

Pitt Rivers Museum ms collections

Spencer papers Box 5 Frazer

[NB some of these letters have been placed in date order rather than the order in which they were catalogued]

Frazer 1

This letter ought to have come a week earlier but it missed the post. By last mail I sent a few photos. to give some idea of what the ceremonies are like which are described in "Nature" of June 10.

[The University of Melbourne]

July 12 1897

My dear Sir,

My friend Mr Fison has kindly sent on to me your letter in which you make enquiries with regard to the joint work of Mr Gillen & myself. First let me say that the work which we are doing is down in the first instance to Mr Gillen. He had for some years past been taking a great interest in the Cent. Australian natives & the result of his work up to the time when we met has already been published in the report of the Horn Exped. to Cent. Aus. vol IV. At the close of that expedition I spent some time with him &, having been originally interested in matters anthropological by my old teacher Prof. Moseley & also by Dr Tylor, was able to suggest to him lines of enquiry with regard to totems & other matters of interest. Then he suggested that we should work together & gradually the thing has grown until now I think that we are in a position to describe in detail & with I trust comparatively few errors the organisation & customs of our tribe & have secured also a lot of information with regard to 6 or 7 others.

Last summer I spent four months with Mr Gillen living with the Arunta tribe the members of which had gathered together close to the telegraph station of which he has charge on the overland line from Port Darwin to Adelaide.

It is as nearly as possible right in the centre of the continent.

We have fortunately been just in time to record the details of the tribe – for it is astonishing how rapidly customs die out the moment the white man comes on the scene. Unless we can in some way set to work seriously we shall be too late to do much in Australia for despite the work of men like Howitt, Fison we know as yet very little. I need hardly say that to these two Gillen & myself are much indebted.

Mr Gillen has always encouraged the natives to preserve all their old customs & in his position as sub-protector of the Aborigines has had a splendid chance of acquiring influence amongst them. They regard him as their chief man & by means of the, perhaps under the circumstances, excusable device of calling myself his younger (tribal) brother I was adopted as a member of the tribe & allowed to see everything.

I have often thought that much of our work would be of interest to you & so am venturing to write direct to you instead of through Mr Fison.

As yet we have only published a brief abstract of part of our work dealing with the totems. This appeared in "Nature" of June 10. 97. You will find therein an answer to one or two of your questions. In a few days I will send an abstract of the same paper which is practically identical with the account in "Nature".

First of all with regard to the eating of the totem. This was the point which struck me most when first I saw the ceremonies performed & questioned the natives with regard to their present custom.

There are plenty of restrictions as to eating particular kinds of food but in no case are the restrictions concerned with the totems. A kangaroo man eats & kills kangaroos, an Emu man eats & kills Emus & so on.

In the ceremonies connected with the different totems the point comes out clearly.

An Unjeamba that is a Hakea flower man is constantly, for example, represented as eating the Hakea flower. A Munyeru or grass seed man eats munyeru. In one ceremony two wild-cat men were represented as cooking preparatory to eating a wild-cat man. All their traditions dealing with this subject constantly represent ancestral individuals eating their own totem animals or plant.

Further than this we come across such curious & suggestive traditions as this:--

Two women of the Alcheringa (that is the very early times – lit. 'dream-times' – in which their ancestors lived) were walking over the country. One was a bandicoot & the other a pigeon woman. The first performed a sacred ceremony & by this means changed the second into a

bandicoot woman after which she (that is the former pigeon) walked on & eat bandicoot. It is a striking feature that the eating of the totem is represented in some of the traditions as a kind of necessary function of the members of that totem. Another tradition refers to certain wild cat men who died & came to life as Plum men after which they walked on eating plums.

I do not think that with the possible exception mentioned below there is anything of the nature of a solemn sacrament at which the totem is eaten. In the case of the great majority of totems unless the ceremonies already referred to at which the ancestors are represented as eating the totem can be regarded as such there is no such customs.

In one totem however we meet with what may perhaps be regarded as such. Every totem has what is called its intichiuma [*NB diacretic marks in original omitted*] ceremony the object of which is to increase the supply of the animal or plant bearing the totem name. In one of these, the witchetty grub (to which both Mr Gillen & myself belong) the head man has a small wooden trough in which he is supposed to grind up the witchetty grub preparatory to eating it. I am rather inclined to think that in the case of the tribes with which we are dealing we have to take the question of cannibalism into account. We have a great deal of information dealing with this. Practically all the Alcheringa ancestors are described as cannibals, indeed in many of the traditions considerable stress is laid on this fact. The older is the tradition the more certainly do we find an individual feeding upon his own totem. We meet also with traditions such as this – A kangaroo ~~man~~ was being pursued by a Kumera man (totem not given) but he could not catch it & turned back then a Bultharra man of the Arrunga (Euro) totem at once changed himself into a Kangaroo man & set off in pursuit being anxious to kill & eat the kangaroo. We have of course many other traditions in which men eat animals & men who are not of their own totem but the curious manner in which in not a few traditions this definite change of totem is recorded & associated with the eating of the same is a noticeable feature. So far as the Australian tribes are concerned I fancy there is little doubt but that their early ancestors were thorough going cannibals & after thinking over the matter a good deal I cannot see how we can do otherwise than take this into account in dealing with the totems. The Arunta people at the present day are not [*insert*] except rarely [*end insert*] cannibals & the prominence given to cannibalism in the traditions may I think be taken as fair evidence of the actual former existence of this in remote times.

Now if they were cannibals there was no reason why they should not eat their own totem. A [*insert*] kangaroo [*end insert*] man would eat – at least tradition says he would – a kangaroo man why should he not eat a kangaroo. To eat a man was to make part & parcel of yourself his strength etc (we still have relics of this in the Arunta amongst whom a weakly child is occasionally fed on the flesh of a younger & stronger one so as to give it the strength of the latter). A kangaroo man would be especially advantaged by eating a kangaroo. We may in fact starting from a common point have had development proceeding along two divergent lines. Along one it may have become less & less the custom to eat the totem until the latter becomes 'tabu' & along the other a kind of proprietary right in the totem may have been developed one result of which is that at the present day, as in the Arunta tribe, it is only the men of the totem who may take part in the sacred ceremony the object of which is to increase the supply of the totem for eating purposes. At all events in Australia we have so far as the totems are concerned a sharp division of the tribes into (a) a series to whom the totem is tabu & (b) a series to whom it is not tabu & who have ceremonies to increase the supply for eating purposes.

You will see from the abstract which will follow this or from the account in "Nature" the remarkable way in which the totems are accounted for: you will also see that every man & woman has his or her own totem. The traditions are so complete that we can now plot down on the map the actual paths taken by the ancestors of various totems as they walked or rather are supposed to have walked across the country in the 'dream times'.

Apparently the totemic system in the Arunta is entirely different from that of other Australian tribes as yet recorded but it must be remembered that we have very little detailed information. The Churinga or sacred sticks & stones you will find interesting. They seem to me to be a relic of a time when a man deposited his spiritual part somewhere outside of himself. This is certainly not very clear on the surface but such a tradition as the following seems to point in this direction. In the Alcheringa a number of men went out to hunt & while away they hung up their churinga on a sacred pole to keep them safe & took them down when they returned. Again every human being has a spiritual double [*insert*] called arumburinga [*end insert*] & the latter the natives say always hovers around his churinga manja. [*sic*] When a man dies his ulthana or spirit part goes to the sacred store house where the churinga is kept & there lives

in company with the spirit double. This is complicated but we have to remember that the ulthana is exactly the same thing as the spirit part of the alcheringa ancestor & each one of the latter has an arumburinga who goes on living unchanged while the ulthana or spirit part of the alcheringa ancestor may be re-incarnated time after time. The arumburinga is the spirit double of the alcheringa man (or woman) & there for [sic] the spirit double of every human being who is the reincarnation of that alcheringa man.

The old men decide what alcheringa ancestor is reincarnated in every child born & the child bears as its churinga aritna or sacred name, that of its alcheringa ancestor.

At a certain age, when initiated, each man is taken by the head of the local group (totem) to which he belongs to the sacred store house. There is is [sic] painted up, shown the churinga, & told his churinga name. The women all have churinga names but the men alone know them though the very old women are told of their existence. The showing of the churinga to the younger men is a most solemn affair. Gillen & myself have stood by for hours watching the old men showing & explaining them to the younger ones who were being initiated into the tribal secrets concerned with the totems.

The question of 'class' totem is a difficult one. Howitt & Fison are of opinion that the 'class' totem precedes the individual totem. The traditions which we have in the Arunta tribe are explicit on this point & we can clearly divide up the Alcheringa into three periods

(1) The early Alcheringa when human beings were transformed by the aid of two spirit men who dwelt in the western sky, out of half animal & half plant with human beings (men & women)

(2) The middle Alcheringa when the rites of circumcision (with stone knives) & of subincision were introduced & the 'classes' were for the first time adopted (In the early Alcheringa stone knives had not been invented & circumcision was performed with the aid of fire sticks).

(3) The later Alcheringa when the present organisation in its full form was introduced.

We have full details with regard to these stages & it will be seen that 'individual' preceded 'class' totems.

With this has to be associated the fact that in the tribes amongst whom we have been working mainly, marriage is solely regulated by the 'class' totem – the 'individual' totem has nothing whatever to do with it.

Here again we seem to have had development proceeding along at last two different lines in different Aust. tribes. In the neighbourhood of Lake Eyre we find a sharply marked line. To the north lie tribes in which descent is counted through the male line & where 'class' only regulates marriage to the South & East are tribes where descent is maternal & where the individual totem governs marriage.

On the question of the form of insanity in which an individual imagines himself to be an animal etc I am sorry to say that I can give you no definite information. I think that we can say that it does not exist amongst our tribe but have today wired a question up to Gillen which will result in his finding out if any such thing exists.

We have been careful to dig as deeply down as possible & to overlook nothing in the way of detail but with natives it is most difficult to tell when you have got to 'bed rock' & if there are points on which you could suggest our working we should be grateful to you. I need hardly say that the 'Golden Bough' has been most useful to me. Of course Gillen & I have worked a good deal together up in the Centre but most of the actual finding out of things has of necessity to be done by him. I send him up endless questions & things to find out & by mutual agreement he reads no one else's work so as to keep him quite unprejudiced in the way of theories. He is simply indefatigable. You may judge of his enthusiasm from the fact that he has already declined two good appointments so as to be on the spot & able to find out anything which I want to know further while writing up our work.

The thing which troubles us most is that with our present knowledge of the tribe & their knowledge of us we could simply, carrying our sacred churinga, be handed on from tribe to tribe right across the continent & so find out much which must sooner or later be lost & yet we are both of us unable to do so he lacking money & I lacking time for a University appointment out here does not allow of too much leisure.

Central Australia is not an ideal place to travel in & it is useless for an ordinary traveller to come out from England & attempt the work as the natives would simply tell him nothing of secret things. Mr Fison has neither time nor I am sorry to say has he now the strength to do it & Howitt is far too busy. It would take a year's hard work but I am quite sure that the results would be good.

As to publishing our work; I hope to have it ready in three or four months time & then will come the difficulty of finding a publisher as we want to have it well illustrated for we have a great series of photos. dealing with totem & other ceremonies such as initiation, burial, mourning etc.

I ought really to apologize for troubling you with such a lengthy letter but if you would be good enough to suggest any enquiries or special points we shall be grateful.

Yours very sincerely  
W Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 2  
Trinity College  
Cambridge  
19 September 98

My dear Sir

Accept my very sincere thanks for your letter and the photographs. Both of them interest me deeply. The abstract of your paper on the totems, which you so kindly promise to send me, has not yet reached me. I look forward to reading it with much interest. At present I am so occupied with work that I cannot enter into the details of the questions raised in your letter. I will only say that the totem system among the tribe you describe seems to be very peculiar and to differ in some respects from those of most other tribes known to us. It is all the more important that the system should be described as fully as possible. I hope to write to you at length before very long when the immediate pressure of work is over (I am bringing out a book next month). My object in writing just now is merely to thank you for your letter and the photographs and to say that I have communicated with Messrs. Macmillan and that they are ready to publish your book on condition that it does not exceed about 500 pages and that the number of illustrations to be inserted shall be left to their discretion. If you agree to these terms the matter is settled Mr George A. Macmillan, the partner to whom I wrote, suggests that you should communicate direct with him. From my experience of Macmillan I should say that they are excellent publishers to deal with, always ready to consider and agree to any reasonable proposals that an author may make to them. Mr G.A. Macmillan seems fully to realise the importance of your forthcoming book, and I do not suppose that they will stint you in the matter of illustrations or strictly limit you to 500 pages. The advantage of publishing with a firm of the standing of Macmillan is obvious. The terms he mentioned were, I think, the usual ones – the publisher to undertake the whole risk and expense and to share the profits equally with the author.

But I must not write more at present. Please remember me very kindly to Mr. Fison and thank him from me for his letter which was, as usual most interesting. I shall hope to write to him at length when I have leisure.

With very many thanks

I am

Yours very faithfully

J.G. Frazer

I found your contributions to the report of the Horn Expedition most interesting but have not had time to do than skim that book.

Please say to Mr. Fison that Dr. Jackson will, I am sure, read his letter with delight, confirming as it does a theory he has long held. He is not in Cambridge just now, but I will show him the letter on his return.

Frazer 3  
Melbourne  
Sept 27. 98.  
J.G. Frazer Esq  
Trinity College  
My dear Sir,

Since writing last I have heard from Mr Gillen with regard to the question of a man changing his totem in special cases. After enquiry he can find no evidence of this ever taking place in the Central Australian tribes. The old men of the Arunta tribe assured him that such a thing was not possible now though, it was possible in the case of the 'alcheringa' or far away ancestors. The opportunity of writing to him has come & I am sending him up fuller particulars than was possible in a telegram.

The mail which has just come in from him brings me also fuller information with regard to eating the totem as certain of the ceremonies concerned with these have taken place – that is the intichiuma ceremonies performed by the members of the totem the object of which is to increase the supply of the particular animal or plant after which the totem is named.

The following account of a certain grub totem called Udnirringita (to which Mr G. & myself belong) will give you some idea of the actual state of affairs.

In the case of this totem the grub is 'tabu' & may not be eaten at all during the period which follows immediately upon the performance of the ceremony until such time as it becomes numerous & fully grown otherwise the ceremony would be of no effect & the supply small. In this particular group of natives those who do not belong to the totem & did not attend the ceremony may eat the grub at any time but it must in all cases be brought into the camp to cook & must on no account be cooked out in the bush like any ordinary food may otherwise the members of the totem would be angry & the grub would vanish. When, after the ceremony it becomes plentiful (N.B. the ceremony is held just before the usual time of appearance of the grub – these times being well marked in Central Australia where every thing is periodical depending upon the rainy season) the grub totem men & their wives & children go out & gather large quantities which they bring in to camp, cook & store up in 'pitchis' (wooden bowls) & bark. At the same time the other members of the local group who are not of the totem are also collecting. After the short season of plenty has passed (that is when the grubs chrysalate [sic]) all the collected store is taken to the men's camp (this is a special spot to which the women do not go). here in the first place the men who are not of the totem place their stores before the Head man (he is head of the totem of that locality). The head man takes one pitchi full & with the help of the other men of the totem grinds up its contents between stones & after he & the other men of the totem have taken & eaten a little he hands all back to the other men. Then he takes another pitchi full – this time from his own store & after grinding it up he & the men of the totem eat a little & pass the greater part of what has been collected on to the other men. After this the individuals of the totem eat sparingly of the grub if they eat too much then the effects of the ceremony would be injured & there would be few grubs.

In the case of the Irriakura (a small cyperus bulb) totem, after the performance of intichiuma by men of the totem the bulb is not eaten for some time. Then men who are not of the totem bring a quantity in to the camp where it is handed over to the Head man of the totem & he & other irriakura men rub the bulbs between their hands to get rid of the husks & then the men take some of the bulbs in their mouths & blow them out again in all directions after which the irriakura people may eat sparingly.

I fancy that though the details vary from totem to totem the essential part of the ceremony so far as the eating is concerned & the restrictions upon eating are closely similar in all.

Further ceremonies of which Mr Gillen has sent me accounts contain evidence of the curious relationship, so far as eating is concerned, which tradition says existed between their alcheringa ancestors & their totems. One ceremony for example related to an Oruncha (a kind of 'devil') man who had killed a man belonging to a grub totem. A curious cross arrangement carried on the head of the performer was supposed to represent the body of the dead man which the Oruncha was carrying about & on this were hung little rat-tails which again represented grubs (of his own totem) which the grub man was carrying about to eat.

We have of course a lot more details but I think that the above represents the gist of the matter so far as [insert] the [end insert] eating of the totem is concerned in the Arunta Tribe.

We can find nothing out about either sex or individual totems – such are I think of very rare & limited occurrence in Australia – especially the second one.

A man becomes associated in a special way with totems other than his own by reason of his inheritance of churinga ('bull-roarers') belonging to other totems – such he may inherit from his father -- & by reason also of his inheriting the right to perform ceremonies concerned with other totems. With regard to this matter we have a considerable amount of information.

We have traditions dealing with the origin of men, of the dividing of the men & women into 'classes' & of the institution of the present marriage system but can find no trace of the totems having ever had anything to do with regulating marriage.

In a week University lectures cease & after that I shall set to work, rewrite the present rough draft of our work & hope to send it home before the end of the year.

Dr Tylor has kindly promised to help us in the matter of finding a publisher but I can see that there will be great difficulty in this, though I feel sure that the work contains much that will be

of interest to anthropologists & I doubt if any one Australian tribe has been dealt with in anything like so full a manner before.

There is one point which I wanted to mention to you. We have a most elaborate ceremony in reference to mourning & in the case of the Arunta tribe I feel convinced that the daubing of the body of the widow with pipe clay is not done with any view of confounding the returning spirit of the dead man but rather with the opposite idea of (1) rendering the woman easily visible & (2) of showing him that she is properly mourning for him as for a certain time he is supposed to visit her camp [sic] & even to lay down with her at night. The final ceremony of mourning includes the taking off of the pipe clay & the performance of certain rites at the grave the object of which is to reassure the spirit of their grief at his loss but at the same time to intimate that the hour has come for him to go away & return to his ancestral camp – that is the spot where the churinga with which he is associated was deposited in the Alcheringa. He may subsequently enter the body of another woman & so undergo reincarnation.

I see that Mr Lang is anxious that you should adopt the term “sex-kobong” in lieu of ‘sex-totem’. I trust that you will do no such thing. The term ‘kobong’ is only of very local application & is the native name for what we call totem in a limited area only of Western Australia where no such thing, so far as we yet know, as a sex-totem occurs.

With all deference to Mr Lang I don't see what harm is done by using the term sex totem so long as it is understood that it is only of limited, local application.

I do not see also how the idea associated with the word totem can be defined except in very general terms as a special relationship of some kind or another existing between an individual or group of individuals & some particular animal or animals, plant or plants. If we are going to define in anything like a precise way what is the nature of the relationship then it seems to me that we shall have to very much restrict, so far as we are concerned in Australia, the use of the word totem & invent new terms. The contrast between the totems of two tribes in Central Australia is striking, in regard to features which I gather that Mr Lang would look upon as fundamental. In the one the totem is never eaten & it regulates marriage, in the other it is eaten & has nothing whatever to do with marriage.+

Apologizing once for troubling you with such a long letter believe me

Yours sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

+ and yet a man belonging to a particular totem in one tribe & going into the other is at once & without any remark regarded as belonging to the same totem in the new tribe.

Frazer 4

[The University of Melbourne]

Nov 14 1897

My dear Sir,

Very many thanks for your great kindness in regard to the publication of the work of Mr Gillen & myself. I had no idea that you would interest yourself to this extent & can only assure you that we are very grateful to you. My next mail I will communicate as you suggest with Mr G. Macmillan & will send him an outline of the work & some of the photos. which will give him an idea of the illustrations without which we do not care to publish. I am a little afraid that the lack of European or in fact any dress may cause difficulty but hope not.

I am fully ware as you point out of the great advantage of securing such a leading publisher and also of the fact that any author is by no means the best judge of his work & if Messrs Macmillan do not think it worth while to publish as we desire I am venturing to ask if you would be kind enough to decide for us whether we shall publish on any terms so far as illustrations etc are concerned which they may offer. Any decision to which you come we shall cordially approve of.

At this distance from home it is very difficult to make arrangements & I trust that you will excuse the liberty which I have taken in asking them to refer the matter to your decision.

A few weeks ago I came across a pamphlet published in N.S.W. and written by a certain Mr Squires in which he records a ceremony amongst Australian natives of northern N.S.W. or Queensland in which as a kind of sacred festival the novitiates partake of the flesh of a man. As Mr. Squires describes the latter as being “of high caste and without blemish” I am much inclined to think that Mr Squires has been the victim of some imaginative blackfellow who saw that the amount of tobacco ahead was proportionate to the amount of interesting information which he could conjure up. I wrote to Mr Squires asking for further information but he has

gone to S. Africa & my letter is now in pursuit of him & will probably never be answered. The mischief of it is that statements like this find their way into print & are repeated so often that people take them as true.

By the time that this reaches you I hope to have our work done & a type-written copy ready to send. It has been written twice but we have such a mass of odds & ends of facts none of which I like to leave out as they may be of value sometime or to someone else in his work, that I find it very difficult to fit everything into its proper place.

If you think that we have any facts likely to be of service to you in any of your work I hope that you will send us questions which we will, if possible, gladly answer. There is one point which we have recently found in connection with the Intichiuma ceremonies (those held to increase the numbers of the animal or plant which gives its name to the totem) which will I think interest you. At a celebrated spot called Undiarra (The Antiarra of Dr. Stirlings account in the Horn vol) is a rocky ledge on which at Intichiuma the men of the kangaroo totem bleed themselves. The natives say that this ledge represents the body of a great kangaroo of the 'Alcheringa' & that after it had been deposited here great numbers of other kangaroos (animals not kangaroo men) came to this spot & went into the ground their spirits remaining in the stone. The blood is poured over the stone for the purpose of driving there [sic] spirits out in all directions the result being an increase of kangaroos. Within a few yards of this stone is the waterhole which is inhabited by the spirits of Kangaroo men. Just as the latter can go into women so the kangaroo-animal spirits can go into kangaroos.

This I think gives us the clue to the meaning of the Intichiuma ceremonies.

I send one or two more copies of our abstract published in the Vict. R.S. in case the other did not reach you, & thanking you again for your kindness believe me

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 5

Melbourne

Dec. 6. 97

Dear Mr Frazer,

I send herewith a copy of a letter sent by today's mail to Mr George Macmillan in which as you will see I have asked him to send the typescript of our work on to you if he does not care to publish it. The great difficulty will probably lie in regard to the illustrations. Certain parts of it are uninteresting but we do not like to omit more than has been omitted, as it is the detailed account which I think adds to the value. As I said before if you would be so good as to decide on our behalf whether to accept or not any proposal that is made we will cordially & entirely accept your decision.

There are two other subjects on which I wanted also to write to you. The first is the publication of a work by W.E. Roth called "Notes on the North-west-central Australian Aborigines" pub. by the Queensland Government & just issued. I thought that perhaps this might contain something of interest to you & might escape your notice.

Roth, who is an old Oxford man of my own standing, has worked apparently in complete ignorance of anything which has been done by anyone else. He has a long vocabulary & important chapters on organisation and gesture language. He has invented names of his own for the various 'classes' & relationship terms & has given there in greater detail than has yet been done & must have worked very hard & conscientiously. Mr Gillen & myself have gone into the same detail & we know what the work means. Curiously he makes no reference to totems as such though they clearly exist. The rest of his work dealing with ceremonies shows that he has not been fully admitted to all their 'sacred' matter though he evidently thinks that he has.

The second matter is concerned with a further clearing up of the significance of certain ceremonies concerned with the totems in the Arunta. From the account of the Intichiuma ceremony – that is the ceremony designed to increase the number of the totemic animals – in the Kangaroo totem of one special locality I think that we get the clue to the general meaning of these ceremonies. At a place called Undiarra the great local centre of the totem is a cave with a large rocky ledge on which at Intichiuma the men of the totem bleed themselves. This ledge of rock is the Nanja stone of a big kangaroo (an animal not a man) which in the Alcheringa was killed by kangaroo-men & the rock arose to mark the place where the body was deposited.

The rock was inhabited by the spirit of the kangaroo animal & to this spot tradition says that large numbers of kangaroo animals came & went into the earth their spirit parts remaining in the rock. The object of the Intichiuma ceremony is to drive these spirit kangaroo animals out of the rock whence they are supposed to scatter in all directions & after that the kangaroos increase in number. In other words the 'spirits' of the animals go out & enter kangaroos.

Close by the rock is the water hole which is inhabited by the spirits of kangaroo men who went down into it just as the animals did into the ~~the~~ rock.

I am busy making a type written copy for the press & by the time that this reaches you it will be on its way home & once more I trust that you will excuse the liberty which I have taken in asking you to be kind enough to act on our behalf.

I am sorry to say that Mr Fison seems to be very far from well. Yesterday he told me taht he was 'just walking about until the undertaker's charges came down' & I am afraid that he is very il at all events he is very different from what he used to be & we are anxious about him.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 6

[Trinity College  
Cambridge.]

13 January 1898

My dear Sir

I am much obliged by your letter of November 14th. It is a great satisfaction to me to have helped towards securing a publisher for the joint work of yourself and Mr. Gillen. I feel sure that it will prove to be one of the most valuable contributions ever made to our knowledge of savage life, and I think I have succeeded in impressing this upon the Messrs Macmillan. They are ready, I gather, to give you a perfectly free hand in regard to the text, and I am glad to hear that you are putting everything into it. We cannot say of science as of law that it de minimis non curat. The details that in themselves seem most trivial and unimportant may turn out on a comparison with other facts to be of the utmost and far-reaching importance. In regard to illustrations Mr. Macmillan says, naturally, that he cannot decide till he has seen them, but I trust there will be no difficulty about publishing most if not all of them. I will send him those which you sent me as specimens. You may be sure that I shall do all I can to induce him to publish all of them or, failing that, as many as possible. Even if he should refuse to publish all, I still think that it would be well worth your while to publish with him. The illustrations that were left out might perhaps in that case be published in an anthropological journal, say the Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie, with a short explanatory text in English. If you approve of this I would endeavour to carry it out, though I hope there will be no need for it. It would be much better to publish everything in a single volume. I much appreciate your kind confidence in leaving the negotiations with Messrs Macmillan to a certain extent (especially as regards illustrations) in my hands, and I will try to do the best for the book I can, as if it were my own. If you like I shall be happy to read proofs of it. The delay caused by sending proofs to you in Australia would be serious. As the book is, I understand, to be type-written, and the type-written copy will doubtless be carefully revised by you or Mr. Gillen, it would hardly be necessary for you to see it in proof. For the same reason it would be perfectly easy for me to read the proofs; I should only have to see that the printer reproduced your ms exactly. I should of course abstain from modifying or adding to your work in any form. My business would simply be to correct any mistakes made by the printer which had escaped the Reader ~~or~~ and possibly here and there to correct a slip of the type-writer which had escaped your vigilance. I should not regard the time so spent as wasted even from the most selfish point of view, as I have no doubt it will well repay me to master your monograph thoroughly.

I am much interested in the description you send me of the ceremony of blood-pouring for the purpose of multiplying kangaroos. I should like to know whether for the purpose of multiplying totem-animals or game the natives resort to any pantomime of sexual intercourse. I am beginning to be struck with the evidence that in agricultural communities a sympathetic connexion is supposed to exist between the intercourse of the sexes and the productivity of the ground, the former being supposed to have a direct effect in forwarding the latter. This suggests that in tribes that live by hunting similar means may be taken to ensure a good supply of game. If I remember right (I have not the book beside me) one gathers from



Gason's work on the Dieri that a good deal of this sort of thing is practised among that tribe. Have you met with any ceremonies of this sort?

Another subject in which I am interested at present is the treatment of homicide, whether the killing has been done in war or in private quarrel. Is there in any case a purification of the slayer? Is there any notion that he is pursued by the ghost of the slain and has to dodge or appease him? Is there any sort of sanctuary where homicides can seek refuge and be safe? And if there are, what is the idea at the root of such sanctuaries? Why is the homicide safe there and why may not the avengers of blood pursue him there? Is the homicide safe only so long as he stays in the sanctuary? Or if he once enters it can he come out again clear of guilt and snap his fingers at the avenger of blood? This used to be the case with some Californian tribes, but I don't see the meaning of the custom. Sanctuaries for homicides are found in many other parts of the world (West Africa, and Kafiristan in the Hindoo Koosh) for example) and I should like to discuss their origin.

Does eating together constitute a bond of friendship among your savages? and if so, how long does the bond last? as long as the food is supposed to be in the stomach? or how long? In this convention the use occasionally of fasting or purges may be of interest. It might, e.g., be thought necessary to clear the stomach of food in one way or another before proceeding to hostilities with a person or tribe with whom one had been on friendly terms and with whom one had partaken of food. On the other hand to renew the bond it might be necessary to renew the ceremony of eating together. Are the Australians careful about the remains of their food, believing that they could be injured by magic ceremonies performed on the remains? This bread is obviously only another side of the belief in the sympathetic connexion between persons who have eaten together, the idea in the latter case being that no one would injure a man with whom he had eaten (at least while the food was in his stomach), since any injury done to him would be equivalent to an injury done to himself.

Thank you for the additional copies of the abstract published in the Victoria R.S.

yours very truly

J.G. Frazer

Frazer 7

Melbourne

March 5 /98

My dear Sir,

I have once more to thank you for your kindness & only hope that in the end you will you will [sic] 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 & map 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 & lastly because of the index. This is the most serious obstacle. If Messrs 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 page of the ms. indicated and all there 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 have 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 illustrations 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 [degrees] in the shade that it has been rather hard work to write continuously and there has been such piles of notes of various dates with corrections & recorections 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 Howitt & 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 Howitt & 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 unmistakeable form of it actually exists in one of our tribes.

Now as to some of your queries:

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.

Among 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 homicide: 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 first of all strike each man's shield; if it gives out a solid sound all is 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 all is well because then the latter knows 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 these tribes 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 neighbourhood of there may be touched: any arrival such as a wallaby or kangaroo which goes there is 'tabu' so long as it remains in its neighbourhood. Once during the Engwura 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 [sic] further. Might not the origin of a sanctuary arise from some such idea as this that no blood should be shed near the sacred objects & then at a later time might not the idea grow 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 friendship. The nearest approach to this was a ceremony in which some natives were returning to another group churinga 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 Gillen 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 clippings 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 who must on no account see a man's food. If I am out hunting & am bringing 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 securing 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 Grey'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 among various tribes.

I trust that sometime 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 Gillen will 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 committee of expurgation.

I am glad to say that Fison is much better again. He & Mr Howitt 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 a work entitled "The Eagle & the Crow". 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 crow does.

If any thing 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 to us believe me

Yours very seriously  
W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 8

[The University of Melbourne]

Ap. 5 1898

My dear Mr Frazer,

You will I think be hearing from Mr Macmillan before long with regard to our work. The ms. went home to him three weeks ago though the last pages only left last mail – or rather a few odd drawings & an appendix containing a series of anthropometric measurements. Dr Tylor has very kindly also been in communication with Mr Macmillan and with two such advocates I am in hopes that the publishers will not be altogether alarmed at the illustrations asked for. They seem a great many but some of them will be very inexpensive & I have really been as moderate as possible. The photos. have been chosen out of a large series & are fairly representative ones.

There are just a few which, if some have to come out, must not be amongst the lost ones. These are (1) the men on the fire (2) the men with painted backs (3) the Kurdaitcha & (4) the Illapurinja woman.

To make the work complete we have had to insert at the end a long chapter on the implements & so forth. This necessitates, if it is to be intelligible a considerable number of illustrations and I do not well see how it can be left out but as far as possible illustrations in this might be sacrificed rather than those concerned with ceremonies.

However we will gladly leave the matter in your hands & I trust that you will not have much cause for trouble.

I am not quite sure as to how far we have done right in leaving out references to the work of other people beyond those who have dealt with the Central tribes. When I came to go over it such references would have been almost interminable and as our object has been to simply describe the customs & organisation of the tribes I determined finally to not to refer except in rare cases to similar customs etc. amongst other tribes of Australia & elsewhere.

There is however one reference which I intended to add but have not done so & I should be glad if you would kindly do so if you decide that you feel able to read the proofs. It refers to Dr Codrington's 'Melanesians' & I have written it on a separate sheet: it will come as a footnote on the 21st page of the chapter on totems in reference to an account given thereon of how a woman heard a [insert] spirit [end insert] child crying 'mia"mia' (mother, mother) & entering the woman was subsequently born in human form.

I have just been reading the ms. of a short work written by Miss Howitt (daughter of Mr A.w. Howitt) on the "Legends of Folk-lore of some Victorian tribes". It is really a valuable & delightful little work written in a most pleasant way & containing much that will interest you. The account of magic and medicine men is especially good. The Legends are like those of Mrs Langloh Parker but while this part of Miss Howitt's work is, I think, quite equal to that of the former, she has a second part detailing what is known with regard to the customs of the

Victorian tribes amongst whom Mr. Howitt lived. Mr Fison is very much interested in & pleased with it and we are hoping to see it published before very long.

Believe me

Yours very seriously

W. Baldwin Spencer

Footnote to be added as reference on 21st page of Chapter dealing with Totems

In connection with this, reference may be made to the following sentence in Dr. Codrington's "Melanesians," Oxford, 1891, p. 154. "Sometimes a woman would hear a Nopitu say 'Mother, I am coming to you', and she would feel the spirit entering into her, and it would be born afterwards as an ordinary child."

Frazer 9

13 Guest Road

Cambridge

5 May 1898

My dear Sir

I have to thank you for your very interesting letter of March 8th.

On considering the matter and consulting with Messrs Macmillan we came to the conclusion that in the interest of the book it would be best that proofs of it should be read by Mr. Gillen and yourself. I felt that with my ignorance of the native language, not to speak of the botany, zoology &c of the country, I might often be quite incompetent to detect mistakes which had slipped [sic] into the type-written copy and had escaped your eye. My decisions on such matters might oftener be wrong than right, and the result might sometimes be disastrous. It would be a thousand pities if what promises to be a most valuable book were disfigured by blemishes of this sort. Moreover it is very possible that in going over the book in type the authors might wish to make changes in the form or substance, which no outsider could make and which they themselves would be precluded from making if they did not see proofs. For these reasons I think, and Mr. Macmillan entirely concurs, that, after all, the delay caused by sending out proofs to you will be more than compensated by the assurance thus gained that the book will appear in exactly the form which the authors would wish it to have. I think you will agree with us in this. At the same time I thank you heartily for the high mark of confidence you have given me by expressing your willingness to accept my offer of relieving you of all responsibility in the matter, as well as your willingness to acquiesce in any arrangement I might come to with Messrs. Macmillan for the publication of the book, I trust that you will find the terms of the agreement satisfactory. They are very usual terms – all expense and risk to be undertaken by the publishers and the profits to be divided equally between publishers and authors. They are the terms on which my own books are published by Macmillan. Acting on Macmillan suggestion I ventured to sign the agreement on your behalf. I hope I did not exceed my delegated powers by doing so. A copy of the agreement has, I understand, been sent to you. If you and Mr. Gillen sign it, the copy signed by me can be torn up.

I have asked that duplicate proofs of the book may be sent to me. I have read the first set with interest and forward them to you with a few trifling suggestions. Thank you very much for your permission to use your materials. It is quite possible that in reading your book I may meet with some facts which I should like to incorporate in the new edition of the Golden Bough which I hope to bring out before the end of the year. I understand from you that I may, of course with full acknowledgement and reference to your forthcoming work, cite from your book any facts that seem appropriate to my purpose. My book may possibly be out before yours, but I doubt it, I have some months (I expect) of reading before me before I begin to revise and add to the text of the first edition, and after that there will be the printing. So the chances are, I think, that your book will be out before mine. Still even if mine came out first I don't think that references [insert] in it [end insert] to your forthcoming book would injure the sale of your volume.

So much for business, except that Macmillan write me that they expect to be able to give all the illustrations you want.

Very many thanks for your most interesting answers to my questions. I hope to send Mr. Gillen some questions on Totemism before long, but I have such a pressure of work of various kinds just now that I can't put them together just now. I am writing to catch the mail. When does he leave his present post?

I rejoice to hear that Mr. Fison's health has improved. I had been concerned to hear of his illness. Please remember me very kindly to him when you see him. I have been wishing to write to him for long, but never seem to have time to do so.

The dedication of your joint book to Fison and Howitt is a compliment which they well deserve.

Yours very truly

J.G. Frazer

Frazer 10

[The University of Melbourne]

June 8 1898

My dear Sir,

The proof & your letter have just come in time to write a ~~month~~ line by the mail just going out. Mr Macmillan wrote & told me the arrangements which you had made on our behalf & as he asked me to send home the agreement signed by Mr Gillen & myself this will be done but at the same time we are perfectly satisfied with any arrangement which you may make on our behalf, an [sic] most grateful to you for your kindness. I need hardly say how great an advantage to us it is to have your notes on the proof & Mr Macmillan tells me that you have arranged to pass the 'revise'. I cannot think how you can spare time to do all this and am in hopes that perhaps in some of the later chapters you may find here & there an odd fact which may be of service to you. The first two or three chapters at any rate & especially the one on the classificatory systems are very dull reading & the latter I do not see how to make more simple or more easily understandable.

Do you think that it would be advisable to have a glossary at the end containing short explanations of the native terms used such as, for example, "Chilara – a head band worn by men" etc.

We shall be only too glad for you to use any information in any way that you like whether the book be published or not: Mr Gillen will not be leaving the Centre for some time yet and will be delighted to try & get any information in reply to queries

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 11

Melbourne

June 30. 98

My dear Sir,

By last week's mail I sent home up to the end of Col. 80 of corrected proof embodying therein your corrections. With regard to italics I have followed your suggestion in most cases with the result that almost but not quite all native terms are thus printed. The principle exceptions are Churinga, Alcheringa & Alatunja: these occur so often that I thought the reader would soon become accustomed to their use. When there is a special term such as Churinga nanja then I have put that in ital. Also when such a term as Nanja is used as substantive then it is spelt with a Cap. But when as a qualifying term then with a small letter.

I have a great dislike to seeing a page disfigured by breaks in the type & therefore did not suggest ital. to any great extent in the ms. but now that it is in print I see that you are right. As far as possible I have, on the proof, replaced native by English terms. Gillen & myself have become so used to using native terms that we forget that they have no definite meaning to the average reader: I had or rather thought that I had, used them as little as possible but you will find fewer of them on the 'revise' than on the original proof.

In the 'Classificatory' chapters we are obliged to use them to a large extent but as very few people will read these & as it is essential to use them here, there is no choice left to us.

Throughout the work I have used native terms of relationship wherever they occur to use such terms as Father, mother, brother etc is most misleading.

There are a considerable number of corrections in the Classificatory chapters but in reading the revise I think that you can, unless any words have to be added, trust to the reader of the proofs in Messrs Macmillan or the printer's department.

With the number of corrections which have had to be made I am afraid that the reading of the revise will give you much more trouble than I had any idea it would & you may even think it better to have it sent out here: the corrections are however such as can easily be checked by the 'reader' in the office & if you can really spare time to go over it, all that I think you need to do is to check the additions to the text most of which are in the form of foot-notes.

There are certain parts which I rather wish now had been treated of at greater length but to us this would have meant a general discussion of such subjects as the totem in Australian tribes

and as our work was supposed to be simply an account of certain tribes & as it already occupied as much space as I thought any publisher would be likely to allow us I purposely refrained from general discussions but there are many parts which are far from what I wish they were & I should like to be able to sit down & re-write much of it.

In correcting the 'revise' if you can really spare the time to do this I hope that you will alter anything of which you do not approve as I need hardly say that we shall be grateful for any emendations which you may think to be advisable: but if you cannot spare the time and I can hardly realize that you will be able to do so then I trust that you will not hesitate to decline: we are already grateful to you for your help.

Yours very seriously  
W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 12  
Trinity College  
Cambridge  
13 July 1898  
My dear Sir

Your letter of June 8th. has reached me. I am happy and proud to be in any small way helpful in bringing to the birth (I mean in securing the publication of) such a very valuable work as the joint work of yourself and Mr. Gillen. I feel that all that I can do is little indeed, but I do it with all my heart. Works such as yours (I wish there were more of them than there are), recording a phase of human history which before long will have past away, will have a permanent value so long as men exist on earth and take an interest in their own past. Books like mine, merely speculative, will be superseded sooner or later (the sooner the better for the sake of truth) by better inductions based on fuller knowledge; books like yours, containing records of observation, can never be superseded. I congratulated Mr. Gillen and yourself on having done a splendid piece of work. The labour involved in the collection of all the facts embodied in your book must have been immense. And the presentation of them is excellent. So far as I can see, they could not have been put more lucidly than you have put them. The style is simple, clear, and flowing, without anything superfluous or redundant, just in fact what the style of such a book should be. You are most well advised in eschewing comparisons. Nothing (short of gross inaccuracy) is apt to spoil a work of descriptive ethnology so much as an attempt to combine the description with comparisons. Descriptive and comparative ethnology should be kept most rigidly apart; to try to combine both is to spoil both. I think that all the finest descriptions of individual races that one possesses are wholly free from the comparative element and are written (as they should be) just as if the writer were unaware of the existence of any race but the one he is describing. Similarly the [insert] descriptive [end insert] writer should absolutely ignore the speculations of comparative ethnology. You are entirely right in doing so; the one exception to this rule which you have made (that of referring to the controversy between MacLennan and Morgan) could hardly have been avoided, and I think you have been judicious in making this exception to your very wise rule of avoiding comparisons.

I shall be glad to pass the 'revises' in your stead. You will have seen from the proofs I have sent you that my corrections are extremely slight and wholly (I think) verbal or literal. You need not fear that I shall make any radical alterations in the revise. An author's text, in all that concerns the matter, I regard as almost sacred, and your book is so well written that even in the form of it there is very little indeed that I should wish to see altered. So you may, I hope, rely on the conservatism of my revision. Probably the changes, if any, will hardly amount to more than the correction of printer's errors.

Your proposal to add a glossary of the native words used in the book is excellent and should by all means be carried out. The number of native words used, though probably inevitable, is rather a stumbling block to the English reader, and this would be to some extent removed by a glossary. The glossary should be complete, embracing even words of constant and familiar recurrence like Churinga.

I am glad Mr. Gillen is not leaving Central Australia for some time yet. I shall hope to send him out some more questions when I have time. With very kind regards to him and you and to my other Australian friends Fison and Howitt (when I think of you all I feel inclined to say Bravo Australia! I wish the other colonies would only go and do likewise) I am

Yours very sincerely  
J.G. Frazer

Frazer 13  
[Rowmore House  
Garelochhead N.B.]  
26 August 1898

Dear Sir

I send you by this mail the last batch of first proofs. Your letter of June 30th. has reached me. In passing the "revises" for the press (which I very willingly undertake to do) I will attend to your directions as to the use of italics for the great majority of natives words (apart, of course, from proper names). My attention will chiefly be given to seeing that your corrections made ~~the~~ in the first proofs are embodied in the 'revises' and that the additions are correctly printed. I will also take it on myself to correct any slight verbal slips that may have escaped you, as well as to mark any printer's errors that the reader may have overlooked. To judge from the first batch of revises that has reached me, along with your corrected [insert] first [end insert] proofs, I do not anticipate that the work of passing the book for the press will be heavy or will demand more time than I can spare. You may rely, I hope, on the caution and discretion with which I will use the powers you entrust to me. In cases of doubt I shall prefer to leave the word or words unaltered.

You say there are some general questions which you would like to have treated at greater length. I am not sure that it ~~would be~~ [insert] be [end insert] advisable to mix up the discussion of general questions with the account of particular tribes. Indeed I incline to think that the usefulness and value of books like yours is rather impaired by the importation of general theories and discussions. What we want in such books and what you and Mr. Gillen have given us is a clear and precise statement of facts (as far as they have been ascertained) concerning the particular people described – that and nothing else. All general theories should, in my opinion, be reserved for treatment in separate works dealing exclusively with general questions by the method of comparison and induction. In other words the purely descriptive side of anthropology should, in my judgment, be kept entirely separate from the comparative and theoretical side. One of the great merits of your book, or it seems to me and as I have already said in a letter, is that you have recognised the importance of this distinction and have rigidly excluded comparisons and speculations. But there is no reason why you should not discuss such general questions as Australian totemism, marriage systems, religion &c. Such discussions by authorities so competent as yourself and Mr. Gillen would, I feel sure, be of the highest value and interest. Only they might, in my opinion, to be reserved for another work? Do think of it seriously. Could you not cooperate with Fison and Howitt to produce a general work on the Australian aborigines? If you do not see your way to writing another book, you might publish the results of your enquiries in a series of papers contributed, say, to the Journal of the Anthropol. Inst. which already contains so many valuable papers by Howitt on these subjects.

Would you not add vocabularies and concise sketches of the grammars of the various dialects of the Central tribes to your present book? It would enhance the value of the work, especially to philologists.

Yours very truly  
J.G. Frazer

Frazer 14  
Melbourne  
Aug 30. 98  
My dear Sir,

I have to thank you for your letter of July 13th.

After correcting the proofs I had begun to think that before offering the work to the public it ought really to be re-written but your more than kind letter has given me a good deal of comfort.

As regards native terms you will find a good many of these are struck out. I only wish now that they had been struck out in the original as it would have given you much less trouble on the revise the correcting of which will I fear be the most tedious work. By this week's mail I have sent home a glossary of Native terms used.

In regard to comparisons with the customs etc of other tribes I have made a mistake which I trust it is not too late to remedy. After thinking over the matter I decided to add a reference to some customs in North American tribes & appended to the proof of col. 152 a slip as a foot

note. After the proof had gone home I felt that this was a mistake & have written to Mr Macmillan asking for the footnote written on the slip to be omitted. If it should come to you on the revise will you please strike it out. It refers to a work in the 16th- 14th annual publication of the Bureau of Ethnology dealing with the snake dance of N. Am tribes in which reference is made to dances, sacred poles, 'sweat-houses' & sacred drawings which are strikingly suggestive in regard to certain of the Engwura ceremonies in our tribes but reference to which is out of place in our work.

Please feel quite free to make any corrections which you think should be made in the revise as I need hardly say that we shall fully agree to any omission or correction which you may think it advisable to make.

Mr Howitt is hard at work on a general account of the organisation of Australian tribes & I hope that before long it will be ready for the press. The difficulty in Australia is that those of us who are interested in Ethnological work have so much else to do that we can only devote to it our only too short leisure hours. Most of the men – Gillen is really the notable exception – who live amongst the natives have neither the inclination nor the ability to study them.

However before the Australian aborigine is civilized out of existence I hope that we may be able to [insert] secure [end insert] better records of him than we have of, at least, the Tasmanian.

Yours very sincerely  
W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 15

[Rowmore House

Garelochhead N.B.]

Please address to Trinity College

Cambridge

15 September 1898

My dear Sir, In going through the second proofs of your book I have been more than ever struck by your account of the Intichiuma ceremonies. Such ceremonies for the multiplication of the totem plant or animal have not been (so far as I know) reported from any other part of the world, and taken in conjunction with other facts that you mention seem to set totemism in an entirely new light, at least so far as the Central Australian tribes are concerned. It almost looks as if among these tribes totemism were a system expressly devised for the purpose of procuring a plentiful supply of everything that the savage regards as desirable – food, water, sunshine, wood &c. The means of attaining this desirable end appears (if I may pursue hypothetically the line of thought suggested by the facts) to have been to take all the desirable things in nature and distribute them among the people, each group of people to whom a special [insert] a particular class of [end insert] objects was assigned being especially charged with securing the multiplication of that particular object or rather species. One group of people had to see that kangaroos abounded, another that grubs were plentiful &c. and the method in each case adopted to secure the multiplication of the species was the identification of the human group with the species of animals or plants &c assigned to them. The people who had to multiply kangaroos must themselves be kangaroos &c. because by being so they would know all the secrets of the kangaroos, how they multiply, how they may be caught &c. For of course the ultimate object of the whole system (on this hypothesis) is to catch and eat the kangaroos, emus, grubs &c.; it is not a purely disinterested desire to secure the flourishing of plant and animal life on a large scale. Hence the duty of Kangaroo man is not merely to see that there are plenty of kangaroo; he has also to catch and kill, or at least to help others to catch and kill them. In the Arunta tribe originally, to judge by the traditions, a man was quite free to kill and eat the animal with the multiplication of which he was specially charged. (his totem); and if the theory of totemism which I am developing hypothetically should turn out to be of general application, we may suppose that among many tribes there never was any objection to a man catching, killing, and eating his totem. But among many tribes a feeling against killing and eating the totem (I mean of course only a man's own totem) may either have been felt from the outset or may have gradually sprung up, and the train of thought which led to the taboo on killing and eating a man's own totem may have been something like this. "I am, e.g., a Kangaroo man, and I want to make as many Kangaroos come and be eaten as I can. Now if I eat-th kill and eat them myself, the Kangaroos will regard me with fear and distrust as a dangerous creature, not as a genuine kangaroo at all. I must therefore be very kind and gentle to my brothers and sisters the Kangaroos. I must



never injure them myself, and then I shall be able to induce them to come quietly and confidently to be injured (in fact to be killed and eaten) by my fellow tribesmen. it is a pity certainly that I am debarred from eating roast kangaroo while my fellows are feasting on it; but then they make it up to me in other way ways. The grub men bring me grubs to eat which they may not touch themselves; the Emu men bring me emus &c &c. And if occasionally I take a bit or two at a joint of Kangaroo when no kangaroo is looking, no great harm will be done, especially if I take care not to eat the best of the flesh, but only the inferior parts. Indeed in order to be (as I am) a real kangaroo, it is necessary that I should occasionally eat kangaroo; for unless I have real kangaroo flesh and blood in me, how could I be a Kangaroo? I should be only a sham kangaroo, and that would never do. The other Kangaroos would know at once that I was an imposter and not one of them would come near me when I wanted to catch them."

What do you think of this as a hypothesis to explain totemism as it is among your tribes? The general line of conduct assumed – the conciliation of animals with a view to more easily catching and killing them – is closely analogous to that pursued by hunting tribes towards animals which they live by but which are not their totems (Golden Bough, II, p. 110 sqq.) The difference between the two systems is this, that whereas among the Aruntas the propitiation of the animals is limited to one group, the totem group (who in general may not kill & eat the animal) among the hunting tribes referred to in my book the propitiation is practised by everyone, and no one is debarred from killing & eating the animal, provided he goes through the necessary form of conciliating the dead animal and his kindred. The ceremonial eating of the totem by the men of the totem, as described by you in connection with the ~~totem~~ Intichiuma ceremonies, seems to me a true totem sacrament (the first well authenticated example of such a sacrament that has come to light I believe), the object of which is to identify the man with his totem by imparting to him the life & qualities of the totem animal. In order to test this hypothetical explanation of totemism among your tribes enquiries must be made in several directions. Particularly it must be ascertained whether all the totems without exception are things regarded by the natives as desirable. Of course if every totem group practises ceremonies for the multiplication of the totem species this would amount to an answer in the affirmative; for the natives would not seek to multiply things which they did not think desirable. Hence any instances of undoubtedly undesirable totems or of totems in connection with which Intichiuma ceremonies were never practised would militate against my theory. Do you know of any such instances? (When I say 'you', you will understand that throughout I am addressing yourself and your colleague Mr. Gillen jointly). Then when a kangaroo man, e.g., eats of a kangaroo on other occasions than at the sacrament, does he take any precautions against being caught by a kangaroo in the act? does he eat secretly or with his head covered? does he dispose of the bones and other remnants in any special way so as to conceal the deed from the other animals or to secure the resurrection of the defunct beast?

If there is anything in this theory, it is clearly of the greatest importance to secure as many examples as possible of Kangaroo men helping men of other totems to catch and kill kangaroos &c. You quote at least one case of this, but to establish the theory firmly many more would be needed, and if possible from other parts of the world where totemism is practised. I would suggest that enquiries in this direction should be made all over Australia. A difficulty now occurs to me in the way of accepting this theory as a general explanation of totemism (though the difficulty does not apply to the Arunta tribe) is this: Why are men and women of the same totem so commonly forbidden to marry or even have sexual intercourse [insert] with each other [end insert]? On the hypothesis that totemism exists for the multiplication of the totem plants and animals, it would seem to be most natural that a kangaroo man should mate with a kangaroo woman, and that by their union the number of real kangaroos should, by sympathetic magic, be supposed to be increased. I can only state this difficulty without solving it. Anyhow if my new theory of totemism (it may have occurred to you independently) is correct, it seems to follow that the original and fundamental side of totemism is the religious, not the social; in other words, it is the superstitious relation of the man to his totem animal or plant that is the original element of totemism; the social element (the prohibition to marry a woman of the same totem) has been tacked on to it subsequently and not in all cases. The absence of the exogamous rule among the Aruntas is a further argument in favour of the same view.

If you think there is anything in the theory I have sketched, I should be glad if you would submit it for criticism to my friends Fison and Howitt, as well as of course to your colleague

Mr. Gillen. Any remarks you or they might make on it would be carefully and respectfully considered by me. If you were to give it a general or provisional approval, I might state it briefly and tentatively in the new edition of the Golden Bough which I have in hand. How far the new theory is consistent with the one propounded by me in the first edition of my book (viz. that a man keeps his life or part of it in the totem animal) is a matter for consideration. The two are not obviously contradictory of each other. The identification of a man with his totem, which is ~~only~~ a part of the new theory, was the main part of the old one.

At a meeting of the Anthropological Institute in May, Tylor proposed a theory of totemism based partly on some facts mentioned by Codrington in his *Melanesians* and partly on your evidence as to the way in which a man's totem is determined among the Arunta. He has probably sent you a proof of his paper, but I may ~~he~~ say that his explanation is briefly this – the souls of ancestors animate the totem animals or plants and therefore these animals or plants are sacred to their descendants. There is certainly something to be said for this theory (which occurred to me independently as a consequence of reading your evidence). It is not necessarily inconsistent either with my old or my new theory; it might quite well be combined with both. It might be that the group charged with the multiplication of a particular species of animal or plant kept their spirits (or one set of their spirits) in the animals or plants during their lifetime, and transmigrated into them at death with the whole of their spiritual baggage, part of which had been retained in their human bodies during their lives.

Tylor, to whom second proofs of your book have been sent by mistake, has proposed to Macmillan and me that the part of the book dealing with the Intichiuma ceremonies from p. 180 onwards should be abridged by the omission of what he called "tedious and disagreeable details." This proposal I absolutely refused to entertain, and that on two grounds. First, I have no authority from you to make any such change, my duty being limited strictly to seeing the book through the press; and I pointed out to him that if I were to exercise such an authority without your leave expressly given, you would have just ground of complaint against me. Second, I said that even if you had given me the fullest authority to excise and compress, I would not have exercised it in the present case, as I regard the chapter to which Tylor takes exception as of the utmost importance, indeed as the most valuable in the book. I added that what we want is not less but far more details of the same sort, and that I was about to write to you asking you to prosecute enquiry on these lines. I hope that you and Mr. Gillen will approve of my action on the matter. If Tylor thought compression desirable, why did he not say so in the first proof which he sent out to you (I suppose) with his corrections and suggestions? You and Mr. Gillen would then have been able to do your own compression, if you had thought it desirable, which I fervently trust you would not. Nothing in the book, in my opinion, can be spared. You need not fear any compression or squeezing or mutilation of your book so long as I am charged with seeing it through the press. If anything of that sort is to be done, it will be done over my dead body.

Yours very truly  
J.G. Frazer

Frazer 16  
Professor W. Baldwin Spencer  
The University  
Melbourne  
Victoria  
Australia  
Rowmore House, Garelochhead  
21 Sept. 1898

Dear Sir,

I am glad to inform you that on reconsideration Prof. Tylor agrees with me in thinking that in the circumstances the idea of compressing or abridging your book by the omission of some details cannot be entertained. Macmillan also entirely approves of my refusal (which was absolute) to accede to the proposal. So all is right. As you will have gathered from my letter, far from wishing the book shortened, I should like to see it lengthened by the addition of more materials, if you have them.

Yours sincerely  
J.G. Frazer

Frazer 17

[The University of Melbourne]

Oct 6. 1898

My dear Sir,

I have to thank you for your letter of August 26th accompanying the last batch of proofs.

By now you will probably have been through a considerable portion of the "revises" and I trust that you have not found the work much heavier than you anticipated. The relationship chapter & tables would I fear be rather trying.

Quite forgetting that I had not received this last batch of proofs from you I sent my copy home the result is that I did not alter the sentence which you very correctly describe as clumsily & cumbrous" I enclose herewith a slip hoping that you may be able to make the correction on the "revise".

With regard to the appendix on names I had merely added a reference to the secret names thinking that this would be sufficient as they & the relationship terms etc had already been explained in the body of the work but to make the matter clearer I have written more fully & enclose slips A1, A2, A3 to take the place of the letter-press above the table. I hope that this also will be in time.

It is possible that I may be able to save you the trouble of correcting the final 'revises' that is the part relating to the end of the book unless it is being pushed through rapidly, as circumstances have arisen which make it necessary for me to run home for three or four weeks. I hope to be in London on Dec 3rd or 4th & shall leave again on Dec 28th. Up till a few days ago I had not made arrangements had I known earlier it would have been possible by delaying matters somewhat to save you all the tedious work of correcting the "revises".

Anyhow I hope to have the pleasure of running up to Cambridge to see you & to thank you personally for your kindness to us & I only wish that it were possible to bring Howitt & Fison with me.

With regard to the vocabularies & grammar. In the first place I know very little personally of the language having had to reply upon Mr Gillen for this. There has been already published a vocabulary & grammar of the Arunta tribe though it could be extended with advantage. Gillen can talk to the natives & understand them, but though I have pressed him to work carefully at a grammar he is evidently rather frightened at the task which is a most difficult one. If I can only get up into the centre again for some time we shall set to work but meanwhile to publish what we have would, with numerous small changes in the vocabulary due to local variations, be simply publishing what is already in print.

Would you kindly send me a line to c/o Professor G.B. Howes, Royal College of Science, South Kensington telling me when I should be likely to find you in Cambridge. My time will be very fully occupied and it will be vacation with you but I should very much like to run up to Cambridge for a day when I am in London, so as to see you.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 18

Melbourne

Oct 19. 98

My dear Sir,

I have just received your deeply interesting letter of Sept. 18th referring to the totems and will try and write about this next week and meanwhile will see Howitt & Fison & discuss matters with them. As I leave Melbourne in a fortnight and am in the midst of Exam. papers my time is rather limited just now & I only write a few lines to thank you for the firm stand which you have taken with regard to the non-compression of the chapter dealing with the Intichiuma ceremonies. It appeared to me that this was the most valuable and important chapter in the book: my only regret was that we could not supply more detail as every scrap of information relating to the subject would have been put in. In writing to Gillen last mail I impressed upon him the urgency of securing further information with regard to the use of Churinga such as is mentioned in the case of the Kangaroo man who charmed a Churinga so as to enable a man of another totem to secure kangaroo. From the point of view of a correct understanding of the totems this appeared to me to be of considerable value and I hope that we may be able to supplement it by similar evidence in regard to other totems.

Dr Tylor has not said anything to us about the matter in fact I have not heard at all from him or received any proofs except the first four sheets sent through Macmillans but with no alterations suggested and I had begun to think that he was not reading the proofs at all.

We feel perfectly safe in your hands and if there be any changes which you think it desirable to make I can only once more repeat that we shall fully agree with whatever you do.

The one part where I thought that compression might have been desirable was in the chapter dealing with the 'wanderings' the details of which are decidedly tedious but on the other hand one can never feel sure that an apparently trivial fact may not be of service to some other worker & in addition the very minuteness of the details seemed to be of interest & importance for the proper understanding of the mental condition of a typical savage tribe like the Arunta. These & the traditions associated with the Churinga & their former possessors seem to carry us back towards the very beginnings of anything like a historical record & from this point of view I thought it advisable to place them on record.

I notice that your last letter is addressed from Scotland & it has only just struck me that possibly the revision of the proofs may have been interfering with your long vacation plans which I sincerely hope has not been the case.

Yours very sincerely  
W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 19  
Melbourne  
Oct 20/ 98  
My dear Sir,

I have not yet been able to see Howitt & Fison with regard to your theory of totemism and am just jotting down a few remarks which may be added to after I have talked matters over with them. You will of course understand that my remarks are limited to Australian tribes & more especially to those of the centre. In the first place these appear to differ in regard to their totemic systems from those hitherto described but I am inclined to think that closer search will reveal the existence of ceremonies similar to the Intichiuma of the Arunta in many other tribes in which they have not yet been described & in which the social side of the totemic system is much more strongly developed than it is in our tribes. In the Dieri & Urapunna tribes for example though we have not full details yet we have undoubted evidence of such ceremonies and in these tribes totems regulate marriage. Such ceremonies are I fancy characteristic of the tribes occupying the interior of the continent & probably extending along the head of the Bight. We have as yet no evidence of any such in the E. & S.E. coastal tribes and except in the northern parts it is too late to search for them.

In thinking over the totem question I have been coming more & more to the conclusion that the religious aspect of the totem is the more ancient & that the [insert] now existing [end insert] social aspect has been tacked on at a later period and, so far as our Central tribes are concerned, your theory that each group of people are [insert] originally [end insert] charged with the duty of securing the multiplication of the particular object the name of which it bears appears to me to fit in admirably with the facts.

In many of the Central tribes (Arunta, Ilpirra, Warramunga etc) the ~~soeie~~ religious aspect is developed almost to the exclusion of the social while in others (Dieri, Urapunna etc) the social is more strongly developed but at the same time the presence of intichiuma ceremonies indicate the existence of a religious aspect which is moreover identical in nature with that of the Arunta etc system.

A rough map of Australia is perhaps rather instructive in connection with this. [Handdrawn map of Australia annotated 'unknown' 'R' 'R&S' [S.' '?'] The dotted outline with R. indicates the area occupied by tribes amongst whom the religious aspect is predominant R&S indicates that the tribes have the same religious aspect associated with the totems but that the social (as indicated by the totems regulating marriage) is also well developed while S indicates that the social aspect is the predominant one. It is also worth noting that, on the large area in the centre where conditions of life is more precarious in the matter of food & water supply, the religious aspect predominates whilst it is least marked in the area which is well wooded & watered & where the food supply is more constant. This serves to indicate, so far as Australia is concerned, a relationship between food supply and the development of the religious aspect of the totemic system at the present day.

The traditions of the Arunta seem to point very closely to the former existence of a social arrangement the leading feature of which was that men of one totem had marital relations with women of the same totem and the explicit account of the introduction of the present social organisation may perhaps be regarded as strong evidence in favour of the supposition that the latter is of comparatively recent introduction as compared with the totems. It seems

most natural for a savage to reason that in just the same way in which a kangaroo animal, for example, mates with another kangaroo so a kangaroo man should mate with a kangaroo woman & so increase the number of those who in their turn could increase the numbers of kangaroo animals. If we could only get far enough back we might possibly find that this was the normal system. The division of the tribe into two moieties almost certainly took place long after the time at which the totemic system was established though here I am rather opposed to Howitt & Fison who have been inclined to call these larger divisions of the tribe "major totems" and to look upon the totem groups (kangaroo, emu etc) as resulting from the divisions of two primary moieties – Eagle hawk & crow for example. This is a most knotty point & I may simply be prejudiced by the traditions of the central tribes. In the latter it is most difficult to understand the traditions except on the supposition that they do actually refer to a past time when social arrangements were very different from those which now exist. If we grant that the division into what we call classes & subclass took place when there was a well developed totemic system and that this division was deliberately introduced so as to regulate marriage – and there is no doubt but that such [insert] arrangements [end insert] are every now & again deliberately thought out and introduced – then the new arrangement must have resulted in (1) placing all the members of one totemic group in one of the new large divisions or (2) in each of the new large divisions comprising indiscriminately the members of various totems. As this division of the tribe had for its one object the regulating of marriage it would follow that in (1) as in perhaps the majority of Australian tribes a man of one totem must marry a women of another while in (2) such was not of necessity the case (Arunta etc). When once in the case of (1) this train of reasoning had been followed up for some time it is not perhaps difficult to imagine that it would lead finally to the restriction of men of one totem marrying only the women of another special totem and thus the social aspect of the totems would once more become emphasized. There is the further question of why in some cases the child should follow the father's & in others the mother's class (or sub-class) & totem but this is perhaps a matter of secondary importance so far as the totem is concerned as a savage is quite capable of realizing the fact that ~~that~~ (if descent be [insert] for example [end insert] counted in the female line) its comes to the same thing in the end from the point of view of the group, which is the only thing with which he is concerned, whether his own or his sisters' children belong to his group.

The question of killing ones own totem is a most difficult one. A possible explanation of the matter seems to me to be along the following lines, and here again I am influenced largely by Arunta traditions. In early times amongst savage men cannibalism was the normal condition and during this period also the men of one totem eat freely of the latter and not only this but [insert] they [end insert] had a first right to their totem the eating of which was a functional necessity with them if they were to be so closely identified with it as to be able to perform ceremonies to increase its numbers. When cannibalism began to die out (as apparently it has done in the case of the C.A. tribes) the first thing that perhaps naturally took place was that men of one totem ceased to eat human beings of the same totem – that is those whom they imagined to be most closely allied to them: the eating of human beings being then restricted to members of other groups & finally to enemies or members of other tribes. From human beings the idea was carried over to animals and then a man of one totem ceased to eat animals of his own totem though as it was essential for him to be identified in some close way with his totem, as he still had to perform ceremonies to secure its increase, it was necessary for him to every now and then eat a small portion and this was done at a time when the totem was most abundant & had apparently, by its increase in numbers, become as it were revived.

I find a difficulty in regard to your suggested train of thought which may have led to the taboo on killing & eating a man's own totem in that the general line of conduct assumed is the conciliation of animals with a view to more easily catching and killing them. Whilst, as shown in the case of the kangaroo churinga, a man of one totem has evidently some special power over his totemic animal yet I can see, in our tribes, no evidence of any feeling of conciliation – a man has a special power and this he can hand over to a friend. The two fundamental points seem to be (1) [insert] and much the most important [end insert] that a man has the power of increasing his totem & (2) though it must be remembered that as yet we have only one bit of evidence for this, a man has some special power in regard to catching his own totem. Again you say # "It is a pity certainly that I am debarred from eating roast kangaroo while my fellows are feasting on it; but they make it up to me in other ways. The grub men bring me grubs to eat which they may not eat themselves etc". Now this is hardly the case. When I, a kangaroo

man, have made kangaroos plentiful I catch one eat a little and hand the rest over to other men. In the same way ~~I catch grubs~~ grub men catch a few grubs (on one special occasion only) and give me a few but there is no such general thing as a grub man catching grubs for a kangaroo man to eat or vice versa. I think that we have to regard as the main point of the totem the power to produce increase of the same and it is possible (apart from the explanation suggested above in regard to cannibalism) that not eating plentifully of the totem is in some way associated with the idea that too much eating of the totemic animal will make the latter regard me with fear and distrust and will consequently ~~not~~ have an effect, not so much of preventing my being "able to induce them to come quietly and confidently to be injured (in fact to be killed and eaten) by any fellow tribesman", as of producing an estrangement between myself & my totemic animal the result of which will be that I no longer possess the influence over them by means of which I can secure their increase. In regard to this point it is at least suggestive that the natives believe that to eat too freely of the totem would deprive them of the power of successfully performing intichiuma (the object of which is simply the increase of the totem without any regard to the catching and killing of the same) in exactly the same way in which not eating at all would deprive them of the power.

With regard to Dr Tylor's theory that the souls of ancestors animate the totem animals or plants and that therefore these animals or plants are sacred to their descendants (of which I have not heard anything save in your letter) – I do not really see any support for this in the system of the Central tribes. Amongst these while animals & plants changed into men there is no idea of the soul of an ancestor ever passing at death into an animal or plant indeed the tradition, so far as they are worth anything, are quite opposed to any such idea. The one important point is that the spirit, when the ancestor died, became resident in a Churinga which it never left until it went into a woman & was thus reincarnated. The present idea is that in the far past there was no very great difference between say a kangaroo & a kangaroo man but there is no tradition or idea of any kind that, either now or ever, a man keeps or kept his life or spirit or any part of it in his totem animal or plant. On the other hand the ancestors were clearly supposed to keep, or rather when they chose to do so to place for safe keeping, their spirit part in a churinga.

There appears to me to be one great point of difference between the killing of the animals in the Arunta tribe and that of the killing of bears, elephants etc in connection with which the ceremony of conciliation of the animal is carried out is that in the former case there is no idea whatever that the animal killed can actually hurt the killer. When an African native kills an elephant has the conciliation anything whatever to do with totemism or is it simply an idea that the animal when dead has a spirit part which will avenge itself upon the destroyer & as the animal is when alive able to hurt a man so will its spirit be able to when it is dead. Then ceremonies of conciliation do not seem to me to have anything to do with totemism of necessity.

Excuse the disjointedness of the above notes: they have been written at intervals during examinations which are keeping me very busy at present. I hope to be in England with a few days of this reaching you.

Yours very sincerely  
W. Baldwin Spencer

I am very glad to hear that Dr. Tylor has relented. Your card saying this has just come.

Frazer 20  
13 Guest Road  
Cambridge  
21st November 1898  
My dear Sir

I was very glad to learn by your letter of October 6th that you are so soon to be in England, and I look forward with much interest and pleasure to making your personal acquaintance and discussing some of the problems of anthropology, particularly the origin of totemism, with you. On this last point (the origin of totemism) your book seems to throw fresh and important light. Towards the end of August I wrote a letter to you in which I stated in outline a new explanation of totemism based on the facts collected by Mr. Gillen and yourself. Perhaps the letter did not reach you before your departure for England. In any case I hope to discuss the theory fully with you. It would give my wife and myself great pleasure if you could spend a couple of days or so with us in Cambridge. Except for December 6th we have at present no engagement for the time of your stay in England, so that any time (except Dec. 6th) which

might suit you would be quite convenient to us. There might be some advantage in coming early in the month, as I should like you to meet my friend Dr. Henry Jackson of Trinity, who is much interested in these subjects and who will probably be leaving Cambridge for the Christmas vacation somewhere about December 10th. As your time is so limited and you will probably have much to do in it, you might perhaps find it most convenient to come from a Saturday to a Monday, as Sunday is not a day on which much business can be done in London. But please name your own time. We shall be delighted to see you at any time, if you can put up with very simple accommodation, which is all that we can offer in our little house. If you preferred it, I could easily get you rooms in College for as long as you cared to stay, and in any case I would suggest that you should dine with me in hall while you are here. In that way you would have a better opportunity of meeting various men whom you might wish to see, for our tiny parlour is hardly adapted to dinner parties.

I have now corrected all the revises, but have directed the printers to print off nothing more till your arrival, beyond what was printed off before I knew of your coming to England. How far the book is printed off I cannot say, as clean sheets have not been sent to me. The Glossary I have not corrected, and hardly need to do so now, as you will be here so soon. The only liberty of any moment I have allowed myself in dealing with the revises has been that of transposing a few of the illustrations into what seemed more suitable places. Some of them had no connexion with the context in which they were placed (so at least it seemed to me), but a close connexion with other passages, to which accordingly I made bold to shift them. But the number of such transpositions is small, perhaps a dozen or so in all. I trust the changes will be approved or at least not disapproved by you.

Hoping to see you soon, I am  
yours very sincerely

J.G. Frazer

I have told the printers to keep all my corrected revises, and I am myself keeping all your corrected first proofs. By comparing them with the book as printed off you will see exactly the extent of the corrections made by me in the revises.

Frazer 21  
13 Guest Road  
Cambridge  
28 November 1898  
My dear Sir

Your very interesting letter of October 20th. reached me last evening. Though I hope to discuss the matter of it with you personally very soon I will make one or two remarks on it now. But first of all I write to ask whether it would suit your plans to stay with us in Cambridge from Saturday Dec. 10th to Monday Dec. 12th? It would give my wife and myself if much pleasure if you would do so. My friend Dr. Henry Jackson, whom I am anxious that you should meet, leaves Cambridge for the vacation on the 12th., but he is disengaged on the 10th. and 11th. and would greatly like to meet you. I should also like you to meet my friend Prof. Ridgeway, a man of remarkable ability who is much interested in these matters. I know how much occupied your time will be, but I trust that you will be able to spare two days at Cambridge. If the 10th. suits you, pray come at any hour that may be most convenient to you. I will put myself at your disposal during your stay. I hope that you will at least arrive in time for dinner at [insert] in [end insert] hall at 7.45, but if you could come a few hours earlier so much the better.

Since I have read your letter it seems to me most desirable that you should publish your views on the origin of totemism, in a more or less provisional form, as soon as you conveniently can, if possible during your stay in England. I would suggest~~ion~~ that the publication should take the form of ~~either~~ a letter to [insert] Nature or [end insert] the Athenaeum or [insert] of [end insert] a paper read before the Anthropological Institute. For the latter a special meeting of [insert] the Institute [end insert] would have to be called and the only practical day for it would seem to be the 13th. December. I am going to write to Mr. Fr. Galton to see if he could arrange for such a meeting. Your time will be so short that I think it would save you time and trouble if the arrangements were made at once. They can easily be countermanded if on consideration you would prefer not to state your ~~theory~~ [insert] views [end insert] to the Anthropological either because they are not yet definite enough or for any other reason. The reason why I venture to urge you to publish at once is this. The facts which you have collected seem to offer a plausible, perhaps probable, explanation of the origin and

meaning of totemism – an origin and meaning such as no one had hitherto dreamed of. The inference from your facts seems so easy and obvious (though both Tylor and Lang – to whom at his desire Macmillan sent proofs – have failed to see it) that I can hardly but think that on the publication of your book, the solution of the mystery which has puzzled anthropologists so long will occur to thoughtful persons, who will hasten to publish their discovery if you have not already done so. You will have observed from my letter of Sept. 18th that I was working towards a conclusion in some respects agreeing with what I take to be your own, and since writing that letter and reading a second time more carefully your account of the Arunta traditions I have reached independently and have stated as an hypothesis to various friends (including Jackson and Ridgeway) a theory of the origin of [insert] exogamy [end insert] of the totem clans which is precisely identical with the one described in your letter. Now what has occurred to me may well occur to many others, and it would be a great pity (it seems to me) if the honour of first publicly stating what is probably the true explanation of the origin of totemism should fall to any one but its true discoverer, I mean yourself. For these reasons I hope you will consent to publish at least an abstract of your conclusions as to the origin and meaning of totemism without delay.

From what I have said you will see that I agree with you (as against Fison and Howitt) in inclining to think that the religious side of totemism is the fundamental and original one, and that a fully developed system of totem clans or groups probably existed before there was any idea of exogamy. We have only to assume that a community consisting of a number of totem groups decided to bisect itself with two exogamous divisions and to put one half the totem groups in one division and the other half in the other division – and at once we have the exogamy of the Kahem [sic] clans. The same principle of bisection progressively carried out would split the community into exogamous quarters first and eighths afterwards, such as we find in so many Australian tribes, which would carry with it a narrowing of the number of the totem clans into which ~~any~~ any one man or woman might marry, such [insert] a narrowing or restriction [end insert] as again we meet with in Australia and elsewhere. The progressive bisection of a community with exogamous halves, quarters &c. may be regarded not as a mere hypothesis, but as a well attested fact established by Australian and American evidence. In Melanesia, as you doubtless remember, the division has almost everywhere remained stationary, after the first bisection – there are [insert] in general in Melanesia [end insert] only two exogamous divisions, and totem clans are practically non-existent or present only in germ; so that this principle of bisection into exogamous divisions appear to be quite independent of totemism. All this points to totemism having existed at first as a purely religious (or as I should now prefer to say magical) system, and exogamy having been afterwards, as you say, tacked on to it more or less accidentally. Thus totemism may quite well exist (and probably in some places has always continued to exist) without exogamy; and conversely where we find exogamy by itself we are not justified in assuming that there ever was totemism. In short totemism and exogamy are two entirely distinct things that may and have existed quite independent of each other.

So far I think we are agreed. It is when we come to the reason for not killing the totem animal that I am inclined to dissent from you. You suggest that the taboo was originally on eating men of the same totem and was afterwards by analogy extended to eating the totem animal. To this I object that many Australian tribes continue to eat their relations as a mark of affection after they have given up eating their enemies. See my Totemism, p. 79 sq. To the examples there given I ~~can~~ could now add others. Indeed I am not sure but that it might be plausibly maintained that the eating of dead relations is the last (not as you assume the first) side of cannibalism to be given up. Indeed Your theory would obviously be upset if any of the many Australian tribes who eat their dead relations do at the same time refrain from eating their totems. I have not yet investigated the cases, but I fancy that it would not be difficult to find cases contradictory of your theory. What is the rule of descent in the Dieri? Gason misled me about it, and I have not Howitt's correction (in the Journ. Anthr. Inst.) to hand at present. Among the Dieri children regularly eat of their dead mother, and the mother eats of her dead children. If the Dieri have female descent and don't kill their totems, that would seem to be a nail in the coffin of your theory.

As to my own explanation, I meant to suggest that a man refrains from killing and eating his totem animal in order that the animal may not fear and avoid him. I did not suppose that the Australian fears his totem, as the elephant hunter and the bear hunter fear and propitiate the animals they hunt and kill. Nor did I mean to say that wherever you have propitiation of animals killed for food or for other reasons you have totemism. I do not suppose for a moment



that the elephant-hunter or the bear-hunter is, so far forth, a totemist (if I may use that abominable word, which by the by I think you rightly avoid). All I meant was that in the propitiation of animals by the hunters and fishermen who catch and kill the animals they revere you have a train of thought analogous to that which among other or even the same people (for the American Indians e.g. have both totemism & the propitiation of animals) has produced totemism. But certainly my idea was, as you rightly assume, that the abstinence from killing and eating the totem animals in Australia was based on a desire to conciliate the (timid and shy, not fierce and dangerous) animals; and I fully admit the force of your objection that the conciliation of animals is, so far as you know, not practised by the Australians. Indeed I had myself drawn attention to this in my book 'The Golden Bough' (I should like to show you the passage when you come), pointing out that whereas hunters in America employ conciliation to secure the game, the Australians ~~attain~~ seek to attain the same end by sympathetic magic. To prove this last point I referred to Gason's account (in Native Tribes of South Australia) of the magic ceremonies among the Dieri for multiplying the numbers of the game. From this I drew the conclusion that sympathetic magic is a more primitive method of securing a food supply than propitiation. Thus I am greatly pleased that ~~the~~ [insert] one [end insert] result of your researches is to confirm my view on this subject. In fact I am coming more and more to the conclusion that if we define religion as the propitiation of [insert] natural and [end insert] supernatural powers, and magic as the coercion of them, magic has everywhere preceded religion. It is only where men find by experience that they cannot compel the higher powers to comply with their wishes, that they condescend to entreat them. In time, after long ages, they begin to realise that entreaty is also vain, and there they try compulsion again, but this time the compulsion is applied within narrower limits and in a different way from the old magical method. In short religion is replaced by science. The order of evolution, then, of human thought and practice is magic – religion – science. We in this generation live in a transition epoch between religion and science, an epoch which will last of course for many generations to come. It is for those who care for progress to aid the final triumph of science as much as they can in their day.

But this has carried me far away from totemism. I hope we shall talk these matters over when you come. I shall be particularly interested to know what you think of my theory of a magical age ~~everywhere~~ preceding in order of time a religious age, at least in Australia.

My wife and I look forward with pleasure to the visit which we hope you will pay us. If the time I have mentioned (Dec. 10-12) does not suit you, please name any other. All days (except Dec. 6th) are equally convenient to us.

yours very truly  
J.G. Frazer

Frazer 22  
13 Guest Road  
Cambridge  
8th Dec. 1898

My dear Prof. Spencer

We are looking forward with much interest and pleasure to your visit and shall expect you on Saturday afternoon at any hour. We hope that you will be able to stay till Monday, if you can spare the time and can put up with our very simple accommodation. I am very glad to hear from Mr. Rutler that the Council of the Anthropol. Inst. have arranged a meeting for Wednesday next. I hope to take up a contingent from Cambridge to it, and no doubt Tylor will be there. In a note received from him today he expresses his wish to do all he can "to show honour to Spencer." I am writing to Lang too to come. He confessed himself in a fog about the totems of your tribes. I think you will dissipate the fog, at least in good part, on Wednesday next.

May I hope that you will resist any temptations to make engagements for Sunday morning?

That would probably be our best time to discuss various matters connected with your book &c.

yours very truly  
J.G. Frazer

No answer is needed.

Frazer 23  
13 Guest Road  
Cambridge

12 Dec. 1898

My dear Spencer

Here is your letter. Perhaps you could let me have it back on Wednesday evening when we meet. Let me say what a great pleasure your little visit was to me, and how much I enjoyed our talks. I saw Jackson today, and he expressed himself to the same effect.

Don't answer on any account. We shall meet on Wednesday.

Yours very sincerely

J.G. Frazer

Lang seems bursting to know about the new theory of totemism, but has read through your proofs twice without getting any light. When you write to him, perhaps you might enlighten his darkness. Or shall I?

Frazer 24

13 Guest Road

Cambridge

16 Dec. 1898

My dear Spencer

On thinking the matter over I have decided not to expand my notes on totemism into an article for a magazine, but to print them as they stand in the Journal of the Anthrop. Institute at the end of your paper. As the view of totemism put forward in these notes was entirely suggested by your facts (a suspicion of it never having crossed my mind before), I think I ought not to anticipate you in stating the general conclusion which you had drawn from the same facts before me. It will be honour enough for me to be allowed to publish my views simultaneously with yours.

I enclose my paper for you to glance over, if you find time. If you find anything in it to object to, please let me know and I will see if I can alter it. I will omit [insert] or modify [end insert] the argument I drew from the supposed fact of the totem animals not eating each other.

With regard to my old theory of the totem containing the soul or part of the life of the man, I incline to think that though it does not hold true of your tribes at present, it may have done so in the past. If the object of totemism is to control and direct the various departments of nature, it might be thought that this could be best effected by each group of men and women having portions of their life deposited in the totems. This would supply a sympathetic link between the men and the totems and thereby give them power over the latter. The traditions and customs of your tribes in regard to their Churingas and Nurtunjas seem to me to point back to a system of this sort.

Yours very truly,

J.G. Frazer

Frazer 25

13 Guest Road

Cambridge

17 Dec. 1898

My dear Macmillan

Some queries as to the ~~illus~~ list of illustrations in Prof. Spencer's book have been referred to me by the printers. I understood from Prof. Spencer that he had undertaken to pass the list of illustrations and the last chapter for the press. So these questions had better be referred to him. My responsibility with regard to the book is now at an end. I enclose the queried sheets. We had an interesting meeting at the Anthrop. Inst. on Wednesday. Spencer spoke very well and his lantern slides were excellent.

Yours very truly

J.G. Frazer

Frazer 26

13 Guest Road

Cambridge

28 Dec. 1898

My dear Spencer

I would not have bothered you with my telegram last night if I had not thought that you were sailing for Australia today and that it was my last chance to catch you. Write at your convenience.

Talking the matter over with Ridgeway since I wrote to you last I have come to think that there is something to be said for my writing an article on your book in one of the magazines.

1) Our theory of totemism (if you will let me associate myself with you on it) is now published by having been stated at the Anthropological. Any one is now free to discuss it, and possibly some may do so as soon as the book appears. Their version might be a mere travesty of the theory, and it would be a pity if this were to pass uncorrected for months. The Journal of the Anthropol. Inst. may not be out for six months or more. I have reason to think that Jevons (who has an absurd theory as to totemism being a primitive form of monotheism! of all things in the world) was present at the meeting, and as he is down for a paper on ~~totems~~ the religious significance of totemism in the history of religion, to be read before the Folklore Society, he may possibly use what he heard or fancied he heard at the Anthropol. Inst., long before our views are printed in the Journal.

2) In an article in one of the magazines I could speak more at large of the importance of your book, and thus call public attention to it better. The Anthropol. Journal is read only by anthropologists. I have not the least doubt that your book will make its own way on its own merits, but at least no harm could be done by emphasising the merits in a public way and at an early date. Jackson suggested to me independently (before the meeting) that I should write an article for one of the Quarterlies. This would give me more scope, I could touch on other points such as the McLennan – Morgan – Westermarck ~~entirely~~ controversy, but there would be more delay in getting this out than in publishing a shorter paper in one of the monthlies.

What do you think? For some reason I am unwilling to write an article. I am working hard at the new edition of the G.B. and don't wish to be interrupted. Moreover I intend to deal with your evidence not only in the body of my book but also in the [insert] new [end insert] preface, which will probably be of some length, dealing with general questions, particularly the relation of magic to religion. So I am unwilling to pull out any plums that there may be in my book and to put them in a magazine. In short there is something to be said both for writing an article and for not writing it, and I feel undecided. Let me know what you think. If I wrote it I would not commit you to my conjectural explanation of the taboo on eating the totem, to which you may still feel objections on the ground that the Australians show no other trace of conciliating animals. I admit the force of the objection, but don't yet see how the taboo is to be otherwise explained. If you are done with your letter to me (the one I returned to you), could you let me have it back? What you said in it about the Intichiuma ceremonies being specially prominent in the more desert parts of Australia seems important, and in an article (if I wrote one) I might call special attention to this, of course giving you the credit of the observation. I wonder whether I might further state your opinion that group-marriage or sexual community was an essential step in the evolution of human society out of an earlier stage in which pairing and isolation of the pairs were the prominent features, as among the large apes? The idea was quite new to me and struck me a good deal. It would come in very à propos in referring to the Morgan—Westermarck question, but you might very likely prefer to reserve this point to be stated directly by yourself more at large elsewhere.

Forgive me for inflicting this long letter on you when you are so busy.

My wife joins me in very kind regards and in all good wishes for the New Year.

Yours very sincerely

J.G. Frazer

The ms. of Miss Howitt's book has not come yet. I will look at it & write to you about it soon.

Frazer 27

[Paquebot, le Ville de la Ciotat.

nr Suez

Jan 5/98 [sic].

My dear Frazer,

Just a line to enclose the letter which ought to have been returned before.

We have had a real tossing about in the Mediterranean and today in the Canal it was so cold that we are all more or less miserable and enveloped in overcoats and rugs.

I have written to Mr Lang giving him very briefly as I do not feel in letter-writing humour an outline of some of the more important points concerned with the totem hypothesis.

When he sees your paper he will understand it better though I wish I could see the way more clear as to the origin of the non-eating: please let me know when and where you are publishing. Meanwhile I hope the new edition of the G.B. makes good progress.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Frazer & please say, if I omitted to do so before, that in a short time Gillen will be on the track of some native dances.

I will write more when in a more suitable humour.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

A letter from Tylor in which he does not approve of the new hypothesis at all. Also please offer renewed apologies to Dr Jackson to whom I will write from Colombo.

In regard to the idea about not making the totem think that you are desirous of hunting it & thus will lose its confidence & it will not come to you to be killed dont forget that you have to deal with plants just as much as with animals.

W.B.S.

Frazer 28 [NB letter to Andrew Lang referred to above in Frazer 27]

[Paquebot, le Ville de la Ciotat.

nr Suez

Jan 5/98 [sic].

My dear Sir,

I must apologize for having so long delayed to answer your letter with regard to the Scotch stones which seem to bear a certain resemblance to Churinga.

Whether they have really any definite connection with these so far as their meaning is concerned it is of course impossible to say.

As yet while we know of wooden 'whirlers' or 'bull roarers' from all over Australia the stone ones seem to be confined to the central area but probably further work will show that stone ones are found wherever wooden ones shaped like those of the Arunta tribe exist [2 drawings]

The second form (described by Howitt), as used in the Kurnai tribe, is different both in shape and significance. In this case the 'whirler' or 'tundun' is definitely associated with the spirit of Daramulum & a smaller one also with that of the wife of the latter and each individual of the tribe does not possess his own whirler as he (and she) does in the Arunta.

In the latter tribe while the women are told that the noise of the churinga is the voice of Twanyirika the latter is not associated with any special Churinga and the spirit is not supposed to impart any instruction at the time of initiation.

I am inclined to think that the association of particular Churinga with particular individuals, such as we now know exists among the central tribes, will be found to be widely spread over Australia – in fact possibly everywhere except along the Coastal fringe on the East & South East. This of course is mere conjecture but the resemblance in form of the Churinga of all parts of the continent except along this coastal fringe is evidence tending in that direction; but as you can understand it is very difficult to gain information on such 'sacred' matters about which the natives will only speak to me like my colleague Mr Gillen in whom they have implicit trust.

I have asked Mr Macmillan to send you a copy of our book and shall be glad to reply to any queries – that is if I can.

Also I promised Mr Frazer to write to you about a point connected with the totems but had so much to do during my short visit to England that I could not do so.

To put it briefly the main point brought out with regard to the totems is that each totemic group seems to be charged, as its main function, with the duty of increasing the numbers of the object the name of which it bears.

The Intichiuma ceremonies form the most important ~~function~~ feature of the totemic system in the central tribes and what Mr Frazer calls the religious side is strongly developed the social being almost non-existent.

The social aspect, so far as it regulates marriage etc, as found in other tribes, is something which has been tacked on at a later period to a previously existing religious aspect.

The traditions of the Arunta tribe strongly point in this direction and they are all the more interesting and important because they relate to times when the organisation of the tribe was very different from that of the present day so that they are not simply myths which have arisen to explain the organisation of the present day. For example according to these traditions in past times a man appears to have been obliged to belong to a particular totem before he could eat the totemic animal – unless he was a kangaroo he might not eat kangaroo etc. At the present day he will only eat kangaroo at a special sacramental ceremony but he will give permission to other men to eat it and will assist them in catching it.

I am inclined to think that too much stress has been laid on the oft quoted statement of Grey & that deeper search in the tribes with which he dealt would show something more in common with the Central tribes. Have you ever noticed the suggestive statement which /Grey himself makes (in his work on the dialects) that one hypothesis suggested by the members of one or two totems to account for their bearing the totemic name was that they used to feed upon the totem. [insert] WHERE?? [end insert]

If we had never chanced to come across the Intichiuma ceremonies we should have regarded the Central tribes as agreeing with and corroborating Grey's well known statement about the totem not being eaten, or only sparingly, and as a matter of fact it is true but quite misleading and requires to be amplified in view of our knowledge of the meaning of the Intichiuma ceremonies. It is significant also that we have found the latter existing amongst tribes in which the social organisation (as regulated by totems & 'classes') is exactly similar to that of Grey's tribes so that the religious aspect of the totemic system as seen in the Arunta is not a special development peculiar to this & other tribes in the centre.

After reading through our chapters on the totems and Intichiuma ceremonies I think that you will come to the conclusion that we shall have to regard the non-eating of the totem as probably a relatively late development – how it has been brought about is the crux – and that further the religious aspects of the totem is the earlier & the social the later: over a very large area in Australia there is practically no social aspect at all.

I hop I have made myself clear if not please put ambiguity & disjointedness to the account of the Mediterranean which has not been kind to us.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 29

Paquebot, le Ville de la Ciotat.

nr Colombo

Jan 15/99.

My dear Frazer,

I send under separate cover a few remarks on Totemism. Will you kindly glance at them and if you think it worth while please send them on to the Anthropological. You will see that at the end I have said a little about soul transference. It seems to me that there is not really any idea of this amongst our tribes nor do I think there is amongst Australian tribes generally.

The statement of Grey about the Kobong has been so often quoted that I think people have come to think that there is a great deal more known about Australian totems than there really is. Howitt's sex totem may be put on one side: it is only found in a tribe which is probably abnormal in its organisation.

Is there any other statement besides Grey's dealing with the meaning of the totem? It is quite likely that as soon as any worker such as Gason (who was quite incapable of forming any reliable conclusion) found totems existing he at once jumped to the conclusion that they had the significance attributed to them by Grey.

Grey really knew very little indeed about the customs of the natives and when he says that to kill ones totem is forbidden because in doing so one might be killing ones dearest friend it may be only his way of expressing the idea that a man regards his totem as just the same thing as himself. This of course is exactly what our natives say but they do not at all mean that the totem contains the soul of a man.

It is quite true that the soul of an ancestor is associated with a Churinga & that in the olden times men are, at least in one case, said to hang their churinga on the Nurtunja when they went out hunting but it does not seem to me that this at all implies that they had any idea of placing the soul in the totemic animal. In fact when they went out hunting it was usually in search of their totemic animal & with the express idea of catching & eating it which does not look much as if they had any idea of transplanting the soul into the beast.

I think that in a previous note I made some remark about your idea with regard to the pacification of the totemic animal or plant – as connected with the fact that it is no longer eaten freely. I do not see how this can possibly apply in the case of plants where there can be no idea, as there might be in that of animals, that they would become frightened & not come near enough. Then again the killing goes on all the same and it is difficult to see why an animal should object to being killed by a man of its totem and not anyone else.

What seems to me more likely is that the idea is that too freely eating & killing produces an estrangement between the man & his totem so that he loses his influence over it & cannot efficiently perform Intichiuma.

After all though of importance yet the point is a secondary one as the fundamental fact, both in the Alcheringa & now, is that the man must eat his totem.

I am not at all keen about publishing the notes now sent and if you think them in any way unsatisfactory please destroy them & I shall be perfectly satisfied: in fact with only a knowledge of Australian matters I do not know how far it is advisable to put them into print as theorizing is a dangerous matter when ones knowledge is so limited & I am quite content to leave it to one like yourself with a wide knowledge.

By now I hope Macmillan will have sent you a copy of the book which ought by now to be printed off.

He kindly sent me a few incomplete copies but I did not send you one of these because they were incomplete in one or two points.

I don't find it very easy to even think rationally on board a boat and will write further from Melbourne – meanwhile I am having a most enjoyable dose [sic – dose?] of novels & sleep in the midst of lovely seas & skies. With kindest regards to Mrs Frazer

Yours very sincerely  
W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 30  
[Trinity College,  
Cambridge.]  
6 February 1899

My dear Spencer

Your letter from Colombo, with the enclosure, reached me on the 4th. I will of course send on your paper to the Anthropological Institute. It ought certainly to appear in the Journal.

After I got your letter from Marseilles, in which you approved of my proposal to write an article for one of the journals, I offered to the editor of the Fortnightly to write an article on the origin of totemism, explaining to him the circumstances. He accepted the proposal, so I wrote the article and sent it in a week ago. I have not seen it in proof yet. It is practically an expansion of what I said at the Anthropological, but I have so far developed the theory as to include an explanation of sub-totems or pseudo-totems (as Howitt calls them) and a suggested explanation of Roth's taboos on animal food. You will readily see of course that the sub-totems fit in beautifully with our theory. If the object of the system was to control the whole of nature for the good of man, and the totem clans were few in number, it is obvious that each clan would have to undertake the charge of many departments of nature in addition to its own proper totem; these additional departments of nature under the special charge of each totem clan are the sub-totems or multiplex totems, as they might also be called. We may conjecture that Intichiuma ceremonies are practised also in regard to sub-totems. Evidence of this should be looked for also of their practice by Roth's tribes. [insert] We may conjecture that each exogamous division had to perform Intichiuma for all the animals it was forbidden to eat. [end insert] As to the question of soul-transference (a really subordinate matter, as you say) I am inclined to stand by my guns, in spite of your fire. In regard to the legend of the Wild Cat men who hung their churinga on the nurtunja when they went out hunting you say: "It does not seem to me that this at all implies that they had any idea of placing the soul in the totemic animal. In fact when they went out hunting it was usually in search of their totemic animal and with the express idea of catching and eating it, which does not look much as if they had any idea of transferring the soul to the beast." Certainly it does not look much to us as if they could have any such idea, but the matter may have presented itself otherwise to the savage. May he not have thought that by transferring a part of his life, including his will or a part of it, to the animal he could make it come and be killed instead of running away? I take it, this was a sort of primitive mesmerism. And when the savage killed and ate the animal which he had thus mesmerised, he would of course recover, in its flesh and blood, the portion of his own vitality which he had put into the creature, so that he would suffer no harm by his temporary life-transference; on the contrary, he would have procured himself a good dinner. The risk would only arise when the beast was killed and eaten by somebody else. When that other was a friend (a member of the same group or tribe, though not of the same totem) he would have to perform some ceremony for the purpose of restoring the human life or soul in the beast to its proper owner. This may have been in part the intention of the totem sacrament.

and I conjecture that in killing an animal which is known to be a friend's totem the hunter performs a ceremony of some sort for the purpose I have indicated. Look at the remarkable ceremonies with bull roarers &c. performed over dead turtles by the Torres Straits Islanders, among some of whom the turtle is a totem (Haddon, in *Journ. Anthropol. Inst. Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*. VI. p. 150 sq.). Again, a Brazilian tribe performs ceremonies at the killing of all those animals into which the soul of their medicine men transmigrate at death; the ceremonies have for their object to make sure that there is no more life in the animal; none of the animals of this sort may be eaten till the ceremonies have been performed over them. Ask Gillen to make careful enquiries as to what is done by men in killing an animal which is a totem of their friends, though not of their own.

On these lines I have in my paper ~~in~~ [insert] for [end insert] the Fortnightly defended the idea of soul transference as forming the complement of the totem sacrament. The great principle by which the magical influence over the totem is obtained, whether for the purpose of multiplying or of catching and killing or gathering it, is the identification of the man with his totem, and this is effected by a double process, 1) by transferring the life of the animal or plant to the man in the totem sacrament, and 2) by transferring a part of the man's life to the totem by means of the two magical implements, the churinga & the nurtunja.

As to conciliation of the totem by not eating it, you say that this could not apply to plants. I am not sure of that. Some peoples think that plants can be frightened and deceived just like human beings. I have got fresh and striking evidence of this (which will be used in the new edition of my book) from the Malay region. But the Malays have worked out the animistic theory more completely than the Australians, so perhaps we are not justified in attributing similar ideas of ~~at~~ to the latter. This is a point on which we want more evidence before deciding. But the point I made in my original letter to you as well as in my remarks at the Anthropological, namely that animals do not as a rule live upon their kind and hence that an Emu man living on emus would be detected as humbug by the real birds, applies equally to plants, in regard to which I suppose the rule is universal that they do not live upon their kind, and hence that a grass-seed man stuffing himself with grass-seeds convicts himself of imposture. You say: "What seems to me more likely is that the idea is that too freely eating and killing produces an estrangement between the man and his totem so that he loses his influence over it and cannot efficiently perform Intichiuma." This seems to me to be merely saying in a negative form what I have said in positive form. I say, "You must conciliate the totem;" you say "You must not estrange it." What is the difference? How is estrangement avoided except by conciliatory conduct? Change your idea into the positive form, and I think you will find it difficult to distinguish it from mine. What I suppose the totem man to avoid by [insert] not [end insert] eating the totem is precisely an estrangement between himself and the totem and a consequent loss of influence over it, which [insert] / [end insert] is just what you suppose him to avoid by the same conduct. Observe that [insert] / [end insert] the physical union of the man with his totem is promoted by eating the totem; the more of the totem he eats, the more of its substance he will have in him, the more completely therefore will he actually be the totem. The refusal to eat the totem weakens the physical bond between the man and his totem; it must therefore surely be thought to strengthen the mental tie, the bond of good feeling and friendliness; in a word, it must be a measure of conciliation. The difference between us such as it is, seems to be not so much in the idea of conciliation, as in its application, you thinking mainly of its application to the Intichiuma ceremonies [insert] for the multiplication of the animal, [end insert] I thinking mainly of its application to the magical ceremonies for making the animal come and be caught. Probably it applies to both. I have stated the theory in my article so as to cover both. There seems to me to be little or no real difference of opinion between us on this head.

Since I saw you I have been thinking over the exogamy question. The conclusions to which I have been coming are briefly: 1) that the segmentation of a tribe into two exogamous divisions was intended to ~~pr~~ avoid the marriage of brothers with sisters; 2) that the subsequent segmentation of each of these divisions into two [insert] exogamous subdivisions [end insert] with a rule of descent such that children always belong to a different subdivision from their parents and a subdivision moreover into which their parents may not marry, was intended to avoid the marriage of parents with children; ~~and~~ 3) that the subsequent segmentation of each of these four subdivisions into two exogamous sub-divisions was intended to prevent the marriage of grand-parents with [insert] grand- [end insert] children; and 4) that the reason why the rule of exogamy was never applied to the totem class of the Arunta and similar tribes was that if so applied it would not have served the only object which

the rule was intended to effect, namely the prevention of marriages between brothers and sisters and between ascendants and descendants. I had thought of writing an article on exogamy setting out these conclusions and showing the thorough weakness of McLennan's theory when tested by Australian facts (absence of [insert] special [end insert] female infanticide, absence of system of capture [insert] of wives, [end insert] absence of permanent state of hostility between the groups). But on looking up Howitt's article 'Further notes on the Australian class system' Journ. Anthrop. Inst. XVIII (1889) to see whether he gave the rules of descent in tribes where eight exogamous subdivisions are found, I saw that he had practically anticipated my conclusions 2) and 3); and as conclusion no. 1) is of course Morgan's, there is no particular need for me to write an article on the subject, and I may content myself at least for the present with stating conclusion 4) in a note to my article on totemism.

I don't know how far you agree with these conclusions. If they are well founded, it seems that the root of the whole system of exogamy is an aversion to marriage between brothers and sisters (as Morgan supposed). Now, what is the savage reason for that aversion? Put Gillen on the track of this. I conjecture that it is some superstition which we have not yet fathomed. If so, the whole marriage system of mankind stands on a shaky foundation, unless it can be proved that the close interbreeding, which the marriage system prevents, has been on the whole a benefit to the race. I understand that biologists are not agreed as to the evil or other effects of close interbreeding. Have you views on the subject?

I hear you are not standing for the Oxford chair. Scientifically speaking, I am glad, though personally I am sorry. Amicus Plato &c., so I am, or ought to be, more glad than sorry. The anthropological work still to be done in Australia is, so far as I can judge, of more importance for the early history of man than anything else that can now be done in the world. So I do not think you will ever regret giving yourself to it, and future generations will rise up and call you blessed! How I wish we could get Howitt relieved of his official work for a year or two in order to give himself to the work of completing and putting together his materials. Can you think of any means of attaining that most desirable object? Would a strongly worded and signed memorial to the Victorian government by the University or scientific societies here at home be likely to have effect? Let me know. I would do all I could to promote such a memorial or anything else likely to secure the object.

I offered Miss Howitt's ms. to Macmillan, but they again refused it. Then I sent it to A. Lang, asking him to use his influence with Longmanns. He did so, but they also declined it. At present I am thinking of offering it to the Cambridge University Press. Jackson, who is on the Press Syndicate, is reading it. At present he thinks it would be better published in the Anthrop. Journal; but I shall probably be able to give you his final opinion (when he has read it all) before I finish this interminable letter. Jackson raised a difficulty; he pointed out that I have no direct authority from the authoress or her father to negotiate for the publication of the book. Probably Tylor has such authority, so I wrote to him a few days ago to ask him whether he has authority, and if so whether he would consent to my offering the book to the University Press. He has not answered yet. I fancy he may be a little sulky about totemism, especially the Intichiuma side of it. I may hear from him before I close this letter.

I have received from Macmillan a copy of the book. Very many thanks for it. It is a very handsome volume, not unworthy of the excellence of the contents. A friend to whom I lent it is reading it with great interest, though he is not an anthropologist at all.

My wife joins me in very kind regards. She thinks it kind of you (as it is) to remember about the dances, where you have so much else to think about. Please give my best regards to Fison and Howitt.

Yours very sincerely,

J.G. Frazer.

P.T.O.

9th. February. No word from Tylor yet. Perhaps he does not intend to answer. Would you be so good as to learn from Miss Howitt or her father what they would wish me to do with the ms.?

Jackson has not finished reading it yet, but seems to adhere to his view that it would be better published in the Anthrop. Journal than in the form of a book. Would Miss Howitt agree to this? Or shall I offer it to the Folklore Society? They might publish it as a volume, or if not as a volume certainly in 'Folklore'. I might also try A. and C. Black, the publishers of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. They published 'Totemism'. I am on good terms with them, but of course I should not like to recommend a volume to them unless it was likely to pay.



Frazer 31

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

Melbourne

July 10. 99

I owe you many apologies for any long silence & even 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 University 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 of W. Australia who takes a great interest in the natives & 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 & envying 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 totem, or rather the 'non-estrangement' 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 present in the man's mind.

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

From what I know of the Australian native I feel sure that the idea of 'reconciliation' which is so clearly seen amongst other saves 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 Intichiuma & 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 as 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 charged 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 Urabunna) 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 restriction) present in some & absent in others surely we are correct in regarding the former as primary & the latter as secondary.

If we take three tribes the Arunta, the ~~Dieri~~ Urabunna & the Dieri, what we find is this.

(1) In the Arunta 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 missionary long resident in the tribe & who is now hard at work) belonging to a series of totem [insert] other than his own [end insert] provided she does not belong to his "class"; in the Urabunna he may only marry a woman of one special totem.

(2) In these tribes the totemic groups all perform Intichiuma. In the Arunta [insert] individuals of [end insert] the same totem are found in each moiety of the tribe: in the Urabunna & 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 Larry's article in the June 'Fortnightly'. I can only describe this as slashing & superficial.

He has a wonderful way of both assuming the main ~~parts~~ points at some & quoting paragraphs which mis-represent 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 counting 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 anthropological 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. Baldwin 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 their 'Magnum opus' & will shortly be sending home some valuable work to the Anthropological.

Frazer 32

Inch-ma-home

Cambridge

4 June 1900

My dear Spencer, How am I to apologise to you for having left your letter so long unanswered? Forgive me if you can. I have no excuse to plead but more or less incessant work and an almost invincible repugnance to writing letters. However, believe me that I was very glad to get your letter expressing your approval of my statement of our joint theory of totemism (or rather of the totemism of the Central Australian tribes) in the Fortnightly. Of course, as we both, I believe, recognise, the theory is merely an attempt to formulate the conclusions to which the new evidence collected by you and Gillen, seems to point. It may be confirmed or upset by later investigations. Some little time ago Fison sent me a letter of yours in which you expressed a wish that the Government would order you to go & work among the tribes who still remain to be examined (whose name, if not legion, is something like it, I fancy) and Fison suggested that we at home should get up a memorial praying the government to send you out to do field work among the niggers. The suggestion seemed to me admirable, and I am acting on it. I drafted memorials (of which I enclose copies) to the Governments of Victoria & South Australia asking them to grant you & Gillen asking them to grant you & Gillen 'leave of absence for a year in order to investigate the tribes of northern Australia. The drafts were approved by Ridgeway and Jackson and we are now having them signed by people whose names are likely to carry weight. At this stage of the proceedings I am seized by a ghastly fear: what if you and Gillen don't want to go after all? Perhaps it was very rash and wrong of me to rush into the matter without consulting you both. If I have done wrong, I can only ask your forgiveness. But I hope I have been right. Had I written to you first, time would have been lost, and when your answers (if favourable) came I might not have been able to move in the matter, as we have let out house and are going abroad for the winter. So I trust all has been for the best, but I would ask you to relieve a certain anxiety which I feel on this point as soon as you conveniently can. What will Mrs. Spencer and Mrs Gillen say to me? My rejoicing is mixed with trembling when I think of them. But it is a grand piece of work we are asking you and Gillen to do, probably the finest piece of anthropological work that could be done in the world just now, and you and he are the very men to do it. If I should have been in any measure instrumental in getting it done by poking up your governments in the matter, it will be the best thing I ever did in my life. As for Fison, I can see him chortling in his joy. I do hope it will come off.

I am hard at work at the new edition of the G.B. which will be twice the size of the old one. It will be out, I hope, sometime about the beginning of winter. Copies will be sent to you, Fison, and Howitt. Please give my kindest remembrances to them and accept the same for yourself. My wife would join in them if she were beside me. Yours very sincerely J.G. Frazer

Frazer 33  
Inch-ma-home  
Cambridge  
27 July 1900

My dear Spencer,

Here are copies of the memorials with the signatures. They have been sent in to the Agents-General of the two Colonies in London, and I have received from one of them (Hon. J.A. Cockburn) an acknowledgement and a promise to recommend the one earnestly to his government. The acknowledgement from your agent (Sir Andrew Clarke) will probably follow soon. I shall be anxious till I hear from the principal persons concerned (you and Gillen) like the scheme. I hope I have not been rash in promoting it. But it seems a great opportunity, and I am in hopes that the plan will succeed, if only you and Gillen are willing to fall in with it. The list of signatures will show you that the work which anthropologists are doing in Australia is not wholly unappreciated at home.

My book is going through the press fast. I hope to have it off my hands by the first of October, when my wife & I intend to leave Cambridge for the winter, which we intend to spend in Switzerland and Italy.

I trust that you are flourishing. My wife joins me in very kind regards to you. We have a very pleasant recollection of your short visit to us.

Yours very sincerely

J.G. Frazer

I will put in a number of copies of the memorials, as you [insert] may [end insert] like to distribute them to friends. In sending copies to Gillen please convey my best compliments and say that I hope he does not regard me as his worst enemy for trying to get him to go on this expedition.

Frazer 34  
Melbourne  
Sept 4. 1900  
My dear Frazer,

Your request to the Vict. government arrived last week & was passed on to the University Council which at once granted me the leave of absence for a year and I am hoping to hear in a day or two that the S.A. government has granted the same to Gillen.

I trust that you will fully understand that we are most grateful to you for the trouble which you have taken. It is impossible to thank the many who signed the petition and all that we can do, if we go, is to show our appreciation by our work. You must not expect too much. I really believe that we shall secure a goodly amount of information but you must remember that we shall be working amongst natives to whom we are at most only known by repute and, in the more remote parts, are quite unknown.

The main difficulty now is the expense. My leave of absence has been granted on the understanding that I provide a substitute at the University. It is remotely possible that the Government of Victoria may provide this if so well & good. The S.A. government will, I think, provide Gillen's. Then there comes the cost of the expedition itself. This I estimate at about £800. We shall of course have to send stores up to various depots and buy horses etc. I am in hopes that through the kindly help of one of my colleagues – Professor Morris – one or two wealthy men here may help us. My substitute at the University will cost me £500 which is about as much as I can stand though if the Government will not defray the other expenses – that is about £800 – I will endeavour to manage it some way or another. However in a week or two I hope to be able to tell you that the difficulty of finance has been overcome.

In the course of a month I hope to run over to S.A. to see Gillen and fix plans up finally. Meanwhile my idea is for us to get to Alice Springs (about 3 weeks from Adelaide) and start off north following up the overland telegraph line as along this we have stations at long intervals which will serve as centres. From there we can work east & west over distances which will depend upon the nature of the season & the whereabouts of the natives. We can follow the line as far north as the Katherine River & then I propose if possible to strike first west into the Daly River district & then south on to the Victoria River.

All of this is very wild tropical country occupied by tribes which ought to yield most valuable results if we can only get to know them.

I feel certain that this will yield better results than working through towards Carpentaria though if time permits we might spend a month or two on the Roper River which runs down into the Gulf. I will write more when our plans are more matured.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Frazer. Also please remember me to Dr Jackson & Professor Ridgeway.

Yours very sincerely  
W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 35  
Hotel Beau-Séjour  
Gersau, Lake of Lucerne  
12 Nov. 1900

My dear Spencer, I am delighted to hear from your telegram and your letter of October 4th (which last has just reached me) that all the arrangements for the expedition are progressing so well. The two governments have behaved well, and Mr Syme's liberal offer seems to show that the Australian public is taking the matter up. The news will be welcome in scientific circles in England, where our appeal to support the petitions met with an even wider response than I had expected. By the same post which brought your letter this morning I received from Dr Hill (Master of Downing College) some extracts from the Australian press referring to the expedition.

I quite understand that you will both be working under much greater difficulties than before, and that it would be unreasonable to expect such full information about the tribes whom you will visit as you obtained about the Central tribes among whom Gillen had resided so long, and whom he knew so intimately. But the introductions you will get from your old friends will doubtless be a great help in securing the confidence of their neighbours, and your knowledge of the customs and ways of thought of the natives will stand you in good stead. I have no doubt the results obtained will be most valuable and will be well worth the exertions and hardships undergone in securing them. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are rendering an immense service to science; this work is probably, without any exception that I can think of, the most important that could be undertaken in anthropology at the present time. It would be impertinent in me to tell you what to look for. You both know that well enough. Everything is important. As you know, even apparently trivial details may turn out to be of great significance. So get everything you can and despise nothing. Remember your conjecture as to the reason of subincision and look out for anything in that direction that may throw light on that and similar mutilations, which all probably hang together. The explanation of one such custom might furnish, or at least lead to, the explanation of all. The connection of initiation ceremonies with puberty, and of both with totemism, are things to be kept in mind. Some of the Americans think that the personal totem, acquired in a dream at puberty, may be the origin of totemism in general. Any evidence of this in Australia?

I hope the new edition of the G.B. may reach you before you start. It should be out next month, and as it contains much fresh matter it might possibly suggest to you some fresh things to look out for. Compared to you and Gillen, I feel shamefully indolent and idle, spending a whole winter away from my work. But the doctor has recommended it for my wife's health, and I brought a good many books with me and hope to get through a fair amount of reading.

We have been six weeks in Switzerland. Tomorrow we start for Rome, where we think of spending the winter. I shall find plenty there to interest me at least, if not to study. But I find mere archaeological remains, even of Greece and Rome, comparatively uninteresting beside the study of human beliefs and customs.

My wife joins me in very kind regards, and with our united best wishes for your success in all respects

I am  
yours very sincerely  
J.G. Frazer

Frazer 36  
Melbourne  
Feb 4. 1901  
My dear Frazer,

Many thanks for your letter. I hope that your Italian trip will do Mrs. Frazer all the good that you desire it may and that you are both very much enjoying it.

Shortly after your letter came the second edition of the G.B. It is simply splendid: very many thanks for your kindness in sending me a copy. I have three solid days at it and have been through it rather rapidly but will shortly have another go at it. The more general parts when you summarize matters – such as the page dealing with magic & religion & the debt we owe to savages – are delightful as is especially the closing paragraph which, despite the criticism of some accurate minded geographer, I am very glad that you have allowed to stand.

The part dealing with Esther & Mordecai & with Jesus & Barabus is intensely interesting. The knowledge that there is some one like you who can piece together the odd fragments of information which isolated workers can acquire is a great stimulant.

You may rest assured that at least Gillen & myself will do our best & will not disregard the smallest trifles.

Amongst other things that I want to investigate further is the question of magic connected with the totems such as the giving a man of another totem a churinga to help him to kill your totemic animal. In addition to this kind of thing there are I believe special forms of magic associated with totems – pointing sticks & bones etc endowed with special properties according to the totem of the man by whom they are made and charmed.

So far as I can see in Australia the personal totem is anything but primitive: it is only met with and that most rarely amongst our most modified coast tribes & is with us a late invention. In early days the group is everything, the individual nothing & I can hardly realize a genuine [insert] early [end insert] savage thinking that he had a personal totem – a something which did not belong to the group. On the other hand when the group totem was established then it is not so difficult to understand how in later days the idea of a personal totem might arise though as I said before it is only very rarely met with in Australia & never so far as I know amongst our thorough going totemistic tribes.

However this is one of the many points which only those who like yourself have a knowledge of the evidence from various quarters of the world decide upon. So far as I can see the Australian evidence is dead against the American theory.

Roth in Queensland is hard at work: he tells me that he has a very large amount of material – enough to make a bigger book than the “Native Tribes”.

Gillen & myself are hoping to work across into Queensland so as to link on the central tribes with those amongst whom Roth has been working. Most unfortunately the present season is a terribly bad one in Central Australia and for more than a thousand miles there is not a drop of water or a blade of grass.

It would be simply foolhardy for us to set out under the present conditions. Our horses could only live for a few days – even camels are out of the question -- & so we have decided to wait for a time in the hope that rains will fall during the next month. If they do not then we shall go north by steamer to Port Darwin & work southwards. This means of course that instead of working from the known to the unknown we are doing the opposite which will be a most serious handicap but as this year is the only one during which I can well be absent from the University & Museum we shall adopt this course rather than not go at all. At present Gillen & myself spend our days in thinking about & our nights in dreaming of droughts & floods & we are both more or less depressed.

Mr Syme has given us £1000 but under present conditions we shall want more. A year in a wild drought-stricken country is rather a serious undertaking. Mr. S. does not see his way to give us more and of course as he has provided the main expense of our trip no one else will now stop in – that is no one else out here. Gillen & I had a serious consultation about expenses last week & I think that it will be all right.

Please excuse so much about ourselves & our work but G. & I have set our hearts upon doing this bit of work & the horrible drought & lack of funds have been giving us ‘fits of the blues’.

However we are going & before this reaches you I have no doubt but that the financial difficulty will be overcome.

After this please write me to the P.O. Port Darwin. When opportunity offers, which will be seldom I will write and let you know how we are getting on.

Meanwhile I feel equal to the slaying of half a dozen Priests of Nemi if only this would ensure rain in Central Australia.

Kindest regards to Mrs Frazer for whom Gillen & myself will try & photograph a good dance but whether it will be fit to reproduce I am rather doubtful.

Yours very sincerely  
W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 37  
Charlotte Waters  
Ap 7. 1901

My dear Frazer,

Just a line to say that we are on our way up north & have already begun work. We left Adelaide March 15th got to the head of the railway line in 3 days, packed up there & started off. We only travel slowly as we are heavily loaded. At the present moment we are 'spelling' for a few days at one of the telegraph stations on the overland line to Port Darwin and have been kept pretty busy with work of one kind and another.

So far as the native are concerned [sic] we have been getting phonographic records of their songs etc and have taken some 30 of these which are all more or less successful and may be of interest & value in years to come.

I have also been working with the Cinematograph photographing some of their dances & sacred ceremonies but cannot tell yet how they will turn out. Of course our real work will not begin till we get north of the Macdonnell Ranges but travelling here is slow & tedious. Our lives are tormented by myriads of flies who make work almost impossible.

Kindest regards to Mrs Frazer who I hope has benefitted much by your tour.

I will write again from Alice Springs when there may be some progress to report

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

We are both in first class health & eager for the fray.

Frazer 38  
Barrow Creek  
Jun 17. 1901

My dear Frazer,

We are now at a station on the overland line working amongst the Kaitish tribe. Fortunately for us the natives have heard all round about our coming up and are coming in to see us which saves us a lot of time & trouble. At the Alice we went over some of our old work. There is no doubt whatever about our account of the totems there or about the fact that the man normally eats sparingly of his 'totem' but must eat at the intichiuma and then really gives the other people permission to eat it. [NB *From this point the text is all underlined in red, other underlining marked here is also marked in black by Spencer*] Here among the Kaitish we find a most interesting (from your recent point of view especially so) state of affairs. The men of the totem not only eat this freely but have the first right to do so. We have a fine old fellow of the grass seed totem in the witness box just now & what is the case with him is thus. He makes intichiuma to cause the grass to grow & seed. Then when it is seeding all sorts of people (different totems) go out & collect it and it is brought to him. He grinds some up eats it, taken some in his mouth & squirts it out all round so as to make it grow plentifully everywhere and then gives the people permission to eat it and goes on always eating it freely himself [*this section double underlined in red*]. If an emu man comes into his (grass seed) country the former gather some but before grinding it up takes it to the grass seed man and says I have been gathering grass seed, I want to eat it. The grass seed man then says "all right you eat it". This same thing exactly so far as the principle is concerned takes place in regard to other totems. This tribe is the exact reverse of those in which the totem is tabu – whether it be the more primitive or not remains to be seen. I fancy that if we could get to the root of the matter in Australia we should find that this is the fundamental idea underlying the totem. I am persuaded that in the tribes described by Grey the men of the Kobong were obliged at times to eat it and had to take charge of it. [*end of red underlining*] We may find interesting developments when we get a hundred miles north of this in the Warramanga tribe. Time is slipping by but we cannot work more quickly than we are doing. Natives are very difficult people to worm reliable information out of and we have to keep working back. Of course we are getting plenty of information on other points but the above is the best bit in regard to totems & is alone worth coming some distance to find out.

Kind regards to Mrs Frazer who I hope is better again. I expect you are hard at work. Please remember me to Dr. Jackson & Prof. Ridgeway.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

I dont know when you will get this: it is going down south 200 miles to the nearest post office.

Frazer 39

I did not much like that article by Lang in wh. he referred to & made much of the supposed anthropomorphic being who sits up aloft & inculcates moral ideas in the young men. He made too much into what Howitt has said & Howitt quite agrees with this. Excuse this writing but I only have one ancient pen

Barrow Creek

July 1. 1901

My dear Frazer

By good chance I have the opportunity of sending you down another line and am anxious to do so because what I told you last time was not quite correct in regard to the eating of the totems here. We thought that we had it all right but found out that when the men told us they eat their totem as they said 'all day' it did not quite mean this. What really happens is as follows. The tribe (Kaitish) is of course divided into two main halves (each subdivided again) and speaking generally the totem groups are divided up between the two main halves

Aa

b

c

d

etc

Be

f

g

h

etc

If A & B are the two main halves & ab...gh etc the totems then what happens is this:-- [NB

*From this point the text is all underlined in red]*

A man say of A kills totem animal f but before eating it he either sends a small portion to the man B & totem f or the whole of it: in either case the man B.f. eats a small portion & gives all of the rest to men of A. This is done ~~all the time~~ at all times & is of daily occurrence. No man will eat ~~anything~~ the totem of another man without first getting his permission to do so. On the other hand if a man say of A & totem a eats too much of his own totem he will be as the natives say "boned" (that is killed by a charmed bone) by men of B. for the simple reason that if he eats too freely of his totem then he will lose the power of performing intichiuma and so of increasing it. [*end of red underlining*] At all intichiuma ceremonies the man of the totem (1) has to perform the ceremony of increasing it & (2) the other men must bring the totemic animal or plant to him before eating it themselves & he (a) just eats a small part & (b) gives them permission to eat it freely.

*From this point the text is all underlined in red]* In many ways this is more interesting than merely eating the totems 'all day' without any restrictions whatever. as it seems very clearly to show that in their minds at present the one idea is that the men of the totem are responsible for its persistence and what we have not had before the other men keep them up to the mark by 'boning' them if they do anything which will impair their capacity for preserving the totemic animal. In the water totem a man unless thirsty and alone is not allowed to help himself to water but has this given to him by certain special individuals. [*end of red underlining*]

Of course we dont want this publishing yet but if it be of service to you you are quite welcome to refer to it but please state that it is still subject to further enquiry though I think after much trouble that we have got to the bottom of it in this tribe. It does not sound much, but you will understand how difficult it is to get at the precise truth with savages. We are getting on very fairly well but wade through endless traditions from here & there a speck of something of real value

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 40

Barrow Creek

July 15 1901

My dear Frazer,

Just a line to report progress. We have had 6 weeks here now working daily amongst the natives and are just on the point of going north for another 160 miles to our next Depot at Tennants Creek when we hope to work the Warramunga & probably also the Waagai tribe. Our results here are decidedly satisfactory – fundamentally of course the customs & beliefs are very similar to those of the Arunta but they will probably form a kind of stepping stone to something different up north & we did not like to go on until we understood them pretty thoroughly which I think that we now do. It is slow work & at times decidedly tedious and monotonous but so long as we got good results we do not mind this. It is becoming more & more evident that we shall be obliged to limit ourselves to work upon a few tribes but I think we can get as far as the Gulf. A thousand miles does not sound very much in England but when one has to travel over country like this it means a good deal as we cannot replace horses if they happen to die. At the present time the climate is heavenly but in another month or six weeks we shall be again in the midst of heat, flies & mosquitos. We are both in first rate health and if we can only keep so & go on at the present rate of work we ought to have a really good record of results by the time we reach the Gulf.

I will let you know later how we got on amongst the Warramunga

Yours very seriously

W. Baldwin Spencer

**For Frazer 41-end see Part 2**

Transcribed by Alison Petch June / July 2015.