

FRAZER

Melbourne,

March 5/98

(7)

My dear Sir,

I have once more  
to thank you for your kindness  
& only hope that in the end you  
will you will not feel that you  
have wasted time in helping us  
but I am rather afraid that  
you are expecting too much. Mr.  
Macmillan wrote to me by last  
mail & by next week's mail the  
ms. goes home to him. I am  
glad to say that at length it  
is all written but as I cannot  
insert the illustrations & make for  
a day or two it must wait for  
a week. It is extremely kind  
of you to offer to correct the proofs.  
I am almost afraid to accept  
your offer partly because in going

over the typescript I have made  
a good many corrections &  
have added a certain amount  
in ms. so that correcting may  
give you more trouble than you  
can realize, partly because I am  
afraid that a good deal of it  
may be of very little interest to  
you as we have included all  
such things as weapons etc the  
account of which is rather tedious  
& lengthy because of the index. This  
is the most serious obstacle. If  
Purp Macmillan can get someone  
to go over this & insert correct  
pages it would simplify matters: as  
it is I can only send home the  
index with the pages of the ms.  
indicated and all these will  
need 'translating' into pages of the  
printed matter.

It would certainly save a  
great amount of time & we should  
be more than grateful to you. I  
would like to leave it in this  
way that the proof should be  
sent to you & then if you are too  
busy or find it difficult then  
it could be sent to us. Whatever  
you decide please accept our most  
sincere thanks for your offer. The  
illustration will be a matter of  
difficulty and anything which you  
decide with regard to them we  
shall entirely agree with.

We have had such a hot  
summer with the temperature up to  
109° in the shade that it has been  
rather hard work to write continuously  
and there have been such piles of  
pages of various dates with corrections  
& re corrections to go over that it has  
dragged on week after week & now  
I should like to start & re write it.

In the proof I am afraid that you will find a good many things which I ought to have corrected. I trust that much violence has not been done to the English language.

A long time ago we promised to dedicate the work to our friends Hornitt & Fison as a slight recognition for what they have done in the matter of Australian anthropology & after the way in which they have been referred to in the last edition of McLennan we finally determined to do so. If Mr McLennan could have had personal contact with the Australian natives he would have much modified his views & he certainly would not have spoken of Hornitt & Fison as he has done. There never were two more honest workers. I cannot help thinking that 'group marriage' in Australia is proved up to the hilt. A modified but unmistakable form of it actually exists in one of our tribes.

Now as to some of your queries:

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In the tribes with which we have come in contact I know of no pantomime of sexual intercourse for the purpose of multiplying game: the ceremonies concerned with this are all of the sacred character which no woman may come near but in one tribe the Dieri I think we know of the following ceremony which is more than pantomime. Several men have intercourse with one woman. The semen is collected in a wooden bowl & with this on his head a man walks into deep water until it is all floated out: the idea is to increase the number of fish. This we have on the authority of two reliable men.

Amongst the Arunta & other Central Tribes it is not supposed that a child is the direct result of sexual intercourse: it is the result simply of a spirit individual entering the woman.

As to homicides, we have a ceremony of some interest in regard to this. When a party kills a man (avenging parties are

sent out for this purpose, then the men who have actually done the killing march in perfect silence to the home camp. Here the women point of all stroke each man's shield; if it pin out a solid sound all in well if not some ill will befall him. Each man has to keep awake at night to listen for the chirping of a bird in the form of which the spirit of the dead man flies about the camp. Each man also has to cover his right arm when lying down otherwise the spirit might see it & he would be paralyzed.

So soon as he hears the bird he will become then the latter whom that it is watched and can do no harm. There is nothing actually done to appease the spirit of the dead man.

As to a sanctuary: we have in this tribe what I have called the early rudiment of the idea of a 'city of refuge'. It is certainly very rudimentary.

There are particular spots where all the sacred objects (Churinga) are stored up. Nothing in the immediate neighborhood

of them may be touched: any animal such as a wallaby or kangaroo which goes there is 'tabu' so long as it remains chiefly & no man would be killed in its neighborhood. Once during the Ingwora ceremony some of the younger men began quarrelling near to where the sacred Churinga were stored & the old men at once ordered them away. This seems to be an

interesting beginning of something which might develop further. May be not the origin of a sanctuary arise from some such idea as this that no blood should be shed near to sacred objects & then at a later time might not the idea pass that if a man went near these & were not injured by the spirit or supernatural beings associated with them that he was in some way purged of his guilt.

We do not know of anything in the nature of eating together constituting friendships. The nearest approach to this was a ceremony in which some natives were returning to another group

chewing which they had borrowed  
for a time + as one token of friendship  
the borrowers were presented with a  
special "cake" which was divided amongst  
them + eaten.

We have further  
a special ceremony of drinking blood  
by the members of a party which is  
going out to avenge some injury. We have  
known of a case in which the avenging  
party took with them a man of the  
group whom they were going to attack +  
forced him to drink blood with them  
after which he could not give notice to  
his friends to save themselves. I will  
get filled to make further enquiries as to  
eating together but do not think it occurs.

With regard to hair etc there are very  
great differences amongst the Australian  
tribes: in some they are very careful to  
avoid letting anyone get hold of hair,  
nail clipping, remnants of food etc. but  
in our tribe there is no such thing. Every  
man + woman must give his or her  
hair to certain individuals + they have  
no idea of working any ill to a man  
by means of securing hair etc from his  
person. With food the restrictions are  
curious. There are certain individuals

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who must on no account use a  
man's food. If I am out  
hunting + am bring a kangaroo  
home + a father-in-law (actual or  
tribal) comes suddenly round the  
corner + sees it I have to drop  
it at once + he takes it. He is  
one of the men who seeing my  
food "projects his smell" as they  
say into it + renders it unfit  
for me to eat. We know of no  
case in which injury can be done  
by seeing remnants of food.

A few weeks ago Gillen came  
across a most curious case of the  
use of a Churinga. A man of  
the euro (kind of kangaroo) totem  
had made a Churinga decorated  
with a design of his own totem; this  
he had charmed by 'singing' it +  
had then presented it to his son-in-law  
who belonged to the "plum-tree" totem  
in order to assist the latter in  
catching + killing Euros. This seems

to be clearly an expression of the fact that a man of any totem has some peculiar right in regard to the totemic animal. He does not catch & kill it himself but he can help another man to do so.

Everyone seems to quote Frey's 'Kobong' as typical of Australia generally whereas it is by no means so. We very much want a careful investigation of the whole subject amongst various tribes.

I found that sometimes you will write a further work on Totemism and meanwhile if there are any points which you would like to gain information on with regard to our tribes please let us know as soon as possible as I shall be leaving the Centre before long & when he comes away there will be no one who can investigate matters. You can have no idea of how little reliance is to be placed

on the observation of the ordinary person living amongst the natives. Australian anthropology is badly in want of a course of expurgation.

I am glad to say that Finon is much better again. He & Mr. Hovitt are engaged on a work which will occupy some time but will be really good when it does see the light. A Rev. Mr. Matthew is about to publish ~~and~~ a work entitled "The Eagle & the Cross". It will I fancy contain much philological lore, but, though he is very well meaning, the author knows just as much of the Australian native as an eagle or a Cross does.

If anything in our work can be of use to you whether it be published or not I hope that you will use it with very many thanks for your great kindness & as believe me

Yours very sincerely  
W. H. R. Spencer.