, the Oxford Group.) Religion can have no politics except the creation of small-scale societies of chosen individuals outside and on the margin of the essentially unviable large-scale societies, whose nature dooms them to self-frustration and suicide.<sup>884</sup>

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<sup>881</sup> Gerald Heard, reply to letter of Richard Pennington. *The Week-End Review*, 18 November 1933: 521.

<sup>882</sup> Aldous Huxley, "To Julian Huxley." 14 October 1933, *Letters*, 374-5.

<sup>883</sup> Aldous Huxley, "To Kingsley Martin." 30 June 1939, *Letters*, 443-44.

<sup>884</sup> *Ibid.*

Heard had been thinking along similar lines as early as 1936. He believed that the majority of individuals, mired in self-consciousness and “obsessed with economics and suspicious of psychology,”<sup>885</sup> would be largely unable to feel their extra-individuality. Only a handful of serious, contemplative individuals found this experience possible; in fact, Heard openly states that “the Yogic way is not for all.”<sup>886</sup> The solution Heard advocated was the creation of a social “centre,” a core of those individuals who could experience our “superconscious” unity and guide others incapable of the same experience to create social patterns and policies more conducive to community. Writing on the role of universities should play in society for *Time and Tide* in November 1935, Heard suggests the creation of a ruling elite:

We are compelled [...] to intentionally construct some centre which will both receive the feeling of the community and give back that feeling transmuted into thought-for-action [...]. The community can no longer leave the individual to find by himself the purpose of his life in a series of irrelevant, private, inconsequential affairs, excitements, adventures and enterprises. The community is an unlimited liability company - the only company fully deserving that grave title. It must purpose together what life and what goal it believes to be worthy of its endeavour and unlimited devotion.<sup>887</sup>

Heard believed that such an elite should not engage directly in political action, but rather operate independently in the capacity of detached visionaries, advisors and instructors to their respective governments. Heard’s reasons for this are best expressed in an 1935 article on the “sociological significance” of the British Monarchy in light of the coronation of Edward VIII. Although the value of the monarch to actual governance was minimal, Heard noted a “a queer uprush or flush of the social circulation”<sup>888</sup> – that is, renewal of national pride and unity as a result of Edward’s coronation; as a contemporary example, one might consider the “queer

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<sup>885</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 6.

<sup>886</sup> Heard, *Source*, 243.

<sup>887</sup> Gerald Heard, “University Supplement: Leviathan. Introduction.” *Time and Tide* 16 November 1935: 1665-67. (Hereafter “Leviathan”.)

<sup>888</sup> Gerald Heard, “Men and Books,” rev. of *Letters of George III*, by B. Dobrée and *Government in Business*, by Stuart Chase, *Time and Tide*, 9 November 1935: 1619-20.

uprush or flush” provoked by the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in April 2011. Heard felt that the Monarchy served as an “emotional rallying point”<sup>889</sup> which generated a sense of loyalty and community that governing powers could then channel accordingly. Heard concludes that the main need of modern society is a rallying point around which a social order could be constructed; “seek we first the king, the nucleating power, the centre of spontaneous loyalty,” Heard argued, “and then all these efficiencies can be added into us.”<sup>890</sup> The role of the monarch as Heard envisioned it was not to be a practical politician, but rather work to generate emotional social fervour. Heard offered, as an example, George VI, whom he believed “failed” as a monarch owing to his inability to recognise

what of course no Englishman could tell him because none knew, only felt--that the monarchy was not to execute but preside. You must never mix loyalty and efficiency [...]. A respectable hard-working king in a rationalist century could hardly fail to ruin all.<sup>891</sup>

Heard remarked that Fascist states were successful because they had “devotional figures” around which the masses could rally; “Germany has a Führer,” he writes, “Italy a Duce.”<sup>892</sup> However, because these “devotional figures” were also the “supreme, indeed sole, executives”<sup>893</sup> of their countries, they were doomed to failure, as the taint of power would render their devotional magic null and void. Heard argued that governments existed to design the mechanics of social organisation, but that the ideal monarch was to be “the supreme practical psychologist--one whose power must be instinctual and not intellectual,”<sup>894</sup> able to tap the instinctual social energy in each individual and channel it towards the supporting political machinery. The monarch was to be considered “not the head but the heart” of society,

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<sup>889</sup> Ibid. 1619.

<sup>890</sup> Ibid.

<sup>891</sup> Ibid. 1620.

<sup>892</sup> Ibid.

<sup>893</sup> Ibid.

<sup>894</sup> Ibid.

representing “not the detailed coercive powers of the state, but its instinctive power of cohesion.”<sup>895</sup> “If he interferes with thought, with the administrative means,” Heard continued, “he is deserting his supreme station – to point like a compass to the end – a civilization of consent.”<sup>896</sup>

In *The Source of Civilization*, Heard outlines the basis for a caste system which would form the “heart” of the state, keeping the most trenchant thinkers at the helm of society. Heard effectively championed the pacifist cell as a ruling elite, drawing on both examples from nature and his understanding of the Hindu caste systems to declare the pacifist cell a new Brahmin caste. Drawing on examples from biology in a 1935 article in *Time and Tide*, namely the social structure of bees, ants and termites, Heard argues that all societies required a central locus of thought and guidance to coordinate the behaviour of individual constituents; as Heard writes, “every social organism as it becomes highly evolved must have some centre, which takes the same place in the body-politic as is taken by the brain in the body-physiologic.”<sup>897</sup> While bees and ants enjoyed the biological distinction of drone from queen, Heard argued that the distinction in the human world was purely a question of mental ability. As a result, Heard stresses the need for a caste system which could organise artificially what nature imparted biologically to other species and keep “men of vision [...] free to see and to keep them at their task of seeing.”<sup>898</sup> Heard outlines the roles of various castes, describing the lowest class as “routineers,” drones of human society possessed of a “very short time sense, content to repeat an unvaried round of duties with a similar round of rewards and satisfactions.”<sup>899</sup> The next highest rank was a “class of technicians, men who repair and keep the machinery running,” and above them a class

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<sup>895</sup> Ibid.

<sup>896</sup> Ibid.

<sup>897</sup> Heard, “Leviathan,” 1665.

<sup>898</sup> Heard, *Source*, 244-245.

<sup>899</sup> Ibid. 242.

of social planners, “supply and distribution experts who allot products, plan expansion and foresee consumption.”<sup>900</sup> The next and second highest caste consisted of “community state officials”<sup>901</sup> who provided governance, and would be immediately responsible for translating the social force unleashed by the highest caste of visionaries into practicable social policy. The sole responsibility of the “advanced types” in Heard’s scheme was to “communicate their vision”<sup>902</sup> to the lower castes, acting as the colloidal social agent within a given society. Heard called this highest caste “the supreme moral judicature,”<sup>903</sup> and describes them in terms which resonate with his article in *Time and Tide*:

It gives moral guidance. It does not apply the law [...]. Indeed, it must never touch practical administration. It must be absolutely clear of the taint of power and the pressures of immediate need or particular topical difficulty of administration.<sup>904</sup>

Heard had also discusses his conception of a caste system in his correspondence with Margaret Isherwood as early as 1934, arguing that

[t]he higher you are [within such a system], the more your life has its meaning not in any personal satisfaction but in being assumed in the social being of which you are a part. Power must mean a decrease, not an increase of arbitrariness, a decrease not an increase of physical pleasure and personal satisfaction.<sup>905</sup>

With all this in mind, it is easy to understand Heard’s intention in founding Trabuco College, a commune in which those who wished could develop both a devotional way of living and a practical one. It was in 1939 that Heard met Swami Prabhavananda (1893-1976), a disciple of Radakrishnan, who brought Vedanta (a branch of Hinduism focusing on the Vedic books of the *Upanishads*) to California.

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<sup>900</sup> Ibid.

<sup>901</sup> Ibid.

<sup>902</sup> Ibid..

<sup>903</sup> Ibid. 243.

<sup>904</sup> Ibid. 242.

<sup>905</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 8 October 1934, DWE Correspondence General 6a – Unsorted, Isherwood/Heard. HCH.

Prabhavananda and his teachings became a point of fascination not only for Heard, but for fellow expatriates to whom he introduced Prabhavananda, including William Somerset Maugham, Aldous Huxley and Christopher Isherwood. Isherwood devoted himself to Vedanta; he not only adopted the simplicity of life and devotion required of the faith, and promulgated the word of Prabhavananda through such works as *Vedanta for the Western World* (1945) and *Vedanta for Modern Man* (1951). Most significantly, he went on to assist his Swami in writing the first English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* in 1944, for which Huxley wrote the introduction. Isherwood would go on to discuss the influence of Prabhavananda on his life in *My Guru and his Disciple* (1980). But Heard would not so much become his disciple as incorporate his teachings into his own similar and evolving philosophy; David King Dunaway, in his 1994 essay “Literary Correspondence: Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard,” similarly suggests that Heard “combined the insights of Hinduism with his own particular blend of anthropology and history of science.”<sup>906</sup> Dunaway suggests Heard’s experiences with Vedanta led him to write two books in particular: *Pain, Sex and Time: A New Outlook on Evolution and the Future of Man* (1939) and *Training for the Life of Spirit* (1941); the latter became an important guide for the regimen at Trabuco College.

Huxley, writing to Christopher Isherwood on 7 February 1942, writes that he “went to visit Gerald the other day, and drove over to see the site of his new monastery, which is now a-building.”<sup>907</sup> It was on “a huge estate of three hundred and sixty acres, in a very beautiful, rather English country-side behind Laguna” that Heard began his “ambitious”<sup>908</sup> plan to build a centre devoted to the development of this highest caste, located on the fringe of a society about to embroil itself in a war from which Heard feared it might not recover. Heard believed that, no matter what the

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<sup>906</sup> Dunaway, “Literary Correspondence,” 31.

<sup>907</sup> Huxley, *Letters* 475.

<sup>908</sup> *Ibid.*

outcome of a war, a new model would be required for a post-war society, and devoted himself to discovering, through meditation, the overarching spiritual reality in which we are all united. What he wrote in 1934 to Margaret Isherwood prefigures what he would say to Sheppard in 1937 about the need to first discover in himself what is what he would hope to cultivate in others:

[O]nly those who actually know that they have a larger life to grow into and have intuitive experience of it, and by exercises have learnt to grow, can serve the community without corruption. More, they alone can be the real leader by showing the greedy rest that there is a larger life more satisfying because above the chances of this mortal life, if only they had the strength to climb up to it.<sup>909</sup>

Although Huxley was entirely supportive of Heard's aims and techniques, he was less than sanguine about the construction of a large-scale community, and was doubtful of his own knowledge and abilities to make a success of it. In a letter to Kingsley Martin of 30 June 1939, Huxley dismisses a rumour that he and Heard intended to establish a commune:

I don't know where you got your information about Gerald and myself being about to start a community; it doesn't happen to be true. I can't speak for Gerald; but certainly I don't know nearly enough about many things to be able to embark on such a venture with any prospect of success.<sup>910</sup>

However, Huxley's concern over the success of such an enterprise did not "diminish [his] interest in such ventures."<sup>911</sup> Although Trabuco was Heard's pet project, Huxley's interest in it and his contributions to its underlying philosophy led to its being considered an expression of what came to be known loosely as "Gerald Heard-Aldous Huxley theories."<sup>912</sup> We have seen how important Heard's ideas were to

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<sup>909</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 8 October 1934, DWE Correspondence General 6a – Unsorted, Isherwood/Heard. HCH.

<sup>910</sup> Aldous Huxley, "To Kingsley Martin." 30 June 1939, *Letters* 443-44.

<sup>911</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>912</sup> D. S. Savage, *Mysticism and Aldous Huxley: An Examination of Gerald Heard – Aldous Huxley Theories* ("Outcast" series of chapbooks, no. 10. Yonkers. New York: Oscar Bardinsky, 1947). Richard V Chase would similarly refer to a "Huxley-Heard Paradise" in an article of the same name in the *Partisan Review* (10, March-April, 1943: 143-158) and E. H. Owen and R. N. Bragg, would refer to both "Heard-Huxley theories" throughout their article devoted to examining their practical application

Huxley's developing interest in pacifism on a practical level. Before considering Trabuco as a philosophical 'joint venture' it is worth considering the degree to which Huxley's thought was been influenced by Heard's thinking about pacifism as a way of life.

Heard's ideas on mysticism, human community and pacifism were equally important to Huxley's fiction and thought during the 1930s, and find perhaps their greatest expression in his novels before and after the 'watershed' that was *Eyeless in Gaza*. For example, Huxley's caste system in *Brave New World* (written before he declared himself a pacifist, but only two years after meeting Heard) is remarkably similar to the one advanced by Heard in *The Source of Civilization* in 1935. The highest caste in Huxley's scheme is that of the Alpha-Pluses. As in Heard's scheme, this highest caste consists of the most intelligent members of society. Heard also posited that the highest caste would be psychologically-informed visionaries a distinction which is present in *Brave New World*; Bernard Marx is an Alpha-Plus psychologist working in a London Hatchery, while Helmholtz Watson is an Emotional Engineer, writing the hypnopaedic propaganda responsible for conditioning newly decanted children. The Alpha-Minus caste act as state officials, executing such tasks as the management of Savage Reservations to dispensing Soma. The Beta class, as represented by Lenina and Fanny Crowne, are that class of technicians who maintain and operate the machinery, namely the works of the Hatchery. On the bottom rung of the social ladder, the Deltas, Epsilons and Gammas are what Heard would call "routineers," whose low level of intelligence make them "content to repeat an unvaried round of duties."<sup>913</sup> Huxley illustrates the responsibilities of the "routineers" by illustrating the work at the Electrical Equipment

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("What Happens to an Idea?", Schimanski, Stefan and Treece, Henry, eds, *Transformation Three*. (London: L Drummond, 1945).

<sup>913</sup> Heard, *Source*, 242.

Corporation, “a small factory of lighting-sets for helicopters,”<sup>914</sup> describing how the Deltas produce parts for the Gammas to assemble and the Epsilons to load into trucks. The fundamental difference between the two systems is that Heard believed such a system could be created by means of social organization rather than by “conditioning.” Huxley’s model suggests that each individual would have to be physically and mentally predestined to fit within their designated castes; as Henry Foster reflects, “an Epsilon must have an Epsilon environment as well as an Epsilon heredity.” Huxley’s vision of “conditioning” is a totalitarian extrapolation on Heard’s castes based on ability; by physically and permanently conditioning individuals to their caste, the potential for opposition from lower castes is effectively reduced.

Although Huxley’s caste system suggests only a similarity of ideas, Huxley would appear to have borrowed heavily from Heard’s ideas of community and small groups. In her review of *Brave New World* for *Time and Tide*, Winifred Holtby argues that the religious ritual of Solidarity Services were “wickedly suggesting a caricature of Mr. Gerald Heard’s primitive community dancing round the dear tree in *The Social Substance of Religion*.”<sup>915</sup> A comparison of the Solidarity Services in light of Heard’s discussion of primitive religions suggests that Huxley was indeed familiar with Heard’s *Social Substance of Religion*. Here Heard defines early religion as “the assertion of unity with all life, and the realization of that unity through close and intense association in groups of such specific size, and for such specific life-associative purposes that the individual is fused.”<sup>916</sup> As individuals emerged from the primitive ‘co-conscious’ group, the group’s “indubitable sense of [...] social

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<sup>914</sup> Aldous Huxley, *BNW*, 130.

<sup>915</sup> Winifred Holtby, “The Right to Be Unhappy,” rev. of *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, *Time and Tide* 6 February 1932: 150.

<sup>916</sup> Gerald Heard, *The Social Substance of Religion* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932), 67. (Hereafter *Substance*.)

solidarity”<sup>917</sup> faded, and some external method of reaffirming that solidarity was required. The dance was “an act of sympathetic magic” which, by its “rhythmicisation,”<sup>918</sup> involved the whole group at a subconscious level. “Psychically,” Heard writes, the ritual dance “makes a reciprocation between each constituent’s discharge of excitement, and his recharge, from the group’s excitement, to which he contributes and from which he is repaid.”<sup>919</sup> Heard, argues that dance evolved from “sympathetic mimicry, group dancing and yearning”<sup>920</sup> and was an inheritance from our primal ancestors. Heard describes the almost ritual behaviour of apes by way of comparison. An “unselfconscious congregation” of apes, “in sympathetic involuntary pantomime of their leader’s efforts” would quickly move beyond “broken gambolling and incoherent play” to “a common rhythmic performance.”<sup>921</sup> Heard recounts that the apes would go “round the maypole” or “dance round a post, and even perform a figure-eight pattern around two posts,” stamping rhythmically until one fell out of time and “broke up the formation by bringing the whole motive pattern to confusion.”<sup>922</sup> The same technique enabled human beings to experience a feeling of unity; “When the group is so surgent together,” Heard writes, “the tendency is for its movements, random gambollings, and what is little more than reflective play, to become rhythmic, and so a dance measure.”<sup>923</sup> But over time, ancient religion incorporated sexuality into its rituals. At some point, Heard argued, the orgy became the particular “life-associative” technique which could bridge the gap between individuals; “Man would only know ecstasy

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<sup>917</sup> Heard, *Substance*, 85.

<sup>918</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>919</sup> *Ibid.* 111.

<sup>920</sup> *Ibid.* 106.

<sup>921</sup> *Ibid.* 86.

<sup>922</sup> *Ibid.* 118.

<sup>923</sup> *Ibid.* 114.

when a group,”<sup>924</sup> Heard writes, finding in sexuality “the crest of psychophysical release.”<sup>925</sup> Heard describes the orgy as both “carnival and sacrament”<sup>926</sup>; “it was ecstasy because it was natural and physical: it was sanctity because it was supernatural and psychic.”<sup>927</sup> His description of a ritual orgy provides an interesting counterpoint to Huxley’s description of the Solidarity Services. “On the eve of the release and reunion,” Heard writes, “the individuals must be in a state of vigilic tension.”<sup>928</sup> In this “advent mood,” individuals gathered together in silence “with one mind” awaiting “the power that will come upon them because they are together.”<sup>929</sup> Suddenly, that power finds them; “Something,” Heard writes, “is at the door.”<sup>930</sup> The rhythmic dance Heard described earlier still played a valuable part within this sexual sacrament, generating excitement and community; the ritual dance made possible “a reciprocation between each constituent’s discharge of excitement and his recharge from the group’s excitement to which he contributes and from which he is repaid.”<sup>931</sup> At the peak of their excitement, “the trigger is pulled, the train flares, and the tribe is fused in an explosion of unity.”<sup>932</sup> The “affective urge” of the group, their common anticipation and desire for unity, enables this “explosion,” for as Heard argues, “the entire system can only detonate when the whole is charged in every part.”<sup>933</sup> As the individual “passed out of the orgy,” he felt “purified, balanced, at rest.”<sup>934</sup> Only in

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<sup>924</sup> Ibid.

<sup>925</sup> Ibid. 112.

<sup>926</sup> Ibid. 114.

<sup>927</sup> Ibid. 112.

<sup>928</sup> Ibid. 114.

<sup>929</sup> Ibid.

<sup>930</sup> Ibid.

<sup>931</sup> Ibid. 108.

<sup>932</sup> Ibid. 115.

<sup>933</sup> Ibid. 114.

<sup>934</sup> Ibid.

“the bosom of the tribe” could the individual “have any release, let alone at-one-ment, ecstasy.”<sup>935</sup>

In the year of our Ford 632, the world has made a return to the “orgy of atonement.”<sup>936</sup> In Chapter Five, Huxley describes the ritual of Solidarity Services, in which groups of six men and six women “in a ring of endless alternation” come together fortnightly “to be fused, to lose their twelve separate identities in a larger being.”<sup>937</sup> Perhaps in this ritual, and more than promiscuity, lies the truth of the motto “Everyone belongs to everyone else.”<sup>938</sup> The ceremony itself greatly resembles Heard’s earlier description of primitive rituals. The President of the Group begins a series of Solidarity Hymns, supplications to Ford to grant them self-annihilation and unity:

Come, Greater Being, Social Friend,  
Annihilating Twelve-in-One!  
We long to die, for when we end,  
Our larger life has but begun.<sup>939</sup>

Between the soma and their chanting, there is “an ever intenser excitement”<sup>940</sup> generated among those present as they anticipate the “approaching atonement.”<sup>941</sup> “The sense of the Coming’s imminence,” Huxley writes, “was like an electric tension in the air.”<sup>942</sup> This “electric tension” is comparable to the “vigilic tension” Heard asserted was precursory to prehistoric rites. All twelve anticipate the arrival of a power which will erode their individuality. Their rhythmic chanting heightens their excitement, and helps them to lose their individuality; “Ford!’ they were melting,

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<sup>935</sup> Ibid.

<sup>936</sup> Huxley, *BNW*, 212.

<sup>937</sup> Ibid. 66.

<sup>938</sup> Ibid. 34.

<sup>939</sup> Ibid. 67.

<sup>940</sup> Ibid. 68.

<sup>941</sup> Ibid. 70.

<sup>942</sup> Ibid. 68.

‘Ford!’ dissolved, dissolved.”<sup>943</sup> Suddenly, their waiting is ended. They hear the approach of “the feet of the Greater Being” coming “nearer and nearer down invisible stairs.”<sup>944</sup> It is at this point “the tearing point”<sup>945</sup> is reached, and the twelve merge in an orgiastic dance “while the tom-toms continued to beat their feverish tattoo.”<sup>946</sup>

Huxley’s description of the ensuing dance is like a prosaic rendering of Heard:

Round they went, a circular procession of dancers, each with hands on the hips of the dancer preceding, round and round, shouting in unison, stamping to the rhythm of the music with their feet, beating it, beating it out with hands on the buttocks in front; twelve pairs of hands beating as one; as one, twelve buttocks slabbily resounding. Twelve as one, twelve as one.<sup>947</sup>

The circle then “wavered, broke, fell in partial disintegration on the ring of couches” which surround the table, and the twelve experience the “final consummation of solidarity.”<sup>948</sup>

As Heard describes our ancestors having left such ceremonies “purified, balanced, at rest,”<sup>949</sup> so Huxley describes the look of “calm ecstasy of achieved consummation, the peace [...] of balanced life, of energies at rest and in equilibrium”<sup>950</sup> on the faces of the congregation. All except Bernard Marx, that is. Bernard Marx, upon entering the room, “foresaw for himself yet another failure to achieve atonement,”<sup>951</sup> and by the end of the evening remains “separate and unatoned, while others were being fused into the Greater Being.”<sup>952</sup> Rather than having lost himself in the Greater Being, Bernard emerges from the Service “with a self-consciousness intensified to the pitch of agony.”<sup>953</sup> Why has the technique failed for

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<sup>943</sup> Ibid. 67.

<sup>944</sup> Ibid. 69.

<sup>945</sup> Ibid.

<sup>946</sup> Ibid. 70

<sup>947</sup> Ibid. 69.

<sup>948</sup> Ibid. 70.

<sup>949</sup> Heard, *Source*, 114.

<sup>950</sup> Huxley, *BNW*, 70.

<sup>951</sup> Ibid. 66.

<sup>952</sup> Ibid. 71.

<sup>953</sup> Ibid.

Bernard? Heard explains that there are those individuals who are not “after practice, [...] are still left not quite satisfied, not quite expressed,” because their own “personal idiosyncrasy and identity was too distinct for the group” to be absorbed by the group’s “power of solution.”<sup>954</sup> Bernard is incapable of “at-one-ment” because he is not of the same mind as the group. Bernard is not alone in his individualism, however. Helmholtz Watson also feels this “sense of apartness.”<sup>955</sup> We are told that what “the two men shared was the knowledge that they were individuals.”<sup>956</sup> They are, in the words of Mustapha Mond, “too self-consciously individual to fit into community life,”<sup>957</sup> and therefore cannot enjoy that sense of unity shared by their peers.

Despite Holtby’s assertion, Huxley does not so much parody Heard’s ideas as use them to demonstrate both their importance and effectiveness within a community. We are told that hypnopaedia affords only moral teaching, conditioning only physical suitability to caste standards. But social solidarity can only be gained through the sort of rituals Heard describes. The appeal of Heard’s technique to our psychological need for feeling something passionately in a small group is sufficient to ensure the loyalty of each individual. Heard’s conception of castes based on ability are also something which Huxley regarded as essential social organization. In *Brave New World*, Huxley not only demonstrates their value, but illustrates how a truly efficient society could not only incorporate these techniques, but make them biochemically inescapable.

We have already considered how Beavis’ progress in *Eyeless in Gaza* is roughly analogous to Huxley’s conversion to pacifism under the guidance of Gerald Heard. However, James Miller’s conception of human unity and anthropological pacifism is identical to Heard’s. Anthony Beavis meets Miller while searching for a

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<sup>954</sup> Heard, *Substance*, 127.

<sup>955</sup> Huxley, *BNW*, 56.

<sup>956</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>957</sup> *Ibid.* 186.

doctor to help the injured Mark Staithes. Miller tells Beavis that his trip to Mexico has been an anthropological expedition; “Been living with the Lacandones in Chiapas these last months,” Miller tells Beavis. “Nice people when you get to know them.”<sup>958</sup> He later tells Beavis and Staithes that he has been trying to understand the Lacandones, and help them to overcome their violent vendettas. Miller’s description of the anthropological approach owes much to Heard’s *Source of Civilization* and also his contributions to *Time and Tide* between 1935 and 1936. In *Time and Tide*, Heard writes that “when a tribe is in wild reaction from mishandling the modern anthropologist takes care to go unarmed, to sit outside the village inviting investigation and then explanation.”<sup>959</sup> Heard concludes in *The Source of Civilization* that anthropologists “have yet to find a people which cannot be approached and associated with, if a defensive attitude is abandoned and the advance is obviously friendly.”<sup>960</sup> Miller echoes the same sentiment, stating quite simply that “if you treat other people well, they’ll treat you well.”<sup>961</sup> “[G]o among a suspicious, badly treated, savage people,” he continues, “go unarmed with your hands open [...]. Go with the persistent and obstinate intention of doing them some good.”<sup>962</sup> Miller acknowledges the method might not work initially; “it sometimes happens that they don’t leave you the necessary time. They spear you before you’re well under way.”<sup>963</sup> However, he reflects that perseverance is the only viable course of action; “Anthropologists may get killed; but anthropology goes on; and in the long run you can’t fail to succeed.”<sup>964</sup> Staithes objects to this approach, believing that only by threats and violence can once succeed in quelling aggression. His own experience at Juan Fuente’s coffee *finca* has

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<sup>958</sup> Huxley, *Eyeless*, 550.

<sup>959</sup> Heard, “Over,” 221.

<sup>960</sup> Heard, *Source*, 416.

<sup>961</sup> Huxley, *Eyeless*, 580.

<sup>962</sup> *Ibid.* 577.

<sup>963</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>964</sup> *Ibid.* 578.

taught him to treat humans like “rather squalid little insects”<sup>965</sup> in order to dominate them. Miller differentiates between his approach and Staithes by comparing the two to anthropology and entomology. By treating humans as bugs, “you can generally make them behave like bugs,” but the individuals in question will always “resent being treated as bugs”<sup>966</sup> and lash out violently. Miller instead believes in treating human beings like human beings, working with rather than towering above them. Staithes dislikes the sentimentality of Miller’s philosophy, but Miller insists that sentimentality is the first and most necessary step. “You can’t be intelligent about human beings,” says Miller, “unless you’re first sentimental with them.”<sup>967</sup> Staithes tries to distinguish between applying anthropology to savage civilizations and between dealing with civilised nations; “Europeans aren’t like your Sunday-school savages,”<sup>968</sup> argues Staithes. However, Miller argues that the same technique will work in Europe; “They’ve just been badly handled--need a bit of anthropology, that’s all.”<sup>969</sup> Like Heard, Miller argues that the technique of anthropologists must be adapted for use at home. Anthropology began with alien cultures, Miller argues, “because it’s hard to think dispassionately about oneself.”<sup>970</sup> However, the lessons learnt by the anthropologist are applicable to civilised societies; to Miller, “[s]avage societies are simply civilized societies with the lid off.”<sup>971</sup> By understanding savages dispassionately, one can begin to understand the civilised dispassionately. Heard advances a similar argument in *The Ascent of Humanity*, discussing the difficulties of early anthropologists faced in distinguishing between their own prejudices and the natural behaviour of those they studied. Heard believed that anthropology revealed

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<sup>965</sup> Ibid. 574.

<sup>966</sup> Ibid. 578.

<sup>967</sup> Ibid. 579.

<sup>968</sup> Ibid. 581.

<sup>969</sup> Ibid.

<sup>970</sup> Ibid. 580.

<sup>971</sup> Ibid.

evidence of a psychic parallax between primitive and civilised cultures. “As the astronomer can deduce the movement of his own system from the apparent movement of different stars,” Heard writes, “[...] so the anthropologist, by comparing his reading of anthropological data, the evidence of man over vast periods of time, with those of his predecessors, can tell how much he has moved from their position.”<sup>972</sup> By studying our ancestors, we reveal important things about ourselves but from a distance far enough to maintain our objectivity. In *The Source of Civilization*, Heard also finds hope in an anthropological approach to pacifism by comparing it to advances in taming savage animals. The domestication of animals provides a “vivid illustration” of how, “when dealing with creatures incapable of rational deduction, our feeling-tone is wholly decisive.”<sup>973</sup> “If adrenaline-charged carnivores can be approached,” Heard writes, “*a fortiori* can we make contact and make our dominant mood prevail, our obvious good faith carry over to thyroid-controlled humans.”<sup>974</sup> “The pacifism,” Heard concludes, “which is not a timid shrinking from the risk of personal pain but a vivid sense of union with reverence for all life, can ‘shut the mouth of lions.’”<sup>975</sup>

The belief in a unity with all life is also an important element of Miller’s pacifist philosophy. When Beavis first meets Miller, Miller explains the benefits of Buddhist meditation over conventional petitionary prayer. Miller believes that petitionary prayer only makes one “egotistical, preoccupied with one’s own ridiculous self-important little personality.”<sup>976</sup> “Prayer,” Miller argues, “makes you more yourself, more separate;” beyond our “piddling, twopenny-halfpenny personality,” there is the potential for unity with all life.<sup>977</sup> Buddhists, Miller remarks, “don’t exalt

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<sup>972</sup> Ibid. 24.

<sup>973</sup> Heard, *Source*, 417.

<sup>974</sup> Ibid. 418.

<sup>975</sup> Ibid. 417.

<sup>976</sup> Huxley, *Eyeless*, 554.

<sup>977</sup> Ibid.

personality; they try to transcend it,”<sup>978</sup> and by meditation attempt “to merge their own minds in the universal mind.”<sup>979</sup> Beavis learns, under Miller’s tutelage, how to appreciate this unity, and how to achieve it by meditation. In the concluding pages of the novel, we see Beavis’ meditations on unity as a means to strengthen his faith after receiving a threatening letter before a pacifist rally in Battersea. One might recall that Huxley had tentatively explored the power of political action to stimulate a wider sense of consciousness, or a fleeting moment of *agape* in *Point Counter Point* (1928); he describes Walter Bidlake’s reaction to reading about a Socialist rally in a red-top newspaper thusly: “The barriers of his individuality were momentarily thrown down, the personal complexities were abolished. Possessed by the joy of political battle, he overflowed his boundaries; he became, so to speak, larger than himself – larger and simpler.”<sup>980</sup> But like Heard, who saw aggressive political involvement as an atavism and a “Philistine mill” which offered a false sense of extra-individuality in prevailing political movements, Huxley too came to find in pacifism and meditation meaningful and true expansion of self. In *Eyeless in Gaza*, rather than praying solipsistically for individual strength or comfort, Beavis draws solace from the experience of “unity of mankind, unity of life.”<sup>981</sup> Huxley’s description of unity is reminiscent of Heard’s envisioned ‘superconsciousness,’ wherein each individual retains his or her identity, but is simultaneously aware of the extra-individual life in which they all share. Within this unity, Beavis reflects, there is a simultaneous homogeneity and heterogeneity; “each organism is unique,” reflects Beavis; “unique and yet unified in the sameness of its ultimate parts.”<sup>982</sup> Within this unity, individuals, above a

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<sup>978</sup> Ibid.554-55.

<sup>979</sup> Ibid. 555.

<sup>980</sup> Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 12-13.

<sup>981</sup> Huxley, *Eyeless*, 612.

<sup>982</sup> Ibid. 613.

“substratum of physical” or “mental identity”<sup>983</sup> are unique and individual. At the bottom of this unity is the true basis for pacifism, for “beneath all being, beneath the countless identical but separate patterns, beneath attraction and repulsions, lies peace.”<sup>984</sup> Beavis experiences the same feeling of “precipitated power”<sup>985</sup> Heard attributes to those groups who can successfully experience a “sense of union”<sup>986</sup> with their world, and is unafraid to face the dangers which may await him at that night’s pacifist rally. Having merged his ego with the larger unifying peace, Beavis is able to feel things “[d]ispassionately, and with serene lucidity.”<sup>987</sup> His individual self-regard has given way to the common life, and he finds himself able to continue. Further, Beavis, like Heard, must first experience this serenity and lucidity before he can begin to explain to others the way to peace. The vision of pacifism in *Eyeless*, both as an exercise in spirituality and anthropology (essentially the study of human life), is unmistakably a synthesis of Huxley’s and Heard’s ideas.

Huxley’s next book after *Eyeless in Gaza* was *Ends and Means* (1937), “a kind of practical cookery book of reform.”<sup>988</sup> Huxley, as has been mentioned, claims he wrote *Ends and Means* in collaboration with Heard. While it is interesting to look for evidence of Heard’s influence in *End and Means*, it is also worth considering Heard’s book of the same year, *The Third Morality*. Like Huxley, Heard intended his

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<sup>983</sup> Ibid..

<sup>984</sup> Ibid. 618-19.

<sup>985</sup> Heard, “Religion,” 146.

<sup>986</sup> Ibid. 145.

<sup>987</sup> Huxley, *Eyeless*, 620.

<sup>988</sup> Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), 9 (Hereafter *Ends*.) The image of the cookery book was one which Huxley had previously employed in his essay “Sermons in Cats,” where he recounts an encounter with an aspiring psychological novelist approaching from advice, and seemingly hoping to be told of the existence of “some sort of esoteric cookery book, full of literary recipes, which you had only to follow attentively to become a Dickens, a Henry James, a Flaubert – ‘according to taste’ as the authors of recipes say, when they come to the question of sweetening and seasoning.” It is interesting to note his dismissive attitude towards the notion of their being a “trustworthy cookery book of literature” (or “the fictional equivalent of ‘One Hundred Ways of Cooking Eggs’ or the ‘Carnet de le Ménagère’”) when he put forth *Ends and Means* as the political equivalent of the Larousse Gastronomique. This allusion may, of course, suggest that Huxley was being ironically self-deprecating, and somewhat unsure of his abilities as a political sous-chef. (“Sermons in Cats,” *Music at Night*, 141.)

book to be a new and dynamic solution to the world's problems rather than a rehashing of established philosophies. Heard uses the word "morality" to suggest a dominant paradigm of human thought. For example, the preceding two "moralities" in Heard's mind were anthropomorphism, the conception of the universe as "an expression of individual persons"<sup>989</sup> and mechanomorphism, the conception of the universe as a machine. Both of these, Heard believed, had been proven to be false by advances in human knowledge. Heard's "third morality" was therefore intended to be a comprehensive new paradigm for human thought which incorporated all human knowledge, proposing a new direction for human endeavour and suggesting techniques by which these could be achieved. Heard describes the book as a "threefold essay" early in the first chapter, consisting of

a cosmology, a co-ordinated outline of contemporary knowledge as far as it is known to this writer [...]: an ethic, an outline of the conduct which follows the outline of knowledge: an exercise, an outline on training so as to induce action to conform with information.<sup>990</sup>

In essence, Heard is similarly interested in ends and means. Heard writes about the need for a new system of living, arguing established philosophies such as Capitalism or Marxism were "not contemporary;" Heard objects to Marxism as being obsolete because it is "based on science almost a century old."<sup>991</sup> "These systems," writes Heard,

may allow you to live for a little while with the sense of being part of a complete process and believing you are in co-ordinated purposive action with your conditions, but they will break down, because they omit, as they must, the important facts discovered since they were formed.<sup>992</sup>

Heard's proposed synthesis would continually amalgamate new information and experience into a coherent and complete way of living. The path Heard suggests

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<sup>989</sup> Gerald Heard, *The Third Morality* (London: Cassell, 1937), 1. (Hereafter *Morality*.)

<sup>990</sup> *Ibid.* 9.

<sup>991</sup> *Ibid.* 6

<sup>992</sup> *Ibid.*

entails a fundamental change in the human mind. Each individual under Heard's plan would aim to live "in co-operation with the purpose of life."<sup>993</sup> To accomplish this, each individual would be expected "to act and think that we become increasingly aware of our extra-individuality--that is, the common life which unites us with our fellow creatures, with all life and the universe."<sup>994</sup> Heard reasserts his claim that society is "an organism, a vast unlimited liability concern"<sup>995</sup> and that each constituent must learn to realise his or her organic ties to others; the "general aim" of Heard's plan is "the individual's realization of his unity with all life and being."<sup>996</sup> In order for this system to work, Heard warns of the need for "applied action" to bring it about, suggesting such "practical aims" as the abolition of war and violence and the promotion of love and "mutual concern."<sup>997</sup> In short, the third morality seeks "to set men free of fear and greed,"<sup>998</sup> removing the only obstacles which prevent us from realising our unity with one another. While Heard stresses the need for practical aims, *The Third Morality* offers a peculiar *mélange* of ideas, ranging from defences of birth control and euthanasia to the abolition of petitionary prayer (for, as Heard argues, "when anthropomorphism goes, it must go"<sup>999</sup>). The most practical and most lucidly discussed suggestion Heard makes is with regard to training individuals to realise their extra-individuality, asserting that "we can change ourselves and our circumstance immeasurably."<sup>1000</sup> Heard considers "self-training exercises" to be "supremely important" and stresses the importance of meditation.<sup>1001</sup> Heard ultimately concludes that changing the individual, merging his or her consciousness

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<sup>993</sup> Ibid. 186.

<sup>994</sup> Ibid.

<sup>995</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>996</sup> Ibid. 187.

<sup>997</sup> Ibid.

<sup>998</sup> Ibid. 210.

<sup>999</sup> Ibid. 241.

<sup>1000</sup> Ibid. 238.

<sup>1001</sup> Ibid.

with the overarching universal order, is the only way to change society and reach that third morality.

We have seen briefly in Chapter III how Aldous Huxley's *Ends and Means* presents similar arguments for a new 'synthesis', or what Heard called a new morality.<sup>1002</sup> Huxley sweeps aside the accumulated "contradictory ideals"<sup>1003</sup> for human behaviour advanced throughout history, arguing that they are products of their time, or rather their "particular social circumstances."<sup>1004</sup> Having dismissed these obsolete ideals, Huxley focuses his discussion of a new social model on the fundamental "thoughts and aspirations"<sup>1005</sup> which give rise to any theories about human nature and society. He advocates the philosophy of non-attachment, an ethic which asserts the existence of an underlying and ultimate reality from which all ideals spring. Free from self-interest or limiting ideologies, the non-attached individual can obtain "direct insight"<sup>1006</sup> into the greater spiritual reality that underpins the world around us. Huxley considers social change not predicated upon a true understanding of human nature (which, like Heard, he asserts "is not unchanging"<sup>1007</sup>) doomed to failure. Any attempt at social reform which does not take into account the underlying reality of all things is hopelessly mired in its peculiar historical and social context and therefore inadequate. Huxley criticises those philosophers who, being blind to this larger reality, would seek to deny its existence:

A few moralists – of whom Nietzsche is the most celebrated and the Marquis de Sade the most uncompromisingly consistent – have denied the value of non-attachment. But these men are manifestly victims of their temperament and their particular social surroundings. Unable to practice non-attachment,

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<sup>1002</sup> See Chapter III, 112.

<sup>1003</sup> Huxley, *Ends*, 2.

<sup>1004</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1005</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1006</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1007</sup> *Ibid.* 24.

they are unable to preach it; themselves slaves, they cannot even understand the advantages of freedom.<sup>1008</sup>

Huxley's repeated references to insight and blindness, slavery and freedom, are immediately evocative of the metaphor suggested by his earlier title *Eyeless in Gaza*. As in his novel, he champions non-attachment as the correct means by which to free ourselves.

The transcendence of personality was of paramount importance to Huxley's vision. It is worth noting how Huxley's conception of personality and transcendence are effectively identical to Heard's. Huxley believed the majority lived largely "sub-personal" lives whose reality consisted entirely of "thoughts, feelings and sensations which are less than themselves."<sup>1009</sup> We may regard this as loosely corresponding to the largely undifferentiated state Heard posited to exist in the primitive mind before the emergence of the individual. Indeed, Huxley asserts that "if we would transcend personality, we must first take the trouble to become persons,"<sup>1010</sup> a further analogue with Heard's theory of evolving consciousness. Huxley felt it was within the power of any individual with patience and skill to live "entirely on the personal level" by becoming - rather like Beavis in *Eyeless in Gaza* - through a combination of exercises intended to provide "mental and moral self-awareness and self-control."<sup>1011</sup> Only by having become a self-conscious individual could one hope to progress to what Huxley referred to as the "super-personal level,"<sup>1012</sup> a state which greatly resembles Heard's superconsciousness. Through meditation, Huxley argues, an individual can experience a "double consciousness" wherein he may "be both a full-grown person, having a complete knowledge of, and control over, his sensations, emotions and

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<sup>1008</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>1009</sup> Ibid. 324.

<sup>1010</sup> Ibid. 325.

<sup>1011</sup> Ibid. 326.

<sup>1012</sup> Ibid. 325.

thoughts” and yet simultaneously “more than a personal being, in continuous intuitive relation with that impersonal principle of reality.”<sup>1013</sup> Like Heard, Huxley believed an accurate understanding of our natures, and the development of a technique to expand human consciousness, were essential to curing the problems of modern society.

Huxley’s 1939 novel *After Many a Summer* also shows the considerable influence of Gerald Heard. The theme of the novel, the persistence of the individual and the ego, is particularly Heardian. Aging millionaire Jo Stoyte, obsessed with longevity, employs Dr Sigmund Obispo to find him the fountain of youth. Stoyte’s obsession is characterised by his flagship enterprise, the Beverly Pantheon, whose neon advertisements boast it is “the personality cemetery.”<sup>1014</sup> Both Stoyte’s obsession and Pantheon, which immortalises the individual after death, stand in direct opposition to Heard’s fundamental belief that our individualism should be regarded as an obstruction to the greater universal unity we can enjoy. Heard considered intense individualism an obstruction to genuine community, and argued that our obsession with survival after death destroyed the effectiveness of religion to provide that supra-personal experience of unity. The individual ego, for Heard, was something to be transcended rather than protected; as Heard wrote in 1929, “the individual is not solved by being made immortal. He remains, as the myth of Tithonus foreshadowed, a problem of arrested development.”<sup>1015</sup> Heard believed that we were part of a “vast psychic evolution”<sup>1016</sup> and therefore compelled to evolve beyond individualism into a new ‘superconsciousness’. Remaining still, Heard argued in 1935, meant risking a kind of devolution. In *The Source of Civilization*, Heard outlined a theory of evolution in which “the creature which ascends” is one which “somehow chooses

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<sup>1013</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1014</sup> Aldous Huxley, *After Many A Summer* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1968), 11. (hereafter *Summer*.)

<sup>1015</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 12.

<sup>1016</sup> Ibid.

sensitiveness, awareness, a constantly widening focus and new experiences which it cannot master”<sup>1017</sup> rather than adapting to circumstances as they stand. For Heard, the dinosaurs were prime examples of a species which became extinct because it refused to widen its experience; because they ceased to evolve, they “sank into decadence, desuetude and death.”<sup>1018</sup> Such, Heard believed, was the problem facing the individual. Rather than arresting our development and immortalising our egos, Heard urged us to widen our consciousness, to evolve rather than risk devolution. Heard’s thoughts on evolution, and his invocation of Tithonus as a metaphor for individualism are highly illuminating when considering the conclusion to *After Many A Summer*. The folly of Stoyte’s desperate quest for self-preservation is demonstrated when Obispo, following clues found by Jeremy Pordage in the Hauberk Papers, takes Stoyte and Virginia Maunciple to England to find the Fifth Earl of Gonnister. They find both the Earl and his housekeeper alive in an underground cell after a century. Although both individuals have managed to prolong their lives, they have devolved to a sub-human state. They live in filth and squalor, and have taken on primate characteristics. “Just look at his face!” laughs Obispo upon discovering the Earl:

Above the matted hair that concealed the jaws and cheeks, blue eyes stared out of cavernous sockets. There were no eyebrows; but under the dirty, wrinkled skin of the forehead a great ridge of bone projected like a shelf.<sup>1019</sup>

The Earl’s housekeeper, whose “simian face” shows the same “distortions of the lower jaws, the accretions of bone in front of the ears”<sup>1020</sup> as the Earl shrieks and cowers from the light of Obispo’s lamp. The two fight with primitive fury while Obispo laughs hysterically at the price of immortality. The physical devolution of the

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<sup>1017</sup> Heard, *Source*, 70-71.

<sup>1018</sup> *Ibid.* 73.

<sup>1019</sup> Huxley, *Summer*, 312.

<sup>1020</sup> *Ibid.*

immortal Earl is emblematic of the psychic degeneration Heard felt we faced by exalting our individuality.

Heard's ideas are also important to *After Many a Summer* for another reason. Heard has been commonly identified as the inspiration for William Propter, whose "interminable philosophizing" led Thomas J. Merton to describe him as "the dullest character in the whole history of the English novel."<sup>1021</sup> However, Propter - whose name comes from the Latin preposition "because of" - provides the corrective philosophy to the excesses of individualism in the novel. Huxley himself acknowledged the resemblance between Heard and Propter; "Propter does resemble Gerald in some ways," Huxley said in an interview with the *Paris Review*, "but rather remotely."<sup>1022</sup> However, it is worth considering in what ways Propter's philosophy of self-transcendence in Chapter Eight resembles Heard's theories. Heard's own thoughts on religion as having once been the colloidal force in a society of independent individuals are evoked by Propter's own meditations on religion. Propter considers Cardinal Bérulle's definition of Man as "a nothingness surrounded by God."<sup>1023</sup> Propter reflects on Bérulle's assertion that, "if he so desires,"<sup>1024</sup> Man can be filled with God, but concludes that "few men ever desire to do so, or desiring, ever know what to wish for or how to get it."<sup>1025</sup> What Propter believes interferes with our knowing God is our tendency to believe in our individual identities as being "absolute,"<sup>1026</sup> or in Heard's word, "insoluble." Propter attributes this to the failure of a religion which reunites the individual within a larger whole. St. Peter Claver,

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<sup>1021</sup> Thomas J. Merton, "Huxley's Pantheon," rev. of *After Many A Summer*, by Aldous Huxley, *Catholic World* November 1940. clii: 206-209.

<sup>1022</sup> Qtd. in Peter Firchow, *Aldous Huxley: Satirist and Novelist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 157.

<sup>1023</sup> *Ibid.* 90.

<sup>1024</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1025</sup> *Ibid.* 91.

<sup>1026</sup> *Ibid.* 97.

Propter reflects, was able to bank on the existence of a “personal God”<sup>1027</sup> in order to illustrate to men their place within a larger order. However, the modern age lacks a strong and universal religion, reducing human interrelations to “only cause and effect”<sup>1028</sup>; where there is no larger power demanding our subjugation, personality becomes the only end. However, Propter believes there is an alternative to religion. Again echoing Heard, Propter believes that the absence of a godhead shifts the responsibility for finding a similar unifying power onto the shoulders of self-conscious individuals. In an irreligious age, Propter considers, “every individual is called upon to display not only unsleeping good-will but also unsleeping intelligence”<sup>1029</sup> rather than selfishly looking out for him or herself. “[I]f individuality is not absolute,” Propter muses,

if personalities are illusory figments of a self-made will disastrously blind to the reality of a more-than-personal consciousness, of which it is the limitation and denial, then all of every human being’s effort must be directed, in the last resort, to the actualization of that more-than-personal consciousness.<sup>1030</sup>

Rather than wallowing in self-consciousness, Propter believes that the highest goal of self-conscious individuals is to discover this ‘superconsciousness’ and their place within it. Here again we see a similarity with Heard. As has been mentioned before, Heard believed that this larger unity must be “experienced as a psychological fact, present at least potentially in every human being.”<sup>1031</sup> Further, like Heard, Propter believes there is a need for a few individuals “who know in what salvation consists” to “transform and transcend intelligence”<sup>1032</sup> and make this extra-personal state imminent to all. Propter evidently believes himself to be one such individual, both able to realise this higher reality and educate others. Propter’s intention in sitting

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<sup>1027</sup> Ibid. 96.

<sup>1028</sup> Ibid. 97.

<sup>1029</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1030</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1031</sup> Heard, “New Pacifism,” 16.

<sup>1032</sup> Huxley, *Summer*, 97.

under the eucalyptus tree was not to expound upon his philosophy. Rather, Propter had retired there “in order to realize for a moment the existence of that other consciousness behind his private thoughts and feelings, that free, pure power greater than his own.”<sup>1033</sup> Meditating quietly, his “irrelevant personal thoughts and wishes” settle “like a muddy sediment in a jar of water.”<sup>1034</sup> He is then able to feel “a kind of effortless unattached awareness”<sup>1035</sup> of the greater reality. In achieving this state of awareness, Propter is ultimately filled with God, experiencing “blissful freedom from personality.”<sup>1036</sup> It is the knowledge of this blissful transcendence that enables him to educate others, most notably the migrant farmer from Kansas. The farmer is too much attached to the things of the world; “Like all the others,” Propter reflects, “he had allowed the advertisers to multiply his wants; he had learned to equate happiness with possessions, and prosperity with money in a shop.”<sup>1037</sup> Because he has chosen “to conform unthinkingly to [...] the current way of living,”<sup>1038</sup> the farmer is unable to see what Propter would consider the right way of living. This conformity fits neatly within Heard’s theory of evolution; by choosing to adapt to things as they are, rather than trying to evolve beyond them, the farmer has found financial ruin and personal failure. Propter tries to impress this upon the farmer, and is pleased to find that his initial resistance, “when he saw that he was not being blamed,” fades, and the farmer begins “to take an interest”<sup>1039</sup> in Propter’s vision. Having made this progress, Propter believes “it mightn’t be so overwhelming difficult” to make the farmer

conceive of that all-important ego as a fiction, a kind of nightmare, a frantically agitated nothingness, capable, when once its frenzy had been quieted, of being filled with God, with a god conceived and experienced as a

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<sup>1033</sup> Ibid. 99.

<sup>1034</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1035</sup> Huxley, *Summer*, 100.

<sup>1036</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1037</sup> Ibid. 95

<sup>1038</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1039</sup> Ibid. 98.

more than personal consciousness, as a free power, a pure working, a being withdrawn.<sup>1040</sup>

To this end, Propter runs a commune for Stoyte's migrant workers, a community wherein the inhabitants are unified by shared labour. Propter's commune is organised along the lines Heard discussed in *The New Pacifism*; in close association, Propter's farmers can potentially experience what Heard described as "a life of unlimited liability with their companions"<sup>1041</sup> and disprove the unchallenged tyranny of individualism. The similarity between Propter's and Heard's philosophies are striking and show a definite influence in Huxley's thinking. Both Proper and Heard assert the unreality of the ego and stress the need for self-transcendence by heightened awareness. Both conceive of God as a sense of extra-individuality. Both believe in community living as a means of social regeneration.

Having closely charted the degree to which Huxley's thought was informed by Heard's, it becomes clear why the two together were considered together as exponents of a new way of living. However, it is interesting to note that Heard began to absent himself from the public he had courted by establishing a commune and monastery solely devoted to developing the "psychologically sound way of living" essential for reviving human community. Aldous Huxley's reference to Trabuco as a "new monastery"<sup>1042</sup> in 1942 is not to be taken lightly. At Trabuco, Heard was able to devote himself entirely to the problem of purposive living in isolation, and pursue the psychological (and increasingly spiritual) technique he sought unfettered by any larger apparatus. For example, at Dartington, the running a school and a co-operative farm were the primary concerns of the Elmhursts. Without any other aim to distract from the business of living correctly, Heard believed he could establish a method,

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<sup>1040</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1041</sup> Heard, "New Pacifism," 18.

<sup>1042</sup> Aldous Huxley to Christopher Isherwood 7 February 1942. *Letters*, 475.

which could be taught to others, that could serve as a model for change. Heard's withdrawal from public action into personal meditation marks a significant change in the current of his thought. He had hitherto considered his theories would need to be "worked out by many minds,"<sup>1043</sup> and as a B.B.C. broadcaster and outspoken pacifist, Heard disseminated his philosophy to as many minds he could reach, and further attempted to shape those minds so as to be receptive to his ideas. In so doing, Heard could be said to have constructed something resembling Stefan Collini's conception of a 'genuine' public which was "open, impersonal, and 'non-specialist'"<sup>1044</sup> and "not constituted exclusively by those engaged in that form of creative or scholarly activity which is the basis for the intellectual's standing in the first place."<sup>1045</sup> But as Heard came to advance the importance of meditation and mysticism to social regeneration, he became increasingly convinced that only a very few could achieve the requisite state of mind he advocated. He had hitherto invited a 'genuine' public – or to borrow Collini's phrase, "anyone with the requisite degree of literacy and interest"<sup>1046</sup> – to experiment with him. But as he wrote to Margaret Isherwood in 1935, he questioned the degree to which that public could be exhorted or led: "You can help those just behind you and be helped by those just in front, as men advance through a fog. The others that are further away one can only serve by being, not by speaking and doing."<sup>1047</sup> Heard no longer saw himself as a popular intellectual whose duty it was to 'speak out', but rather as part of something that resembled Coleridge's conception of "national clerisy,"<sup>1048</sup> neatly defined by Collini "primarily a means of diffusing

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<sup>1043</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 13.

<sup>1044</sup> Collini, *Absent Minds*, 55.

<sup>1045</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1046</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1047</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 5 July 1935. DWE Correspondence General 6a – Unsorted, Isherwood/Heard. HCH..

<sup>1048</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of Church and State* (London: William Pickering, 1839), 70.

*spiritual* cultivation among the population at large.”<sup>1049</sup> We have already seen Heard’s earliest thought on the possible desirability of creating a caste system that would keep those who could direct the spiritual energy of a community firmly at the top, or else risk losing that energy in individualism. Heard wrote to Margaret Isherwood about his doubts that the majority could achieve this transcendence of individuality: “only the top type will really have any clear conception of anything but physical individual life, and if you tell [others] before they are ready to take it in, they will simply decategorize and materialize what you say in terms of their own nature.”<sup>1050</sup> It is worth recalling to mind David Bradshaw’s contention, stated at the beginning of this chapter, that in adopting pacifism Huxley effectively rejected of a hitherto “authoritarian and aristocratic ideology” in favour of a philosophy that was “expressly libertarian, egalitarian and anarchistic.”<sup>1051</sup> Conversely, Heard came to see those three qualities as a handicap to achieving his vision of a pacifist way of life. In seeking to establish an elite, he began to exert a degree of authoritarianism over would-be adherents to his pacifist philosophy, and in creating Trabuco College as a meditative “centre” to guide society established an intellectual and spiritual aristocracy.

Among Leonard Elmhirst’s correspondence at High Cross House, there exists a copy of Trabuco’s original statement of intent dated September 1942, entitled simply *Trabuco*; Heard undoubtedly sent it back to Dartington to those who still shared an interest in what they would have considered to be part of a greater solution. It is an anonymous document, but its style and content are unmistakably those of

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<sup>1049</sup> Collini, *Absent Minds*, 78.

<sup>1050</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 5 July 1935. DWE Correspondence General 6a – Unsorted, Isherwood/Heard. HCH.

<sup>1051</sup> David Bradshaw, “Flight from Gaza,” 11.

Gerald Heard. In eight typewritten pages, *Trabuco* tells much about the vision of its founder and a glimpse of what followed.

*Trabuco* begins by situating the need for social regeneration within the context of World War II. “Humanity is failing,” he asserts; “Our shame and our failure are being blatantly advertised, every minute of every day, by the crash of explosives and the flare of burning towns.”<sup>1052</sup> He acknowledges that there are many “wondering how to find the way out,” but that

to the majority of the men of good-will, “the way out” means chiefly social reconstruction, the general acceptance of some new political or economic faith, or a further attempt to erect an international organisation with which to curb the rival ambitions of nations.<sup>1053</sup>

As we have seen, Heard believed improvements of this kind alone were insufficient to the task, being a mere “repair job”<sup>1054</sup> when a larger solution was required. For Heard, “the will to destruction is within ourselves,”<sup>1055</sup> and the only way out by a fundamental change in human thought and feeling. The way, he argues, is a rather difficult life of devotion. In describing this life as “not sensational, like a peace parade, or clearly marked, like a blue print,”<sup>1056</sup> he not only attempts to dissuade anyone looking for “just ‘another formula’,”<sup>1057</sup> but also seemingly belittles individuals (particularly those in the P.P.U.) who could not see beyond measurable formulae that meet the immediate requirements of the day. He points out the fallacy of changing the structures of human society without first changing humanity; “Readjusting of our economics, however drastic, the reframing of our code of international behaviour, however enlightened, will not change our hearts.”<sup>1058</sup>

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<sup>1052</sup> *Trabuco*, September 1942. LKE General 17, E. Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>1053</sup> *Ibid.* 1.

<sup>1054</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

<sup>1055</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

<sup>1056</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

<sup>1057</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

<sup>1058</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

Economically speaking, Heard had already found a workable model in co-operativism as a correlative to a psychological sound social model; on the fertile land on which Trabuco was founded,<sup>1059</sup> Heard suggests that work had begun so that in future “a co-operative and ‘self-subsisting’ economy may be developed which would be the complement of its psychological practice.”<sup>1060</sup> But the essential change, that change of heart, requires a concerted effort to look beyond the physical world to “the live, intense, unutterably vivid Truth – a truth which can only be apprehended through a slow hard lifetime of study, prayer and disciplined, ascetic living.”<sup>1061</sup>

There are, and were, those who charged Heard and others with withdrawing from the world in a time of crisis. However, Heard had tried and failed to make his mark through direct action, and believed he could be of no better service than in working out a new mode of living. Writing to Margaret Isherwood in 1932, Heard reflected on the dichotomy of action and thought; “The tough can go on making the world a shambles, and the tender can withdraw into a world of abstraction. But I am sure this is not necessary.”<sup>1062</sup> Although Heard was clearly one of the tender ones, he never doubted the need for balance between economic sensibility and a “psychologically sound way of living.” Heard would echo his statement against abstraction in *Trabuco*, writing that it was “not intended to be a place of withdrawal from the world – quite the reverse.”<sup>1063</sup> *Trabuco*, Heard hoped, would result in the naissance of a new world, and the entry into a new association with one’s fellow men.

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<sup>1059</sup> *Ibid.* 8.

<sup>1060</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

<sup>1061</sup> *Ibid.* 2-3.

<sup>1062</sup> Gerald Heard to Margaret Isherwood, 23 November 1932. High Cross House, DWE General 5, Gerald Heard – 1. HCH.

<sup>1063</sup> *Trabuco*, September 1942. High Cross House, LKE General 17, E. Gerald Heard. 8. HCH.

“Such an aim may sound ambitious,” Heard argues in *Trabuco*, “but no one will say that is it ‘escapist’.”<sup>1064</sup>

Heard argues that *Trabuco* would attempt to address the problem of social reform from its smallest constituent part, the individual; “[O]nly through change of individual character,” he argues, “can there be any real apprehension of God’s nature and will, and a lasting change in civilisation or humanity. Self-education comes first.”<sup>1065</sup> Heard clearly sets out the three core points the education *Trabuco* would offer:

- a. Research. The enormous mass of existing literature, from many countries and ages, on techniques of prayer, ways of self-integration and methods of psycho-physical development must be re-examined and re-interpreted in modern language to meet contemporary needs.
- b. Experiment. We must test out these techniques and determine which are the most applicable and convenient.
- c. Practice. Having chosen the particular techniques best adapted to our individual needs, we must proceed to make them part of our daily living.<sup>1066</sup>

*Trabuco*’s prospectus is not surprising; in practice, *Trabuco* was merely an extension of the ‘group’ sessions Heard chaired at Dartington Hall and the ideas of pacifist ‘cells’ he and Aldous Huxley advanced as the leaders of the P.P.U’s Research and Thinking Committee. Each member of *Trabuco* was to be considered an equal in seeking to find which technique could break down their individuality:

*Trabuco* begins its work in a spirit of humble and open-minded enquiry. There are no ‘prophets’ among us. We all start from the beginning, bringing nothing but our need for God and our trust in His Grace, without which search for him is vain.<sup>1067</sup>

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<sup>1064</sup> *Trabuco* 5.

<sup>1065</sup> *Trabuco*, 3.

<sup>1066</sup> *Ibid.* 3.

<sup>1067</sup> *Ibid.* 3.

From such beginnings, Heard hoped that Trabuco would “grow, spiritually and organically”<sup>1068</sup> as its members grew stronger in their faith and devotion.

But far from becoming a retreat from the world, a commune for only those willing to submit to the way of life Heard advocated, Trabuco College was intended to be a light unto others:

Trabuco aims to become a new kind of missionary college, combining the world-wide concern and zeal of the old missionary with the psychological and social knowledge of the present day.<sup>1069</sup>

Having first experienced that life, students of Trabuco would ultimately be expected to go out and teach others in that technique, which proven, offered hope for the future.

The suggested model for Trabuco was that of a university:

There will be the students, whose whole concern must necessarily be self-education; the “masters.” who are sufficiently advanced in their own self-education to be able to instruct and assist the students; and the “doctors.” who are sufficiently qualified to be able to go out into the world and teach.<sup>1070</sup>

Heard had earlier given some consideration to the role of English universities might play in social change. In 1935, Heard wrote a series of articles for *Time and Tide* on the nature of universities as models of successful microcosmic societies, “living bodies with a way of life as complex as any societies which have ever developed through a mixture of constant growth and sporadic taking of thought.”<sup>1071</sup> Universities, he argued, are “fundamentally more interested in psychological rather than economic factors of social life;”<sup>1072</sup> generally possessed of an endowment income sufficient to meet their requirements, universities were able to bring individuals “into an association where economic stresses are generally relieved leaves

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<sup>1068</sup> Ibid. 4.

<sup>1069</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>1070</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>1071</sup> Heard, “University Supplement. Introduction.” *Time and Tide*, 23 February 1935, 1-2: 2.

<sup>1072</sup> Heard, “University Supplement. Introduction.” *Time and Tide*, 16 March 1935, 17-18: 18.

them more able to give expression to psychological urges.”<sup>1073</sup> Beyond the inherent academic nature of a university or college, Heard believed there was something in the associations formed in a college that made them societies unto themselves. “[T]he university today,” he writes,

is not merely a corpus and canon of learning. It is also a way of life, a silent tradition which moulds those who come under its influence, even more profoundly than any teaching.<sup>1074</sup>

One need only look to the fondness graduates feel for their *alma mater* to know that universities have what Heard called an “unspoken influence”<sup>1075</sup> on those who pass through them. In the amalgam of social, academic, athletic and cultural aspects which constitute a university education, ties are formed not only among current students but those who have experienced the same benefits. “At least as powerful as their teaching,” argues Heard, is a university’s “way of life which shape those who live within their walls.”<sup>1076</sup> Heard aimed to create the same conditions at Trabuco, believing that in their make-up universities possessed unrecognised potential which, if properly channelled, could affect similar change outside their walls. “[I]t is possible,” he muses,

that the universities contain, unrealized even by themselves, certain elements which should, and must be made available to the whole population, if that population is to be happy and the national life sufficiently purposive to deserve the nation’s loyalty.<sup>1077</sup>

Part of Heard’s plan was to create a fellowship of sorts at Trabuco who would form a “nuclear ‘staff,’”<sup>1078</sup> a phrase reminiscent of Heard’s use of the word

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<sup>1073</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1074</sup> Heard, “University Supplement: The Compleat Scholar. Introduction.” *Time and Tide*, 25 May 1935, 771-773: 771.

<sup>1075</sup> Heard, “University Supplement. Introduction.” *Time and Tide*, 23 February 1935, 1-2: 2.

<sup>1076</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1077</sup> Heard, ‘University Supplement: Are the Universities to be Called up? Introduction.’ *Time and Tide*, June 22nd, 1935, 937-939: 937.

<sup>1078</sup> *Trabuco*, 7.

“nucleation” to describe Dartington in 1934.<sup>1079</sup> Those most advanced in the technique worked out at Trabuco would not be “tied permanently to Trabuco,” but could look upon it in much the same way as a graduate might look upon his or her old university; “that, in their lives, wherever they might be, they would be advancing its aims and practising its disciplines.”<sup>1080</sup> Most importantly, for those “social workers” Trabuco produced, the college would offer a place to “‘recharge’ their depleted physical and psychological energies,”<sup>1081</sup> a phrase redolent of the “generating station”<sup>1082</sup> Heard had foreseen at Dartington. As a centre both for the education of neophytes and the further refinement and ‘recharging’ of those who knew the technique, Trabuco was intended to be the model for similar experiment which would spring up across the world, aspiring to be “a type of community which will, we hope, become fairly common, both in this country and in Europe, in the years to come.”<sup>1083</sup> Heard’s optimism, paralleled only by his conviction, ran high. He acknowledged that there were those who saw his dream as a form of escapism (recalling his suggestion to Huxley that they “clear out” of England), but was equally convinced the only hope for civilisation lay in developing the psycho-spiritual praxis about which he had long theorised. As he wrote to Charlotte Shaw,

To the outsider it looks either silly, morbid, escapist or abominably boring and hard. Of course you know not only all about its stiffness – dryness etc. but also about its ‘openings’ when for a split second one sees the world sub specie aeternitatis or some living animal as it is ‘in itself’. I have no doubt that this path not only is the only path to reality – that ‘common-sense’ has dropped us into a coal-cellar – but that so living one not only begins to live really, but one has the only possible power to put the Mess in which we otherwise must stay, into order and give ordinary people any happiness or security.<sup>1084</sup>

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<sup>1079</sup> *News of the Day*, Dartington Hall 13 March 1934. HCH..

<sup>1080</sup> *Trabuco*, 7.

<sup>1081</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1082</sup> Gerald Heard to Dorothy Elmhirst, 1932, D.W.E. General 5, Gerald Heard 1. HCH.

<sup>1083</sup> *Ibid.* 3.

<sup>1084</sup> Gerald Heard to Charlotte Shaw, 7 August 1940. Charlotte Shaw Papers, British Library. Add. 56494 –87.

Heard's dream, however, was fleeting. Heard closed Trabuco College in 1947 and donated the land to the Vedanta Society of California. It is unclear exactly why Heard abandoned the project, but the most likely reason is that asserted by David King Dunaway, namely that Heard had become frustrated by lack of success.<sup>1085</sup> However, Dunaway's argument focuses largely on Heard's personal disappointment in failing to find for himself that sense of 'extra-individuality' and does not look more widely at the faults that may have been present in the wider commune.

In a letter to Margaret Isherwood, Leonard Elmhirst reflected on Trabuco and Heard's on-going attempts to discover what enabled us to live socially. He was certain that Trabuco was only part of a long history of such experiments:

Every dark age has produced a wide variety of experiments like the Trabuco one. Some people call them modes of escape, but we are all escapist when the atmosphere is heavily charged as at present; and a proper analysis of the modes by which we attempt to establish faith in ourselves and in our neighbours is a very vital need, especially at the present time.<sup>1086</sup>

In the same letter, Elmhirst hopes that Isherwood will convey his sympathy to Heard; "I know that Gerald must feel a deep sense of disappointment," he writes, adding that he wishes Heard could be told of his "deep appreciation" of the "means he had used in order to try and create the right sort of atmosphere for his experiment with humanity."<sup>1087</sup> Elmhirst was sensible to the fact that the means employed and atmosphere created at Trabuco had their origins in Heard's tentative attempts at Dartington to build up from individuals already minded to live co-operatively a more significant psychological inducement to community.

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<sup>1085</sup> Dunaway, "Literary Correspondences," 29-54.

<sup>1086</sup> Leonard Elmhirst to Margaret Isherwood, October 1948. High Cross House, LKE General 17, E. Gerald Heard. HCH.

<sup>1087</sup> Ibid.

Elmhirst's letter ends with a handwritten postscript, added some time after the original letter was written.<sup>1088</sup> In this postscript, Elmhirst offers the clearest post mortem of the Trabuco experiment:

Gerald assumed too much development in the people who came to Trabuco. He did not find out what was in their minds & many of them did not themselves know beyond a vague groping for "something" other than church doctrine. Several had but the dimmest idea of what to do with their minds in the 3 daily meditation periods & G. was too remote to approach for guidance. In short, he was not in communication with the apostles – save for a very few.<sup>1089</sup>

Heard's remoteness was partly a consequence of his meditation regimen; as he wrote to Charlotte Shaw, "I am now put up to 6 hrs meditation a day, mainly in 3 sets of two hours each."<sup>1090</sup> But would also half accuse himself of "vague groping" and amateurism; again writing to Charlotte Shaw, he remarked that he had "left England not having found a trainer but still quite sure that along the lines of 'meditation' lay the path to the door of complete consciousness."<sup>1091</sup> Maria Huxley (who once recalled waiting outside the gates of Trabuco with Aldous for hours while Heard completed his meditations) wrote to her son Matthew in 1947 that Heard had "really made a mess of the whole thing, chiefly by having favourites and then dropping them to take up another and so often making the dropped despair of everything and leave Trabuco and God; forgetting that God and Gerald were not the same thing."<sup>1092</sup> Alison Falby confirms the view that "favouritism and social hierarchy" were certainly contributing factors to the collapse of Trabuco, but argues that the blame can be largely attributed to "Heard's unconfident leadership."<sup>1093</sup>

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<sup>1088</sup> The archivists at High Cross House claim that such annotations were made by Leonard Elmhirst as he reviewed the material in the archives at Dartington shortly before his death in 1974.

<sup>1089</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1090</sup> Gerald Heard to Charlotte Shaw, 7 August 1940. Charlotte Shaw Papers, British Library. Add. 56494 –87.

<sup>1091</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1092</sup> Maria Huxley to Matthew Huxley, 1947. Quoted in Bedford, *Aldous Huxley*, Vol 2.

<sup>1093</sup> Falby, *Between the Pigeonholes*, 166.

The conclusions of an independent experiment with “Heard-Huxley theories”<sup>1094</sup> conducted in London in the early 1940s also sheds some light on the possible problems Heard faced at Trabuco. In their 1945 article “What Happens to an Idea?”, E. H. Owen and R. N. Bragg report on their attempt to create small groups of like-minded people in order to assess the practicability of Heard’s technique as it might be best applied with a ‘general’, unspecialised public. Owen and Bragg attempted to attract advertising “in *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph* and a few local papers” looking to form a “study group” for those who had a “practical interest” in Heard’s theories. While many responses were received, only one correspondent arrived at their first meeting.<sup>1095</sup> A subsequent advertisement was placed “in a number of national newspapers and intellectual periodicals” (broadened to include the *New Statesman* and *Peace News*, “which proved to be the most productive of enquiries”) in 1941, and outlined their purpose more clearly: ““The practical application of the theories of Gerald Heard and Aldous Huxley. Group commencing soon.””<sup>1096</sup> Their stated purpose was to “experiment in personal and group meditation and rational living.” with a decided emphasis on action: ““What do you propose to *do*?” provided the keynote of our attitude to enquirers, because positive action was the *raison d’etre* of the group.””<sup>1097</sup> Respondents were more forthcoming, and from this second attempt Owen and Bragg were able to build “a sufficient nucleus of genuinely interested people”<sup>1098</sup> from approximately 400 responses they received to make their experiment possible. They reported the formation of “hard core” group of four members, an average meeting attendance of 10 and corresponding members of about 40. They

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<sup>1094</sup> “What Happens to an Idea?”, Schimanski, Stefan and Treece, Henry, eds, *Transformation Three*. London: L Drummond, 1945, 81-92: 81.

<sup>1095</sup> *Ibid.* 84.

<sup>1096</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1097</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1098</sup> *Ibid.* 85.

were interested to see as few as 400 replies arguing that beyond their efforts to advertise the group, “numerous reviews and articles discussing Heard’s and Huxley’s books must also be regarded as a form of publicity – and in fact, there is reason to think that the Heard-Huxley idea has been widely disseminated and that those sympathetic to the idea should by now be aware of the existence of a group devoted to practical experiment.”<sup>1099</sup> They were further surprised to find that half of those who took the trouble to enquire about the group, many of whom were “young and effervescent, but disinclined to move from precept to practice,”<sup>1100</sup> were never heard from again. Most interestingly, Owen and Bragg note that a good number of respondents were in fact looking for a guru, “a spiritual director capable of guiding and instructing them,”<sup>1101</sup> but when they “discovered only tyros like themselves, people of no outstanding sanctity or spirituality, they felt misled, even deceived.”<sup>1102</sup> Contrasted with Heard’s personal attempt to make himself into just such a ‘spiritual director’, the work of the London group “devolve[d] on ordinary peccable people like ourselves.”<sup>1103</sup> (The natural ‘directors’ would obviously have been the originators of those ideas with which they were experimenting, but little was forthcoming; both Heard and Huxley were “kept fully informed of this group’s activities” but Heard’s only replies were “intermittent [...] hurried scribbles, pertinent but fragmentary” while Huxley “never replied.”<sup>1104</sup> This would seem to bear out Elmhirst’s contention

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<sup>1099</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1101</sup> Ibid. 86.

<sup>1102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1104</sup> Ibid. 91. Interestingly, Heard claimed to write regularly to willing disciples, telling Charlotte Shaw about “a number of my friends in London” who “have taken to the beginning of the training since.” He mentioned in particular an unnamed but “very intelligent young man in the Treasury who has now been working keenly at it” and claims that “he and I interchange a regular and full correspondence on the matter – he is in fact my most regular correspondent.” (Heard to Shaw, 7 August 1940. Charlotte Shaw papers. British Library.)

that Heard was somewhat aloof from his disciples, an inevitable consequence of his retreat into personal spiritual development.)

The results of Owen and Brigg's experiment will perhaps be unsurprising. Individual members were more likely to "express belief in the benefits of meditation than actually practice it" and Owen and Bragg doubted that Heard's "desiderated two hours' meditation daily" was practiced by any of them. Their group meditation sessions were not unlike "the Quaker's period of silence – except there is no agreed approach (such as the Quaker's search for 'Inner Light') and consequently a less reverential, more secular atmosphere,"<sup>1105</sup> an atmosphere which might arguably have limited the effectiveness of their searching. Although their group meditation yielded "no revelations, no foretaste of Nirvana,"<sup>1106</sup> they felt that they had proven the value of "meditation as a spiritual hygiene which deepens and stabilises the personal life."<sup>1107</sup> However, they did not discover a lasting 'force' which could reassure disparate individuals of their connection to one another outside of the group. What benefits group meditation afforded in this direction generally "dissipate[d] on contact with the familiar world."<sup>1108</sup>

The most significant outcome of Owen and Bragg's experiment relates to an understanding of the 'public' to whom it proved attractive and useful. Heard continually stressed the importance of technique, or a regimen of spiritual exercises which would enable individuals as Heard saw them to achieve a pre-selected and clearly identified goal. But this presumes that Heard's conception of the individual was correct, and that his methodology was equally so. As we have seen, Leonard Elmhirst claimed Trabuco's failure was in part the result of Heard's assumption that

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<sup>1105</sup> Ibid. 90.

<sup>1106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1108</sup> Ibid.

his followers had attained a certain level of personal and spiritual development. It is arguable that Heard assumed too much about people in general, and that his fundamental preconception of the psychology of individuals was flawed. This would not have been fatal to his enterprise had he still considered himself to be, as he declared in *The Ascent of Humanity*, “one of the public, general but concerned,” who believed that his theories could best be “worked out by many minds.”<sup>1109</sup> But by elevating himself to the role of an expert or specialist, the correctness of Heard’s theories would have to be inversely proportionate to the power he exerted in guiding and shaping the minds of others. By contrast, it is instructive to look at Owen and Bragg’s attitude towards the individual within their experiment with Heard’s ideas:

At the inception, schemes for experimental work in meditation and yoga, research into mystical states, etc., were prepared. Only the persons themselves were needed to fit into the schemes. But people, when they come, are unpredictable, opinionated, bringing their own approach and demands. Our attitude now is that the members largely determine the nature of the group: what seems important is not so much the scheme in the abstract (“dilating consciousness”) as the people in the concrete (our charismatic bond with each other, the extent to which we interact as individuals). There was a tendency at the beginning to regard “wider consciousness” as a goal to be reached by rigid application of techniques and precisely timed meditation. But now it seems rather that – while meditation and disciplined living are certainly the effective means of spiritual progress – the chief value of the *personal group* lies in its very existence and in its possibility of generating a new quality of relationship.<sup>1110</sup>

Whereas Heard had somewhat ironically chosen to apply himself to his theories as a specialist, Owen and Bragg were self-confessed ‘tyros’, inquisitive amateurs who approached their experiment with an almost scientific curiosity. This amateurishness made them better able to see people as they were rather than reducing them to fit a dogmatic theory of human psychology and consciousness. The flexibility of their approach allowed them to shape their theories to suit the group, and not vice versa.

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<sup>1109</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 13.

<sup>1110</sup> *Ibid.* 88.

Lacking specific evidence of how and why Trabuco failed, perhaps the greatest value of Owen and Bragg's parallel experiment is its suggestion of how Heard could have been a victim of the same specialisation he had long argued was inimical to an advance in human consciousness.

In a review *The Ascent of Humanity*, published in *The Realist* in 1930, George Catlin quips that Heard's suggestion that 'superconsciousness' first posits the existence of fully self-conscious individuals means "[t]here is still left room in the world for Mr. Aldous Huxley."<sup>1111</sup> It is remarkable to consider that the two would become, as Maria Huxley reflected, a Mutt and Jeff team. Aldous Huxley filled the role of 'Jeff' for both his height and his self-admitted quality of being easily influenced by others. Like Mutt, Heard was a kind of mentor, and his highly eccentric ideas were akin to the hare-brained schemes dreamt up by Mutt in Fisher's comic. Heard's ideas afford us a better understanding of how Huxley overcame his objections to pacifism and mysticism. His arguments for an overarching psychological and spiritual unity as a means to an utopian future impressed on Huxley the value of both, and Heard's vision, although largely forgotten, was the fulcrum on which Huxley's thought pivoted in the 1930s. Further, a consideration of Heard and Huxley's philosophy of pacifism and how it evolved helps to explain the origins and aims of Trabuco College, and how Heard's monastery can be considered an extension of the 'New Pacifism' he defined with Huxley.

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<sup>1111</sup> Catlin, George E. G., rev. of *The Ascent of Humanity*, by Gerald Heard. *The Realist*, 3 December 1930, 451-453: 453.

## Conclusion

### “One of the Public”?: Heard and the Clerisy

The focus of this thesis has been largely limited to Gerald Heard’s work and life in England so as to afford a clearer picture of the development of his early thought, and what it contributed to the British intellectual culture of the 1930s. It remains to give some further consideration of the role Heard occupied amongst both the intelligentsia and the ‘public’ of the interwar years.

As we have seen, Heard regarded himself largely as a ‘generaliser’ of others’ ideas, working as “one of the public – general but concerned”<sup>1112</sup> to bring into the public sphere esoteric and abstruse theories of science, psychology and mysticism, and to develop from these a possible solution to modern social discontent. In his books, and most notably in his career as a broadcaster at the B.B.C., Heard formed an audience for his ideas and sought to cultivate in his ‘public’ a mindset that would make them collaborators in his proposed blueprint for social reform. However, the more advanced his ideas became, and the more certain he became of them, the more Heard came to believe that only a few could come to feel or appreciate the sense of extra-individuality, or ‘superconsciousness’, he regarded as the essential requirement of society. The founding of Trabuco College as a monastic retreat from the ‘public’, devoted to generating the social force he felt sure could only be felt by a small number but must be of wider application to the world at large, suggests a definite change in his role. In becoming a man of action, Heard necessarily declared a conviction in the correctness of ideas which he had hitherto felt must be “worked out by many minds.”<sup>1113</sup> To what degree can Heard be said to have abandoned his role as a purely public and general figure, and attained to the level of an expert, or specialist

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<sup>1112</sup> Heard, *Ascent*, 13.

<sup>1113</sup> *Ibid.*

removed from it? And what effect would this shift have on the application of his ideas?

Heard regarded himself largely as visionary and a guide, a role which he felt essential to any society. In *The Source of Civilization*, Heard went so far as to suggest the societal need for a caste system, placing at its highest level just such visionaries as he considered himself to be. Consciously or unconsciously, Heard invokes something of an intellectual's equivalent to Coleridge's conception of a "permanent, nationalized, learned order" or "national clerisy" as suggested in *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1839).<sup>1114</sup> Supported by the state, such a caste would provide both cultural vision and spiritual guidance would comprise visionaries of the sort Heard describes – and it is almost certain Heard considered himself to be just such a visionary. Christopher Kent gives some consideration to the role that such an intellectually-driven clerisy might perform: in seeking to "embrace the entire cultural life of the nation," such a visionary caste would necessarily become "priests in the widest sense – ministers of culture to the nation."<sup>1115</sup> Recalling Heard's conception of 'true religion', it is not difficult to conclude that Heard likewise felt compelled to create both a clergy and a laity, and that by definition his role distinguished him as a part of the former. Insofar as Heard's highest caste conforms to Collini's understanding of the 'clerisy', "primarily a means of diffusing *spiritual* cultivation among the population at large,"<sup>1116</sup> he would tend to conform to a model of intellectualism that purports to engender and develop in the minds of the majority the necessary preconditions for cultural or societal change and advance. It is Collini's contention, however, that Coleridge conceived of this cultivation as more of "an

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<sup>1114</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of Church and State* (London: William Pickering, 1839), 70.

<sup>1115</sup> Christopher Kent, *Brains and Numbers: Elitism, Comtism and Democracy in Mid-Victorian England*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 4.

<sup>1116</sup> Collini, *Absent Minds*, 78.

*inward activity*” whereby any influence exerted by the ‘clerisy’ would be made more “by example than by writing [or] ‘speaking out’ which, under whatever description, has been one of the defining activities of those who exercise cultural authority with a general public.”<sup>1117</sup> Heard presents something of an interesting case, progressing from intellectual generality to specificity, from public exhortation to action and ultimately to a retreat into ‘inward cultivation’ and the development a spiritual attitude conducive to a new way of living.

In thinking about the ‘clerisy’, it is impossible not to consider T. S. Eliot’s conception of a revived Christian (and specifically Anglican) church as a force that could infuse a dissipated, secular society with some larger spiritual meaning. In *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939), Eliot envisions a Christian society that would have at its head a “church within the church,”<sup>1118</sup> an echelon of intellectuals and mystics who would remain at the spiritual forefront of society and remain outside the strict business of government. Eliot’s ‘clerisy’ differs from Coleridge’s in that it was not as parochial or exclusive as the latter conceived of it. Rather, it would be open to any members of the laity who exhibited some skill or talent of which the community could avail itself. As Raymond Plant describes Eliot’s conception,

A truly Christian society would be organised on beliefs and attitudes which postulated certain transcendent, not merely material ends of life. This would not mean, Eliot agreed, that all the activities of such a society would be based on this transcendent aim. Rather the basic characteristics of a Christian society would be the development of a truly human community in which virtue could flourish, but also one in which those who had eyes to see could, in their social existence, pursue a supernatural end.<sup>1119</sup>

While the supernatural discoveries of the higher caste would “permeate the social relations of those who lived in the nation,”<sup>1120</sup> they would not form the sole

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<sup>1117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1118</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society* (London: Faber, 1939), 34.

<sup>1119</sup> Plant, 94.

<sup>1120</sup> Ibid.

preoccupation of that society. Here again we might wonder at Heard's intentions in creating a monastery divorced from the larger stream of social life, and exclusive to only those who proved adept at the transcendent aspect of the problem of living socially. Isolated from the world it purported to be guiding, any discoveries made by such a 'clerisy' as Heard sought to establish would necessarily become pronouncements from the highest caste to those of the lower orders; in fact, at Trabuco Heard claimed he was "trying to write a book on *The Four Types* as a sequel to *P[ain].S[ex].&T[ime]* to show that if we only had quite a small number of these NeoBrahmins [*sic*] they could make life possible for the other three practical types and sanction the society in which those could live in economic equality and rightness."<sup>1121</sup> "It is rather telling," writes D. S. Savage, "that neither Heard nor Huxley seems to be able to conceive of any form of mediation between the individual and society apart from an individualistic withdrawal on the one side and a fanatical power-wielding on the other."<sup>1122</sup> Both alternatives would appear to be very much at odds with Heard's earlier assertions, that anyone with an enquiring mind and general interest could come to realise a supra-personal connection with his fellows.

In *Absent Minds*, Stefan Collini comments on Aldous Huxley's role as an intellectual:

It was an essential part of his role as a "general intellectual" that Huxley should not be a specialist in any particular field, but it seems curious that the one thing he was always thought to speak with special authority about was the future. At times it is hard not to feel that is it the cultural role of the generalist that animated Huxley as much as the desire to occupy that role for a specific purpose, but the danger, as Huxley's life indicates, is that "the generalist" has to write too much, on subjects about which he is radically uninformed, undisciplined by the bracing effect of belonging to a critical community.<sup>1123</sup>

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<sup>1121</sup> Gerald Heard to Charlotte Shaw, 7 August 1940. Charlotte Shaw Papers, British Library. Add. 56494 –87. As D. S. Savage remarked somewhat tartly, it was "doubtless fortunate that Heard's vision of the rise of groups of controlling, 'super-charged' neo-Brahmins is unlikely to be realized – although of course one never knows" (Savage, 22).

<sup>1122</sup> Savage, 22.

<sup>1123</sup> Collini, *Absent Minds*, 458.

Could the same be said to apply equally to Heard? In gaining a reputation as a public intellectual and generalist, Heard constructed for himself a position of cultural influence sufficient to advance his ideas from theory to practice. But in choosing to use this role for an express purpose, he arguably came to be less a member of the ‘general but concerned’ public with which he first identified himself in 1929 and more of a specialist and leader – a role in which his generalised theories were found wanting, and in which he did not feel entirely comfortable. Recalling his 1933 broadcast talk “Humanising Science.” we might consider Heard’s view that a highly specialist mind could not also perform the role of a guide; as he writes, the scientist “is not there to tell us. He has other work to do, he has to follow the trail wherever it leads. It is for us to look ahead.”<sup>1124</sup> In pursuing a devoted way of living with the dogged concentration of a specialist, Heard would seem to eliminate himself from the larger public of which he claimed to be a part.

There is also the question of differing audiences for different aspects of Heard’s work. As a broadcaster, Heard could safely assume there was a large public generally interested in learning about scientific discoveries; this assumption is borne out by the significant efforts of the B.B.C. to cater for it. This audience was as open as it was broad, requiring only a sense of curiosity and sufficient literacy to understand. As a proponent of a new mystically informed way of life, however, it is arguable that Heard did not consider that the receptive ‘public’ would be extremely small and specialised. In their assessment of the applicability of Heard’s ideas of community, E. H. Owen and R. N. Bragg argue that in reality only a “marginal minority”<sup>1125</sup> were attracted to Heard’s ideas. They go on to reflect on just how well Heard knew his

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<sup>1124</sup> Gerald Heard, “Research and Discovery: Humanising Science,” *The Listener*, III.69, 7 May 1930: 808.

<sup>1125</sup> E. H. Owen and R. N. Bragg, “What Happens to an Idea?,” *Transformation Three*, ed. Stefan Schimanski and Henry Treece, (London: L Drummond, 1945), 81-92: 92.

audience, and their remarks are illuminating in light of the question of who it was Heard was trying to reach. We have seen that Heard believed his ideas were potentially of the widest possible application should they come to be proven. As a result, Heard tended to address himself to the widest possible audience. But Owen and Bragg felt that their experiment demonstrated “only in a very few does intellectual assent to a certain idea result in purposive living;”<sup>1126</sup> certainly Heard had come to consider this as early as 1940, writing to Charlotte Shaw

The training is not for everyone, I suspect. Some, as you say, simply can't do it for they have ties they are not free to break and others can't feel the interest and still other can't keep the rules which along this path are not severe but strict.<sup>1127</sup>

As a consequence, Heard can be said to have misjudged the true audience for his work: as Owen and Bragg noted, “The temptation to try to address the abstract ‘public,’ everyone, everywhere, to which Heard often succumbs, only results in addressing no one in particular.”<sup>1128</sup> Here we might reconsider Winifred Holtby’s assertion that Heard’s theories were “too vague for the experts [and] too technical for the common man.”<sup>1129</sup> Had Heard remained attuned to the general nature of his ‘public’, those who looked to him for guidance, it is arguable that his ideas would have been better received. But in so doing, Heard would have removed his ideas from the general sphere to the realm of ‘specialism’, forming a sort of Apocrypha open only to those few who were already devoted to his cause.

Here we can begin to see a dichotomy between Heard’s role as a visionary and as a would-be reformer. Owen and Bragg offer a description of the means by which reformers restrict their exhortations to those who are receptive to them: “The reformer

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<sup>1126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1127</sup> Gerald Heard to Charlotte Shaw, 7 August 1940. Charlotte Shaw Papers, British Library. Add. 56494 –87.

<sup>1128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1129</sup> Winifred Holtby, review of *This Surprising World, Time and Tide*, 28 (9 July 1932): 771.

reaches his real disciples, the individuals who are suggestible to his ideas, by speaking as personally and as intimately as he can.”<sup>1130</sup> If Heard was intent upon inducing select others to follow a devotional way of life, the tenor of his writing would have been tailored accordingly. He would also have taken greater care to understand the ‘public’ he was addressing and focussed his writing specifically. However, Heard had developed a very strong conception of what sort of ‘individuals’ he was addressing, and constructed a theory of society predicated upon his conception of individual psychology. “Because the visionary writer must assume certain facts about human nature,” argue Owen and Bragg, “those facts are an integral part of his world-picture.”<sup>1131</sup> It is possible that Heard could not see the woods for the trees; having so effectively defined individuals as being psychologically fractured and disparate, it may have proven difficult for him in any other way, or indeed, to see them as they really were.

Notwithstanding his lack of specific expertise, everything Heard did tended to conform to his single and ever expanding synthesis of thought on human community. It would be foolhardy to equate conviction with proof of success, but Heard pursued steadfastly a synthesis of all branches of knowledge to which he had access and sought to apply them to this single preoccupation. In attempting to be more than a synthesist, or by stepping outside the boundaries of his defined intellectual role, Heard’s lack of expertise becomes apparent. But considered as an ‘artist of ideas’, to borrow Holtby’s phrase, Heard could be said to have tried to paint as complete a portrait of his ‘vision’ as he could.

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<sup>1130</sup> Owen and Bragg, 92.

<sup>1131</sup> Ibid. 82.

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<b>Broadcast Date</b>	<b>Topic / Title (where available)</b>
13.iv.28	Where have we got our clothes from?
29.vii.28	Discussion w/ Francis Birrell
27.xii.28	No title.
<b>1929</b>	
3.vii.29	Men’s Dress Reform
<b>1930</b>	
2.v.30	Research and Discovery
14.v.30	Research and Discovery
30.v.30	Research and Discovery
13.vi.30	Research and Discovery
27.vi.30	Research and Discovery
11.vii.30	Research and Discovery
25.vii.30	Research and Discovery
8.vii.30	Research and Discovery

4.ix.30	This Surprising World
19.ix.30	This Surprising World
3.x.30	This Surprising World
17.x.30	This Surprising World
31.x.30	This Surprising World
14.xi.30	This Surprising World
28.xi.30	This Surprising World
12.xii.30	---
26.xii.30	---
<b>1931</b>	
8.i.31	---
22.i.31	---
5.ii.31	This Surprising World
11.iii.31	Topical Talk
19.iii.31	
2.iv.31	
16.iv.31	
30.iv.31	
11.vi.31	
25.vi.31	
8.vii.31	Census Reflections
9.vii.31	This Surprising World
23.vii.31	
6.viii.31	
20.viii.31	
11.ix.31	
25.ix.31	This Surprising World
9.x.31	This Surprising World
23.x.31	This Surprising World
6.xi.31	This Surprising World
20.xi.31	This Surprising World
4.xii.31	This Surprising World
18.xii.31	This Surprising World

31.xii.31	Events of the Year
<b>1932</b>	
2.i.32	This Surprising World
9.i.32	Conversations in the Train
16.i.32	This Surprising World
30.i.32	
13.ii.32	
27.ii.32	
28.ii.32	Modern Dilemma
17.iii.32	
26.iii.32	
9.iv.32	
4.v.32	
18.v.32	
1.vi.32	
15.vi.32	
29.vi.32	
15.vii.32	
27.vii.32	
10.viii.32	
24.viii.32	
7.ix.32	
21.ix.32	
1.x.32	
15.x.32	
7.xi.32	To an Unnamed Listener
12.xi.32	Science in the Making
15.xi.32	Leonid Meteors
26.xi.32	Science in the Making
10.xii.32	Science in the Making
24.xii.32	Science in the Making
<b>1933</b>	
2.i.33	1932

7.i.33	Science in Industry
18.ii.22	Science in Industry
3.iii.33	Science in Industry
18.iii.33	Science in Industry
1.iv.33	Science in Industry
4.v.33	New Farraday Building
2.vi.33	Geological Museum
25.vii.33	Oil from Coal
15.viii.33	National Radio Exhibition
9.ix.33	New Friends at the Zoo
12.xii.33	Opening of St. Mary's Hospital and Medical School

### 1934

6.i.34	Enquiry into the Unknown – Introduction
18.i.34	Brock Report on Sterilisation
4.iv.34	Science in the Making
11.iv.34	Science in the Making
18.iv.34	Science in the Making
25.iv.34	Science in the Making
25.iv.34	Science in the Making
2.v.34	Science in the Making
9.v.34	Science in the Making
16.v.34	Science in the Making
23.v.34	Science in the Making
30.v.34	Science in the Making
6.vi.34	Science in the Making
13.vi.34	Science in the Making
20.vi.34	Science in the Making
27.vi.34	Science in the Making
17.ix.34	Science in the Making
24.ix.34	Science in the Making
1.x.34	Science in the Making
8.x.34	Science in the Making
22.x.34	Science in the Making

29.x.34	Science in the Making
5.xi.34	Science in the Making
12.xi.34	Science in the Making
19.xi.34	Science in the Making
26.xi.34	Science in the Making
3.xii.34	Science in the Making
10.xii.34	Science in the Making
15.xii.34	Events and Opinions (On tape 269 – Ken-Kin – with King-Hall, Stephen)
17.xii.34	Science in the Making
24.xii.34	Science in the Making
31.xii.34	Science in the Making

### 1935

1.i.35	Physical Society's Exhibition
15.v.35	Report of the National Physical Laboratory - At Home Today
24.v.35	Among the British Islanders
5.x.35	Debates: That Life 100 Years Ago is Preferable to Life 100 Years Hence

### 1936

18.i.36	Annual Exhibition on the Physical Society
19.ix.36	World Power Conference

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