

Melbourne

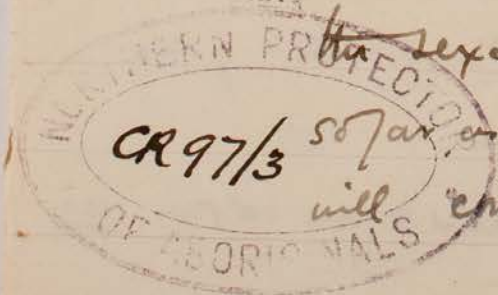
Jan 30.03

My dear Rott,

Your post came yesterday aft. & today I have been through it. I think that some time ago I sent you all some notes in regard to part of it. This part was most valuable & I congratulate you much on gathering together what will be I am sure of the greatest value to ethnologists.

The ngai + Koi part is the best of the whole and I am very glad that you are publishing the parts dealing with corruption not being considered as the result of intercourse of the sexes.

This Chinese matter so far as Australia is concerned & will come as an 'eye-opener' to those



who had a kind of idea that
filler myself am dealing with a
few very mixed files. I am
puzzled that if only we could
have got at the real idea of most
of our Australian tribes we should
have met with his belief in some
form or another.

Be sure to send a copy of this
work home to Tyler as soon as
ever you can: he is at work on the
subject and I heard from him only
two weeks ago asking if we had
any further evidence. I told him
that we had plenty & that you
had also & I am now writing to
him to say that your work will
surely be published.

He will be delighted with your
work & so will Fryer.

Will you please send me down an

soon as ever you can a copy of the
bulletin & I want to refer to it &
is about four weeks from now shall be
sending our work home to Macmillan.

The illustrations are first rate: one or
two of them referring to the projection of
evil magic are clearly visible & what
we have in the Central tribes. The
pointing bones & sticks are almost identical.

There is one thing which I do not quite
understand. Page 16, par. 74. You say (near
the end) "the barkmen have also empty etc"
Does this mean the whites? If not I
think it would be advisable to indicate
clearly when you refer to it it does
mean the ordinary white barkmen then
I would have it out or at least modify
it. The ordinary reader will certainly
take the word 'barkmen' to refer to
white men.

Also on p. 15, par. 82.
You say 'in the mother's belly'. I think
that it would sufficiently describe matters
& is made much better if you simply say
'in the mother'.

I see Totemism sticking out as a
good many hearts of your work. As Laing
would say "à sante aux yeux". Totemism
in Australia may of course be a rather
different thing from Totemism in America
but fundamentally the two systems are
closely allied and sooner or later you
will come to realize this. The idea of
a very close connection between human
beings + animals + plants is one of
fundamental importance + this is what
Totemism really means. This idea lies
at the root of many of the most important
beliefs of our Australian tribes + until you
have realized this you cannot possibly
~~understand~~ understand many of their most important
+ characteristic beliefs + customs. Personally
I do not care what it is called - Totemism
or Shamanism or anything you like.

By the by do you ever come across
the papers of a man named R. H.
Matthews. Most of his work I think
is got from other people but he has

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published mainly in the R.S. of U.S.W.
an interminable series of papers
dealing almost exclusively with the
class names - marriages of titles
Salvo. He has a most
remarkable faculty of mixing up the
classes + is a perfect fraud which
me in Sydney I had the pleasure of
telling him. Homitt + myself
have agreed to ignore him and I
am glad to see that you do the
same.

I have in my study here the res. of
a big work by Homitt. It contains
the results of about twenty years
gatherings. He deals mainly with
the S.E. Australian tiles + up
into the center as far north as Lake
Eyre. You take the N.E. +
filler + myself the central + northern

takes so that between the pair of us
half of Antarctica is pretty well worked
out - from what I can see the greater
part of the coast falls into line with
our rules in the Centre.

At the present time Martin & myself
have our respective wives & families away
at the sea-side & he 'medals' with me.

Like myself he is proving wonderfully
bold but in addition I am trying to

turn my what with ethnology &
Museum work on the side of University
work this is perhaps not to be wondered at
but when you feel young it is rather a
nuisance to look old. The 18 years

ago since we were in for the 'schools'
& I often wish that we could go back
again & start afresh knowing what we
now know. However if we have
done nothing else I think that we have
been able to add a little to the

knowledge of early mankind & that our Old University has no
reason to be ashamed of us. It is a curious thing that only
two Oxford men have done work of this kind out in Australia.

Very much do I envy you your chance of work. I can only
get out amongst the savages at intervals & mostly my time has to be
occupied with teaching first year medical students which is about the
most uninteresting & soul killing work imaginable.

I did not reply to your previous letter but it much amused
me.

Of course I do not know anything whatever about the
Queensland missionary & he may be a person of vastly superior
intelligence to the missionary whom we know in Victoria & Central
Australia - I most sincerely hope that he is - but what I meant
still to mean is that it is a perfect waste of time to teach the aborigine
to read & write & quote 'scriptures' which he cannot understand. If the
money wasted on this were spent in trying to teach him something by
means of which he could gain his living it would be far better.

However we have just had a spell of hot weather. I feel too hot
to argue or do anything requiring much exertion. I hope you -

Mr. Potter have got through the summer well.

all of my time has been spent writing up for my own results now thank goodness I am on the last chapter am drawing hard at implements etc. I think I know thing which is tedious it is the description of these same implements but I presume it must be done.

Yours ever

W. Baldwin Spencer.

P.S.

Be sure send me a copy as soon as possible - don't forget Tylor.