

Have you
seen the nonsense
published by Keane in
his "Man past + present"
pp 149-158?

FRAZER

Melbourne.

31

July 10.99.

My dear Frazer

I owe you many
apologies for my long silence +
then now can only send a few
lines. We are in the midst of
University work which leaves me
but little time to think about
matters anthropologic + for some
months to come I shall be very
busy. The Director of our
Public Natural History Museum
has lately died + I have succeeded
him which has meant amongst
other things endeavouring to reduce to
order a place left more or less in
chaos: drawing up plans for a
new Museum and now superintending
the removal of the collection. Added
to this I have the Secretarial work in
connection with a meeting of the
Aust. Ass. (= your Brit. Ass.) which
meets in Melbourne in the summer so

with ordinary Chaucer's Lectures + work you will understand that my time is fully occupied + that it is not possible to do much in the way of anthropology.

In a few weeks I am hoping to see in Melbourne a man from the Kimberley district in W. Australia who takes a great interest in the arts + shall try + arrange for future work with him. He is the only man of whom I know in that district, which very much wants working, who is capable of doing the class of work which we need.

Your two articles in the Fortnightly were simply splendid + I read them two or three times appreciating more + more your wealth of knowledge + power of intuition + enjoying you much your delightful style of writing.

I quite appreciate what you say as to the difference between our points of view in the matter of 'reconciliation' of the

stone, or rather the 'non-estangement' of the same.

Fundamentally our points of view are closely similar.

The only thing is that in Australia we have no ceremony which seems to suggest that the idea of 'reconciliation' is ever present in the man's mind.

'Reconciliation' seems to me to stand in the relationship to 'non-estangement' in which 'cure' does to 'prevention'.

Now what I know of the Australian native I feel sure that the idea of 'reconciliation' which is so clearly seen amongst other savages is never present in his mind.

The Intichiuma ceremonies are more widely scattered than we had previously imagined. They certainly occur in all the tribes round Lake Eyre + away to the north of this. Mr. Howitt tells me of a special spot on a hill side only a few miles from

Melbourne, where, if a supply of kangaroo was desired, the men (it is unfortunately too late to find out if these were the men of the totem) used to go & perform a special ceremony to secure the desired increase. This sounds exactly like an Intichiumna & it is of interest to find it in a Victorian tribe.

As you say the "multiple" totems fit in well with your theory & yet it is a rather curious fact which requires consideration that this multiple totem system, which presumably antedates such a system as we find amongst the Arunta, exists so far as we know only amongst our Coastal tribes which are in other respects much more modified than the Central Tribes.

So far as I can see at present it appears very much as if in all tribes the totemic groups were changed

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with the duty of performing
ceremonies for the increase of the
totem.

The more we look into the
matter the more evident I think
it becomes that (1) the significance
of the totemic group is the same
in all parts & (2) that Totemism
& exogamy have no primary
connection. In the very tribes
in which (such as the Urubuma)
a man of one totem marries
a woman of another the real
essence of the totem is that the
individuals of a group are charged
with the duty of increasing the
totem. Whether the totems
regulate marriage or whether they
do not we still find this one
feature present. When we find
a single feature common to all
totemic groups and another (in

this case the marriage restrictions) present in some & absent in others such we are correct in regarding the former as primary & the latter as secondary.

If we take three tribes the Arumta, the ~~Arumta~~ Urabumma & the Dieri, what we find is this.

(1) In the Arumta a man may marry a woman of any totem, in the Dieri he may marry a woman (this is according to recent information acquired by Howitt from a Minimar boy incident in the tribe & who is now ^{other than his own} hard at work) belonging to a series of totems, provided she does not belong to his "class"; in the Urabumma he may only marry a woman of one special totem.

(2) In three tribes the totemic groups all person

^{individuals of} the Arumta, the same totem are found in each society of the

tribe: in the Urabumma & Dieri, so far as we know, they are not.

This seems to show that we have to deal with (a) totemic groups & (b) 'class' divisions & that to understand the fundamental meaning of the former we must regard them apart from the latter the connection between the two being of a secondary nature.

This brings me to Lang's article in the June 'Fortnightly'. I can only describe this as slashing & superficial.

He has a wonderful way of both mixing the main ~~points~~ points of totemic & totemic paragraphs which misrepresents his opponent. He does not seem to have realized that it is at least possible that totemism & exogamy are not inseparably connected together. He takes it for granted that contrary descent in

The female line is of necessity a more primitive method than counting it in the male line which is by no means proved & then he proceeds to argue in a circle.

When I can get a little time in which to think matters over I will write you more at length meanwhile I only wish it were possible for me to get away West & do some work but there will be no chance of this until my Museum is arranged.

I am sorry to say (from an anthropologic point of view) that Gillen has finally left the Centre.

Kindest regards to Mrs Frazer: by this time I hope that you are in your new house.

Yours very sincerely

W. Aldrich Spencer.

You will be sorry to hear that Fison has had to undergo a rather nasty operation: he has recovered from it but seems very shaky. Howitt is working away at his 'Magnum Opus' & will shortly be sending home some valuable work to the anthropological.