

FRAZER

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Melbourne,

Sept 8. 03.

My dear Frazer,

By this mail I am sending home the proof so far as column 176 168. I have worked over it several times & hope that there are not many mistakes left uncorrected.

The number of corrections are (or is) rather formidable & I am beginning to think that it would be a good thing for me to go back to school again & endeavor to try & learn how to write decent English. Amongst the natives you get into the habit of writing a kind of 'pidgin English' which is quite understandable to yourself & also very expressive but which at the same time is not exactly English. Also words such as 'billabong' which means a 'back water' on a creek are so common & well understood out here that one forgets that the average reader will have no idea as to what they mean.

Except in the case of a very few words

such as Alcheringa + Clewringa I  
have purposely used Tj for Ch. The  
Tj is just as good + ch would be a  
great trial to a foreigner. all through  
I have adopted the Italian pronunciation.  
For example in fact I have attempted  
to write all native words so that a  
foreigner would know how to pronounce  
them. They are accentuated in  
the Glossary.

Even when dealing  
with written material sent to me by  
pillsen I have been puzzled as to  
whether the Ch. was like ch in Church  
or to a sound like k + therefore  
determined to avoid it. I hope you  
have no very strong feeling on the matter.

I have as you suggested added  
certain things. and have put that  
Kaukish 'booming' business in those  
places. Very many thanks for  
drawing my attention to it: I cannot  
think how I overlooked it. The  
lot in an early letter about peely

either the token is wrong + was  
corrected in a subsequent letter.

In the paper I have already  
drawn attention to one or two of the  
points you suggest such as that of  
no clothing.

In regard to the custom after  
interdiuma of the fan seed) of  
throwing out the seed for the months:  
the idea is certainly that of making  
the seed as they say 'jump up' but  
it is supposed to be a magic being  
and I do not think they have  
any actual idea that the actual  
seed which they spit out will germinate:  
the action is supposed to make the  
grass grow all over the country. of

course they themselves have not the  
faintest idea of sowing seeds or of  
agriculture seeds in the remotest degree  
but of course it is conceivable that  
some time or another in the history of  
Mantland some interdiuma-performing  
savages may have I should think some  
seeds themselves thrown out for magic

purposes did actually germinate & may thus have started on an agricultural career but this is beyond the present Australian native.

You ask whether Howitt & myself are inclined to the view that the rite of the Exogamic system in Australia is the result of deliberate institution. I am & I believe Howitt also to be of this opinion.

Lang in his "Social Origin" p 62. makes free of a statement of mine published I think in the T. A. J. thus "It can only be said that far back in the early history of mankind there was felt the need of some form of organisation and that this gradually resulted in the development of exogamous groups." Amongst other things Lang says that the bisection of my "theory" could not have been "gradual". I ought more properly to have said "this gradually resulted in the development of the exogamous groups as we know them now" or perhaps have left out the word "gradual". However this is not perhaps a very serious matter & the rest of Lang's criticism is jocular. The more one gets to know of the tribes the more

Nulbome

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one is driven to the conclusion that the organization is the result of deliberate intention though of course definite proof of this cannot be given.

The traditions are out of course of any value historically but perhaps they are of some value as showing that the natives do not regard such a deliberate action as beyond the power or outside the scope of work of some of their ancestors and then at the present day we have not only the deliberate arrangement made to fit so as to allow of the systems of different tribes fitting in to one another (Arumta + Uraburua, Binbunga + Mara) but also the deliberate adoption of names for the eight divisions which is now going on in the Arumta tribe.

Durkheim's criticisms on which Lays lays stress are to a considerable extent

based upon a misapprehension of the real facts.

The power of the old men is really supreme & as you suggest I will draw attention to this again though it is discussed in the introd. chapter & also in the other books. Hornitt also deals with it in doubtless you may have seen.

In the ~~proof~~ sent home today an addition is dealing with Subclivina in the Urubuma and also Sutiavina. I am convinced that in different tribes in different parts we have various elements in regard to customs & beliefs in varying stages of development.

There is no such thing as an all round 'primitive' tribe. Any group of tribes such as the Dieri & Urubuma may have retained a more primitive form of organization than another group such as the

Aranda & Naitih but at the same time the latter may be more primitive in regard to other matters such as witchcraft. In addition to this when you come to investigate matters more closely even (about 1000) it is presumably primitive form of maternal descent) the Dieri etc are much more complicated in their organization than appears on the surface. Mattori & Kirara are really divided into groups equivalent to the subclaves of the Aranda though they have no names for them. It is just the old tale of the danger of drawing any conclusion from negative evidence.

One would never have suspected that a maternal descent tribe would have such complicated ideas in the regard to reincarnation as the Urubuma tribe has.

A letter from D. Pylor this evening: I asked Macmillan to send him proof but he does not make any

Criticisms except those of general  
interest in the work - what I much  
fear cannot be avoided - the  
intricacy of the organization matters.  
I am afraid there is nothing for it  
but to let people get tied up in knots  
& tear their hair over this part of  
the business.

I hope you & Mrs. Frazer are  
well & wish I could have an hour  
or two with you.

Yours sincerely

W. Aldwin Spence.

Correction to be made  
on page 100.

On slip 6<sup>line 4</sup> for "Banta  
lillilina" read  
"Bata aurinnia".

It will read "but they are sometimes  
referred to under the name of Bata  
aurinnia which means "the people who  
dwell on hard ground."