

Pitt Rivers Museum ms collections
Spencer papers Box 1 F Tylor

Tylor to Spencer 1

June 17 1897

My dear Spencer

Your letter gave me great pleasure, and so far as my very moderate influence will go I shall do my best to further your project. [1] The preliminary outline paper was sent to me in type by the editor of Nature and I looked through it. [2] Happening to be at Malvern I have not seen last weeks number, but when I get back this evening I hope to find it there or in this weeks. Mr Gillen has kindly sent me the Anthropology of the Horn Expedition, [3] which opened up a new instructive field, and reading the paper made me sure that the newly described totem system is of great importance toward the understanding of the whole totem business, the usual theories of which seem to me unsatisfactory, [sic] whereas your scheme, change and new as it is, is at any rate rational as a piece of savage reasoning.

I will read your typescript as soon as it comes, and shall probably then communicate with Macmillans. [1] The difficulty will be to secure a sufficient sale among the general public in addition to the anthropologists, who though anthropology has come on wonderfully in the last few years, cannot yet take an edition. However I will do all in my power. It particularly delights me that you have made your mark in anthropology when the opportunity offered. Mrs Tylor joins me in best wishes

Yours truly

Edward B. Tylor

Tylor to Spencer 2

Dec 18 1898

My dear Spencer

I am very glad to have heard your paper and seen you as we were to miss you at Oxford. [4] It was a very excellent paper & the thorough work that it shows in anthropology contrasts wonderfully with that of the old times when explorers had the wonderful old savage ways under their eyes & for want of knowledge could not see them.

Our friend Frazer [5] amused me vastly. For years he has been setting the parsons all agog with totem-gods, till having read you, he calmly propounds a bran-new theory in place of his old one, chucked. I took quite a lot of trouble to refute No 1 [insert] in the [illegible] I send with this [end insert] and behold No 2 is out already. Whether this will find you in Oxford I cannot tell but if not it will go on to Prof Howe. I wish I could have been at home to see you & talk over many things. One especially [insert] Miss [end insert] Howitt's Australian Folk Tales which contain a large amount of her father's information came to me some while ago. I sent it to Macmillans but they intimated that it would not pay cost. In fact there is a glut of savage folklore, three quarters of it not worth publication. I sent Howitt's ms on to Alf'd Nutt who writes to the effect that he cannot publish it himself to lose money, but that if it were got into better form by the authors he thinks the Folklore Soc'y might bring it out as an extra volume in a year or two. I do not send his letter but will do so when sure of your address. Howitt wanted me to return the ms by you if refused. It is on my library table at the Museum House in case you are in Oxford & wish to take it.

Mrs Tylor sends kind regards & would have been glad to see you again

Yours truly

Edward B Tylor

Tylor to Spencer 3

[on Museum House paper]

at Linden

Wellington, Somerset

Jun 4 1899

replied Jul 22/ 99 [in WBS handwriting]

Dear Spencer

Have I written or spoken to you about Miss Howitt's Australian Folk Tales? Howitt wished them sent back by you if I could not find a publisher. Macmillan refused the ms, so I sent it to Alf'd Nutt from whom I have a letter finding fault with its form, refusing to publish it himself, & holding out some rather vague hope of the Folklore Society taking it up after a time. If I was

sure of your present address I would send you Nutt's letter & get him to forward the ms to you. I almost think that the best way would be to send the ms back to Australia, and let Howitt have Nutt's letter also. What do you think? Did I express to you my amusement at [illegible] Frazer in the character of a totem-convert preaching a totem-doctrine absolutely contradicting & ignoring that which he has been successfully circulating for years

Yours truly
EB Tylor

Tylor to Spencer 4

[University Museum notepaper]

July 25 1899

My dear Spencer

I am not really writing from Oxford, but from Southwold a quiet little East Coast seaside place. One of my occupations has been to read the last journal of the Anthropological Institute, & I congratulate you as I did when we sat together last, at Frazer's calmly throwing over his former theory of totemism which I had taken so much pains to knock the bottom out of, in order to absorb your discoveries. [6] I think your contribution to the totem-theory is so good that it will lead to the yet unsettled synthesis of the whole set of customs. I always held exogamy to be independent of totem, and indeed years ago made an effort in the J.A.I. to interpret it as a mere alliance of clans. It will be very interesting to have the churingas in the Pitt-Rivers and I shall of course tell you if any turn up from other sources. All I have seen are casts of so-called ones sent me by Andrew Lang from a place called I think Dumbuick in Scotland! [7] I have not heard of Balfour since he sailed for S. Africa to recover from the effects of typhoid & jaundice. I much hope he may get back restored, but poor man, he has had a bad time. I hope for more 'Tasmanian' implements from W. Australia, especially now that things like plateau flints are turning up in S. Africa. Evidently pre-palaeolithic man has lasted most instructively in savagery of the Southern Ocean. My kindest regards to Howitt & regret about the Tales, but we did all we could. I hope anthropology will soon hear of him again, Fison likewise. Have you got H Ling Roth's new edition of Tasmanians

Yours truly
EB Tylor

Notes

[1] The publication of Native Tribes of Central Australia.

[2] 'The Engwura' *Nature* 56: pp 136-139

[3] Spencer and Gillen 1896 Horn Expedition Report Part IV Anthropology London: Dulau & Co.

[4] Presumably Tylor saw Spencer's paper at the Anthropological Institute.

[5] James Frazer

[6] Following the publication of 'Some Remarks on Totemism as Applied to Australian Tribes' Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 28, No. 3/4 (1899), pp. 275-280.

[7] 1899.26.1-2, the place is Dumbuck Crannog.

Transcribed by Alison Petch 2015