

Pitt Rivers Museum ms collections
Spencer papers Box 5 Frazer

See Part 1 for letters Frazer 1 to Frazer 40

Frazer 41

Tennants Creek

Aug 6. 1901

My dear Frazer,

Just another line as there is a chance of sending a mail away from this outlandish and (apart from natives) desperately uninteresting spot. We are at work amongst the Warramunga tribe and are just getting into their ways. By good fortune they are performing a series of intichiuma ceremonies which are decidedly monotonous but will enable us to understand things as nothing else would and they are most friendly and anxious for us to see everything. The totem is quite different here from what I described to you as obtaining in the Kaitish & Unmatchera. The man of the totem apparently never eats his totemic animal or plant and one set of totems belong to one moiety of the tribe and another to the other. At the ceremonies a man of moiety A always paints a man of moiety B & vice versa. Every totemic group of individuals was formed in the Alcheringa as the offspring of the totemic creature or object.

[NB *From this point the text is all underlined in red*] A great wind gave rise to all the wind people: a black snake to the black snakes and so on. These totemic ancestors were not human beings. [*end of red underlining*] Yesterday and today we have been watching ceremonies concerned with burial & the breaking of the arm bones of the dead person. These ceremonies are not yet complete. In ten days we hope to go out with a few of the old men who are most anxious to show us some of their sacred spots and while with them shall probably learn a good deal.

We are simply hard at work from morning till night and I am sure you will be satisfied with our results. We are getting complete photographic records of everything and have already taken some 600 plates as we develop [sic] and print off copies on the spot in case of accident. Probably we shall be here for 6 weeks yet and hope to reach the Gulf about the end of January when deeply interesting though the work is we shall be delighted to turn our faces homewards. I think the anthropologic [sic] institute might appropriately award a vote of thanks to our wives to whom I fear the anxiety & waiting are rather trying.

It is just beginning to 'warm up' again and we shall soon be in the midst of a hot summer.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Frazer: I trust you are both well.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 42

Tennants Creek

Sept 6. 01

My dear Frazer,

We are gradually getting to the end of our work or rather time at Tennants Creek where we have been kept very busy amongst the Warramunga tribe whose customs and beliefs are decidedly different from those of the more southern Central tribes. It has been rather slow work but I think we have now got a fair idea of things.

The tribe is divided into 8 "classes" four ~~beyon~~ belonging to each moiety, one group of 4 forming the Ulu-uru and the other the Kingilli. The individual gets his totem in much the same way as in the Arunta but the 'totemic spots' are more strictly local. That is the totem places of the Ulu-uru when their Alcheringa ancestors went into the ground are on the southern half of the area & those of the Kingilli on the northern.

As a general rule but not by any means absolutely so the son is of the same totem as the father. A persons own totem is tabu so is that of his father & grandfather & that of his mother unless it be given to him by a member of the opposite moiety of the tribe. They always speak of totems as belonging to the Kingilli or Ulu-uru and curiously no totemic ceremony of the Ulu-uru can be performed except with the permission of the Kingilli and vice versa. The Kingilli perform ceremonies to increase the food supply of the Uluuru and again vice versa. When the Kingilli want black snakes to increase for example they ask an Ulu-uru man of the totem to perform and decorate him for the purpose and so on right through. In some cases, but not in all, when the animal puts in its appearance it is collected and brought up to the man who

made the ceremony & he tells the other people to eat it. In all cases his permission is first asked – that is when he performs the ceremony.

In the case of the great majority of totems the originator of the totemic group was an animal of the same name (or plant) who gave rise to what they call “mungai” that is special spots at which he performed ceremonies and brought forth from his body spirit individuals who now go into women & of course give rise to individuals of his totem.

We have got hold of one strange totem that of a mythic water snake which does not exist at the present day. It was of huge size – almost 100 miles long – and the natives are very frightened of it. We have had a long series of ceremonies connected with it: the final object of which was evidently to appease him and keep him quiet in his water holes where he now lives. He threw off any number of spirit children in the Wingara (equivalent of Arunta Alcheringa) and formed a very important totem. Unlike all of the other totems there is no ceremony to cause his increase but the ceremonies which do duty for this purpose in other totems are evidently more or less propitiatory in his case. We had a most interesting series of ceremonies connected with death & burial. They are wonderfully elaborate and as a man died while we were here we have seen every detail & the first burial in a tree – then burial of the bones (save one radius) in an ant hill after smashing up of the skull & the final burial, with a most picturesque & impressive ceremony, of the radius which was smashed in two & placed in a hole by the side of a drawing painted on the ground & connected with the totem. I don't think the drawing need be connected with the mans own totem.

We have got the totemic & class systems of two other tribes here and in about ten days go north but owing to weather conditions & the fear of flood in the far north shall probably do little work until we get to the Gulf district where we hope to form a camp for 3 months on the Macarthur River.

This morning after an all night sitting we finished off a most weird and picturesque fire ceremony which is connected with a kind of primitive form of saturnalia of an interesting description. Old quarrels are finally settled – the men jeer and ~~poke~~ poke fun at one another and no one may take offence at anything said & done – even if a man steals another person's food.

These & many other things we have been at work upon and have also had a trip out east amongst the ranges to visit the sacred spots connected with the mythic water snake. The natives give us no rest and it is all that we can do to keep pace with them.

Kindest regards to Mrs Frazer: I trust that you are both well. We are beginning to look forward to the time when our faces will be turned homewards.

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer

Cant you get Gillen made an Hon. fellow of the Anthropol. Inst. He deserves it if ever any man out here did.

W.B.S.

Frazer 43
Borrooloola
Nov 12.01

My dear Frazer,

At length we have finished our travels by land across this most miserable part of the world. We are now within a few miles of the Gulf settled down in a minute township containing 3 corrugated iron buildings – a public house, a store & a police station – and 3 white men – one in each.

On the way across from the centre we came across two more tribes and got a fair amount out of them and here we have three more tribes. Right through the whole continent – that is from the Arunta in the South to these people in the north – the organisation & customs are fundamentally similar to one another. In every one of them there is the idea of reincarnation & of the origin of the individual originally either according to the Arunta plan or, as in the Warramunga & every tribe through to this place, as a direct offspring of one great originator of the totem who left the spirit children at various spots as he travelled along.

In these tribes here the association with the totem is very close. When a man dies (if he be young and has a good deal of flesh on his bones) he is eaten – I wish I could say by his totemic brethren but such is not the case – by members of the tribe belonging to the moiety to which he does not. Then however his bones are carefully collected and are finally buried in a hollow log which is decorated with the design of his totem. That he is eaten by the other side

of the tribe is apparently on all fours with the Warramunga idea that the one side of the tribe is responsible for feeding the other or rather for performing ceremonies to ensure the increase of the animals & plants on which that moiety feeds. No one here eats his totem. North of the Warramunga we lost sight of intichiuma ceremonies: the old ancestors of the totem are supposed to look after its continuance.

We have gradually got into complete descent in the paternal line. In one tribe there were a fair number of examples of a son not being of the same totem as his father: in the next the son was with a very rare exception of the same totem as his father & always of a totem belonging to his father's moiety and here we have strict paternal descent because the spirit child knows so they say what mother to go into & will not go into a wrong one. If the child be conceived in a wrong locality then the spirit has simply followed up the father from his own locality.

We cannot find a trace of any belief right through these central tribes from Port Augusta in the south to the Gulf in the north of any belief in a being who could be called a deity. There is no mention made during the initiation ceremonies of any such being and the spirit whose voice is heard when the bull roarer sounds is generally only a 'bogey' to frighten the women. The nearest approach to anything of the kind is a custom called Atna-tu amongst, I think, the Kaitish but he is not a deity such as Baiame or Daramulun has been described. I wish we could really get at the bottom of the belief in the latter two: unless the eastern tribes differ very much from these a great deal has been 'read into' the native belief in regard to them.

I rather expected amongst these Gulf tribes to find marked differences as compared to those of the centre but everything is a difference in degree & not in kind and all beliefs & customs shade off into one another right through.

However we have got together a good deal of really interesting material and now have a very fair idea of the series of tribes running right through the centre of the continent from Spencer Gulf up to Carpentaria.

At the present time we are rather stranded in this outlandish place as the steamer which calls here 4 times a year has gone to the bottom and they do not seem to be at all in a hurry to get a new one. It is a most deadly dull monotonously uninteresting spot. Nothing but scattered gum trees and dry yellow grass stalks with just a belt of fair timber bordering the river.

We have hot steamy tropical weather without a trace of any tropical beauty & after this long tramp across the continent without a sight of anything but interminable scrub I am quite longing to see something pretty.

However the natives do not leave us much time to lament the lack of scenery and now I am contemplating how to write up all our work and at the same time manage to get through a year's hard grind of lectures & laboratory work. It will have to be done somehow but the prospect is not altogether pleasant: however when we are out of this steaming weather & general discomfort we shall probably feel more energetic: as it is one gets up in the morning after a restless night feeling much like a jelly fish stranded on a damp beach.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Frazer: I trust you are both in the best of health.

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 44
Melbourne.
June 7.02.

My dear Frazer,

I scarcely know when last I wrote to you but am sure that I ought to have done so before now. Since returning my time has been so fully occupied that I seem to have done nothing except routine work. Four days after reaching Melbourne lectures began and after a year's absence in the wilds of Australia it was rather a serious matter to have to face 80 first year medical students & a few advanced ones & to deliver two sets of lectures with laboratory work which between the junior & senior students occupies most of my time from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. In addition to this I have to superintend matters in the Nat. Hist. Museum so that I hope you will understand that the amount of time which I can devote to ethnologic work is very limited.

I would like to know what you think about Crawley's 'Mystic Rose'. It seems to me that he has 'run amok' on tabu and that he understands nothing whatever about the feelings of the real savage. So far as I know the latter in the person of his Australian representative he has no such idea as Mr Crawley states that he has in regard to any danger accruing to himself as the result of intercourse with an individual of the opposite sex. As a matter of fact the first idea of an Australian native when he meets with a woman out in the bush is most certainly to have

intercourse with her. He has however been brought up under the idea that there are only certain women with whom he may lawfully do so & to a certain extent this guides his conduct but apart from this he has no idea whatever that there is any actual danger attendant upon intercourse. Mr. Crawley seems to me to have no real knowledge of savages & to be a person who has got 'tabu' on the brain with the result that he gathers together every isolated fact which is in favour of his theory & ignores everything else. He makes a statement & repeats it so often that he persuades himself that it is true. His idea of what I think he calls the 'wise providence' of savages in connection with an elder brother marrying an elder sister so that the latter shall be sure to be married made me smile & shows a total lack of understanding this aspect at least of savage life.

There is no such thing as a permanent spinster amongst at any rate Australian savages. From what you say of Mr Roscoe the work of the latter promises to be most important and of the deepest interest in view of Australian work. That twin business is really good & a delightful bit of savage logic. We could find no trace of anything like sexual intercourse in connection with the intichiuma such as Mr Roscoe has in the green locust totem.

Amongst our northern tribes (on the gulf coast) we found traces of intichiuma but they have not in giving up these ceremonies adopted any such plan of praying to or propitiating their ancestors. We could find nothing of this kind amongst them.

I trust that you will not be disappointed with our work. We have nothing so new as in the last work: it is all a kind of elaboration of this. So far as the totems are concerned the most important part of it is that it shows more clearly than before the fact that the members of a totemic group are held responsible by the other groups for the continuous supply of the totemic animal or plant.

I am writing it up as hard as I can but my time is very limited & the last vacation which I hoped to devote to writing has been occupied with a removal which upsets not only ones trend of thought but books & papers and after spending about a fortnight at the top of a ladder arranging curtain poles & pictures I have just settled down to a fresh term's work. I have during the past few nights been endeavouring to write the chapter on Totems & Churinga.

[NB From this point the text is underlined in red] I am persuaded that the most primitive beliefs in Australia are to be found amongst the Central natives – and I think that we met with the really most primitive during our recent work in the Kaitish tribe which curiously inhabits the country right in the very centre of the continent. [end red underlining] In this tribe a stranger coming into ~~any~~ the locality occupied by men of a totem other than his own must first of all ask the permission of the head man of the totem to eat the latter. The men of the totem are responsible for the production of the latter, they themselves, except at Intichiuma, do not eat it but they give it to the other people.

So far as I can see there is no idea amongst our Central Australian tribes of totems into useful & harmful. [sic] I have been wondering why on earth these people perform intichiuma ceremonies for flies & Wollunqua & such things as "laughing boys". They certainly do so. The Wollunqua ceremony stands by itself & is the only example of anything like a propitiatory ceremony which we have come across. It is however something more than propitiatory as the natives believe that they can force the snake to keep quiet and do them no harm.

In the case of the flies the matter is rather different: flies are associated with wet weather and cannot come unless the rain falls & therefor [sic] in performing ceremonies to increase these the native is really endeavouring to secure a good season.

I am inclined to think that in the early days the intichiuma ceremonies were concerned only with material objects which were of service to the natives but that with the development of the totemistic idea this gradually spread until it embraced a variety of objects many of which were of no actual service to the natives. It is a curious feature amongst these tribes that the members of totems named after material objects which are of use as food to the natives are very much more numerous than in the case of totems such as flies or stones or 'laughing boys'.

So far as I can see there is not amongst our Australian tribes anything which could lead to the 'good' totem being endogamous & the 'bad' or 'harmful' exogamous. The majority of our totems are 'good' & in the tribes where exogamy is concerned with totemism we find of course that a man of one totem may not marry a woman of the same & in tribes such as the Arunta & Kaitish where a man may marry a woman of any totem there is no idea that a man of a 'good' totem should marry a woman of the same.

Two days ago I saw Howitt: he has now retired from the public service & is at work upon his book. I hope that in the course of the next few months he will complete it. He has a really

wonderful amount of material & knows more of general Australian ethnology than any of us. I am surprised to find that Stirling & myself are Hon. Members of your institute & that Howitt who is the father of real anthropology in Australia is merely a Corr. Member. Howitt is a splendid man & has done more towards the elucidation of anthropologic problems in Australia than any other man & if your Anthropol. Institute can award him a medal (and he is now a very old man) you really ought to do so.

Please give my kindest regards to Mrs. Frazer. I hope that you are feeling able to do any amount of hard work & very much wish that you & Mrs. Frazer would come & see us out here. It is very hard lines that we poor exiles should have to journey so far to see our friends.

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 45
4 Park Side
Cambridge
14 July 1902

My dear Spencer,

Your letter of June 7th came yesterday and was most welcome. As you will have seen from my last letter I was beginning to wonder at not having heard from you for so long. Your previous letter was of November 12th of last year! But I did not allow sufficiently for the tremendous pressure of work you must be under since your return from the dreary Australian wastes of the torrid zone to a lecture room and laboratory in a great city. Let me say again how truly glad I am that everything on the expedition went so well, that there was no mishap, and that you both came back hale and hearty. I hope that Mrs Spencer and Mrs Gillen will now regard me more favourably and not regard think me merely a wicked and slothful man, who sits at home at ease, while he sends his friends out on laborious and dangerous expeditions.

I agree with the substance of your criticism of Crawley's 'Mystic Rose'. He overdoes the notion of taboo, and indeed extends the word to cover things which are not taboos at all. A taboo is [insert] always negative; it is [end insert] merely a prohibition to do certain things; he applies the term to positive duties – "Thou shalt," instead of restricting it to "Thou shalt not." It was also my impression, derived from reading and confirmed by your knowledge of living savages, that he greatly exaggerates the dangers supposed, in certain cases, to be by savages to arise to men from women. His theory would logically lead to an absolute separation of the sexes, and so (like the extreme systems of asceticism) to the extinction of the human race in a single generation. I put this to him in a letter, and he admitted that this was the conclusion to which the line of thought traced by him logically led. He seems to have quite overlooked the mass of evidence which goes to show that among many (if not most) savage races the relations of the sexes before marriage are perfectly free and unrestricted. This fact alone seems to knock the bottom out of his theory.

On the other hand there are some good things in his book, particularly the explanation of the twofold and fourfold exogamous divisions of the Australians as deliberately adopted to prevent the marriage, first of brothers and sisters, and secondly of parents with children. But he was not the first to perceive this. I indicated it very briefly in a note to one of my papers on the Origin of Totemism. And if I remember aright, Morgan clearly perceived the reason of the twofold division; and Howitt writes to me that he and Fison pointed out the reason of exogamous classes long ago. Again, Crawley seems to me entirely to underestimate the strength of the converging lines of evidence that something like sexual communism preceded the rise of exogamy. These lines are indicated, as it seems to me, conclusively by you and Gillen in "The Native Tribes of Central Australia", and Crawley simply [insert] merely [end insert] follows Westermarck blindly in putting aside the evidence with a simple assertion that it amounts to nothing. By the way I have not seen Westermarck's Latest edition, and don't know how he deals in it with the fact that you and Gillen gave him. In all this question of primitive communism Westermarck's book gave me (when I read, but did not finish it, I confess, many years ago) the impressions of being a special pleading for the social proprieties, instead of a strict and impartial inquiry into the facts. In this respect it seemed to me to rank with the books written to please the religious public by discovering a high ethical religion, if not the essential truths (so-called) of Christianity, among the lowest savages. Such books have their vogue for a time, so long as they chime in with the tone of current orthodox opinion. When that

changes, they are forgotten, or remembered only as obsolete historical curiosities. Let us try to look at the facts straight in the face and damn public opinion!

I am deeply interested by all that you tell me about the results of your last expedition. It is particularly gratifying to me to find that our theory of Australian totemism has been so strongly confirmed by the new evidence, and further that (as I maintained, and have been attacked for maintaining) the Central tribes are the most primitive of all. I am delighted to hear that in the midst of all your other work you find time to go on with the writing of your book. I pant for the time when I shall be allowed (as I hope I shall be) to read it in proof. Remember I expect to be allowed the privilege of reading your proofs. If you allow me, I should like to do just as I did for the former book – look out for printer's errors and for occasional obscurities or awkwardnesses of expression, of which I might sometimes suggest amendments to be approved or rejected by you at your discretion. As to omitting or cutting out a single fact or opinion, however apparently unimportant, I hope I would rather cut off my hand.

It is a great satisfaction to me that Howitt has retired from his official work and is giving himself wholly to completing his book. It will be grand if he finishes it this year. The work will of course be of primary importance and will be an anthropological classic from the day of its publication. He is very kindly sending me type-written copies of the chapters as he finishes them. I have not finished reading the last batch that he sent me (having been, like you, desperately busy in moving into a new house, shifting and rearranging my books etc.), but I hope soon to be able to write to him any remarks that may seem worth making. Though I feel that the work of such an expert, dealing with the subject he has made his own, is really beyond the reach of effective criticism by an outsider like me. I note what you say as to the Anthropological Institute in connection with him, and will lay it before Haddon, the President, who I am quite sure will take it up warmly.

My wife joins in kindest regards to you. She would like much to come out to Australia with me, but I doubt whether that will ever come off. Please give all kinds of kind messages to Fison when you see him. I trust that he keeps fairly well.

Yours very sincerely

J.G. Frazer

Frazer 46

Melbourne

July 23. 02

My dear Frazer,

Your letter received today surprise me by saying that you had not heard from me since my return seeing that I have written twice. I ought to have written more often but have really been so busy with work of various kinds that my correspondence has fallen sadly behindhand. I am in my lab. from 9 – 5 daily except such odd times as are spent supervising work in the Nat. Hist. Museum The evenings are occupied with lectures & writing up our Ethnologic work but the sabbath is about the only day which I can call my own & even that is a good deal cut into with visitors & visiting. Please understand that any apparent neglect of you is not really any such thing & only arises from the fact that I have more to do than I can get through & that therefore correspondence suffers. My whole day is occupied with zoological work & students & it is only after looking over & preparing for lectures in the evening that I can set down to ethnology & enjoy myself.

Very many thanks for the two papers which you sent me. In regard to Mr. Cooke's I would have liked a good deal of further elaboration: it was in the nature of an 'abstract' which could only be really appreciated by those who have a good deal more knowledge than I have. It also struck me that he had not read his literature enough for he referred to us as stating that in the initiation ceremonies a burning bark was used for circumcision. A much better example of this would be found in the use of a stone knife for circumcision among the Jews, vide Tylor. The latter refers to what actually takes place whilst our illustration dealt only with a tradition. Mr Roscoe's paper I have not read all through yet but it strikes me as being really good. The green locust matter is very suggestive I suppose there is no doubt but that the intercourse only takes place (with the object of securing the increase of the totem) when one or other of the two individuals belongs to the totem. Here in Australia – or at least in the Central area – we are not likely to meet with anything of this kind for the simple reason that the natives do not believe that children are directly connected with intercourse and therefore they are not likely to associate this with reproduction in the animal or plant kingdom. We have met with no trace whatever of this idea – in fact during the intichiuma ceremonies exactly the reverse

takes place – strict continence is enforced. We asked a Kaitish man about this matter with the object of finding out whether the natives ever had intercourse for the purpose of influencing the increase of the totem and he told us that when he was performing intichiuma he was too, as he said, “full of churinga” – that is sacred power for it to be safe for him to have intercourse with his wife. Any such thing would result in serious ill to the woman & would make him incapable of properly performing the ceremony.

So far as our tribes are concerned there can be no doubt whatever about the fact that the members of the totem are responsible for the increase of the animal or plant: but as we pass out of the dry interior parts towards the coast where the rainfall is more abundant & food supply less precarious the intichiuma ceremonies disappear until on the gulf coast there are only traces of these left.

I see that in his “Uganda Protectorate” Johnston p 589 says “Each tribe or clan has its own ancestral spirit, who is sometimes confused with the totem” (this is in reference to the Banyoro tribe). He evidently has not gone deeply into the matter but what he means by a “tribe or clan” is I presume a totemic group and if so the statement probably implies that the natives imagine themselves to be the descendants of an ancestral animal whose name they bear as that of their totem – just as in the case of our Australian totemic people. I wonder if Mr Roscoe has made any inquiries as to what are the ideas of the members of the different totem groups as to their ‘alcheringa’ (if they have the equivalent of such) ancestors.

In the Warramunga tribe every totemic group has an ancestor such as a snake from whose body emanated a large number of spirit individuals who were located in certain definite spots & have since been reincarnated. I wish that Mr Roscoe could come across something equivalent to this idea of reincarnation which is such a striking feature in Australian tribes. Of course we know nothing about this in the eastern & southern coastal tribes but I think that if we could only have investigated them in their pristine condition we should have found traces of the belief.

Unless we had known of this belief as it exists in full force in the central tribes I doubt if we should have detected it in the tribes on the Gulf coast.

Roth writes to me that he has come across a curious belief on the east coast where certain rocks & trees are supposed to be inhabited by spirit children & he also told me when we met him on our way home that years ago he had been told something about a belief among Queensland tribes of spirit children going in to women & of children having nothing to do with intercourse but did not like to refer to it because it sounded so preposterous – until he saw what we had published.

Also he has quite given in on the subject of his tribes having no totems. I asked him to publish a statement on this subject but am afraid that he will not do so & meanwhile I see that Keane has stated that Roth has explained the non-eating of the totem (or rather of certain animals which are really totemic animals) by a system of tabu in the form of an agreement between the old & the young men! No one who really understands our natives could for a moment imagine that any such agreement could possibly take place. If there is one thing which stands out prominently in this respect amongst Australian tribes it is that the old men rule the young ones with a rod of iron & that anything in the nature of an agreement as to what they are respectively to eat is simply an absurdity.

I would give much to see the look upon the face of an ancient ‘black-fellow’ of any Australian tribe when asked by Mr Keane as to what kind of agreement he had come to with the young men of his tribe in regard to what they & he might eat.

Roth has just been on a trip round the Queensland coast but so far as I can see he does not really come much into touch with the uncivilized native & his interests are more in direction of games & gesture language. He will do good work in this line but not much I fear in regard to ‘sacred’ matters & beliefs which lie at the root of things.

[NB text underlined in red from this point] I feel more than ever convinced that, judging from our Australian tribes as a fair example of savages, your theory of magic preceeding [sic] religion is the true one. *[end red underlining]* It is so easy to render into English what a native tells you with regard to an individual such as Baiame or Daramulun so as to give an idea of a belief in a supreme Being. Howitt whom Lang quotes time after time only made his statements on this matter as the result of talking to natives who were so civilized that they said that the young men were spoilt by their intercourse with the whites & therefore required to be brought under proper control. I do not believe that any native Australian has the slightest idea of anything like an “All father” but that this is simply a free rendering on the part

of a man who did not recognize the real importance of the matter of some term which to the natives implied a very different meaning.

When I can get a little spare time I intend to go over the whole evidence in the light of our present knowledge & think [*NB text underlined in red from this point*] that it may be possible to show that very much has been made out of very little evidence. Lang does not realize that Howitt in regard to these matters only worked with civilized natives & as you know Howitt himself does not agree with Lang. At all events in all of the Central tribes who are presumably the least untouched by civilization we do not find any trace whatever of a belief in a Supreme Being.

Do you know anything of Mr Crawley the author of 'The Mystic Rose'? I wish that before writing his work he had had some acquaintance with savages. His idea with regard to intercourse with any particular woman being associated with danger which may be removed by his previous intercourse with another individual is most remarkable. Amongst our savages there is certainly no idea of this nature. If there be any danger in regard to intercourse surely this applies to one man just as much as to anyone else & a savage is not likely to incur any danger to himself by doing anything which will at once secure immunity to any other member of the community & at the same time render himself liable to injury. On Mr Crawley's hypothesis any intercourse with a woman [insert] or at all events for the first time [end insert] is fraught with danger (I do not think that any Australian native has the slightest idea of this) & yet according to him there are in each case certain men who [sic] willing to take the risk of this so that one man may go free of any evil influence! If it hurts this one man why will it not hurt them? Perhaps Mr Crawley thinks that there is 'safety in numbers'.

His criticism of group marriage is very poor & thin & some of his remarks such as that referring to the wise provision of the savage in causing the elder sister to be married to the elder brother so as to secure marriage for her are very remarkable. Savage women never lack husbands & the elder sister has no more difficulty in getting married than the younger one seeing that every girl is betrothed it may be years before she is born.

I trust that your eyes are not troubling you and that both you & Mrs. Frazer are in the best of health & spirits.

Please do not imagine that I shall be anything but most grateful to you for help in proof reading. I only wish the time had come – meanwhile I am making slow progress & have about 300 pp. of type written foolscap which all needs revising.

What we wanted was 20 years instead of 1. With kindest regards to Mrs Frazer

Yrs

W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 47

Melbourne

Aug 19. 02

My dear Frazer,

I intended writing you a few lines this mail when this morning your very welcome letter came. I cannot understand the long silence but a letter must have gone astray. Anyhow things are beginning to settle themselves somewhat & I will not treat you thus again.

Your criticism of Crawley's book was very refreshing: the more I have thought of his idea the less I like it. So far, quite apart from other features, as I know him, the Cent. Aust. savage has not the slightest dread of sexual intercourse or any idea that there is danger of any kind attached to it on the first occasion. Then as you say the fact that among many savage races the relations of the sexes before marriage are perfectly free is simply fatal to him.

In view of his work which seems to have attracted some attention – even one of our 'dailies' in this remote part of the globe devoted a long 'leader' to it I had to a certain extent [illegible] the ground in regard to the Urabunna tribe and will leave in what I have written so that you can see it. If you think it superfluous I shall be guided by your advice & omit it but with Westermarck still in the field and attracting a good deal of attention (to judge by the new editions called for) & with Crawley possibly running into a second edition I thought it better to state the case briefly once more.

Have you yet seen Howitt's chapter dealing with the Piraru [sic] system? I thought that in the original draft of it he was not quite clear enough upon the point that the Noa women were only as it were a specialization of the Piraru women & that the important fact to draw attention to was that every Noa woman was also a Piraru of some man belonging to the same group as

the individual to whom she was Noa. In the Dieri & Urabunna there simply is no such thing as an individual wife.

Crawley's way of dealing with this rather irritated me – it was so evidently a case of special pleading & a perhaps unconscious twisting of the facts.

[*This text marked by red line running down side*] As to the “discovery” of a high ethical religion amongst the lowest savages there is not I am convinced any such thing [insert] in Australia [end insert] The great difficulty is that we have had statements made on the authority of men like Gason. The latter was an illiterate police trooper, I believe, who was perfectly honest but at the same time perfectly incapable of dealing with matters such as these.

In the days when the evidence of Baiame & Daramulun was collected the importance of securing minute & detailed information was really not realized nor was it imagined that there were men without any so called religious ideas & as I have endeavoured to point out in one of our chapters it is the easiest thing possible to be misled by what a native tells you in broken English in regard to such a point as this.

The ‘all-father’ business is a theory based upon the most slender & I believe unreliable statements but unfortunately it is now too late to test the truth or otherwise of the statements. The same thing is repeated over & over again until people little realize that the whole theory of this high ethical code depends on two or three casual remarks made mostly by men who in rendering into English what natives told them quite innocently translated the native ideas in terms of their own.

Anyhow Gillen & myself could not find any trace of any such thing amongst the Central natives though we searched hard for it. I have written a short chapter dealing with “Belief in superior beings” which refers to these matters & shows I think conclusively that the Central Australian natives have nothing whatever in the way of a simple, pure, religion.

Sooner or later people will see that you are in the main right meanwhile you can afford to wait & as you say damn public opinion. [*end red line*]

I have not heard from Howitt for some time. He is quietly working on at the book which will be a great work. [*This text marked by red line running down side*] The only thing of which I am at all anxious in connection with it is that he has to trust so much to evidence collected by others. My experience of the average man in Australia who lives amongst the natives & gives you information about them is that whilst thoroughly well meaning & honest he is usually very unreliable. [*end red line*] I met with a very good example of this in the far north. There was a really good educated man – a police magistrate stationed on the Macarthur R. at Borroloola – named Stretton who published a paper dealing with the natives in those parts. He was quite friendly with them & published in all good faith but most of what he said was sheer nonsense & yet it sounded all right & Dr Stirling (who by the way is Langs authority for saying that Gason was an excellent & reliable observer) thought highly of his work. Stretton said that the Macarthur natives had no totems & could not discover their class system. Now totemism simply ‘sticks out’ & hits you in the face or as Long, more politely, says ‘saute aux yeux’ as soon as ever you begin to really investigate matters amongst these natives. We managed to get hold of the same natives who supplied Stretton with his information & soon found out how unreliable his information was. [*This text marked by red line running down side*] However Howitt has had so much experience & is so thoroughly able that I hope he will not be led astray. [*end red line*]

I am in hopes that you are going to reply to Powell's short paper in ‘Man’ dealing with Totemism. According to him totemism is merely a system of naming & if we follow him we have to explain a more primitive system by reference to a more highly developed one. [*This text marked by red underlining*] He does not seem to me to have any real grasp of the matter or to realize that our Australian savages are in a very much earlier stage of totemism than his ‘Amerinds’ & that we must interpret the ideas of the more highly developed totemistic people in terms of the more primitive ones & not vice versa. [*end red underlining*] His ‘Shamanistic’ societies are clearly only a specialized form or rather they consist of a special group of members of the totem who perform ceremonies equivalent to the intichiuma of our central tribes – ceremonies which with us are taken part in by every member of the totem. If the American ethnologists are going to adopt his series we shall have no end of confusion. His remarks with regard to exogamy & endogamy I do not quite understand nor do I see that we have fallen into any confusion in regard to exogamy. The whole thing so far as our Australian tribes is concerned seems to be perfectly clear but if the Americans want to make totemism mean one particular thing such as a system of naming then it is not totemism in the ordinary accepted meaning of the term. I trust that either you or some one else will reply to

Powell. Can you tell me what he means when he says (p. 105) "The tribal peoples cannot be divided into those who are exogamous in ~~its groups~~ some one of its groups, and endogamous in the others. Exogamy & endogamy are, therefore, correlative phases of one institution in every tribe in America. The failure to recognize this leads to much confusion in our knowledge of Australian tribes."

Does this refer to his remarks "among all tribal people we discover strange prohibitions; this, a man is prohibited from marrying a woman of his clan, but this he may avoid by being accepted into another clan ..."

In Australia there is absolutely no such thing as adoption of this kind and I cannot see that we have fallen into any confusion in regard to exogamy or 'tabuism'. We shall fall into a good deal of confusion if we are going to follow Mr Powell.

If the American ethnologists want to apply the terms [insert] (totem etc) [end insert] in the sense used by Mr Powell then we had better adopt a new set for our Australian customs such as Kobong & Robongisrer [?] but if only people will stick to your original definition of a totem then there need be no confusion at all.

I was rather amused to see that in 1902 he (the head of a big ethnologic dept.) referred to the 'Native Tribes' as a book not yet published. Even in Melbourne the head of a department is not quite 3 years behind the times.

At present amongst other things I have a goodly lot of public lectures on hand – 10 all told with more to follow. Some in Melbourne others in up country towns. One has to spread oneself a good deal in a part of the world like this. The University is paid for out of the public purse and so we who are connected with it are more or less public servants. However though it is rather a grind still I am glad to be able to interest people in these matters. A short time ago I gave a public lecture in the Melbourne Town Hall – an audience of more than 2000. As we are in a bad way in the Science labs. I charged for admission & after expenses were paid cleared more than £200! for the labs.

I have not seen Fison for a long time but he seemed better than a year ago when I did last see him. He seems to have quite given up ethnologic work. Howitt is simply marvellous. IN 1860 he was exploring in the centre & yet today he is as fresh & lively as a comparatively young man. I sincerely hope that the Anthropol. Instit. will do something to recognize his work while yet he is with us as he is really the father of Australian ethnology!

Kindest regards to Mrs. Frazer: I only wish we could see you out here.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 48

Melbourne

March 17.03

Mr dear Frazer

I have been very hard at work all of the long vac. Somehow the putting of our results together has occupied much more time than I expected and during the past two months I have been at odd times hard at work on the illustrations. It is [sic] rather a thankless & monotonous business drawing and describing implements etc. but to make the thing complete it must I suppose be done. However about three weeks more work ought to see the thing done & sent home complete to Macmillans.

Tomorrow we begin lectures once more and after having been grinding away all the long vac. save for two spells of seven days each I feel rather like having a rest than commencing work again.

Howitt has very nearly done his work. At the present time he is away up country acting on a commission which is in search of a federal capital. Fison met with a nasty accident a little time ago but is better again but I think that his days of ethnologic work are quite over.

This is merely a line to let you see that I am still at work but with my time so much occupied that letter writing is not possible.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Fraser I hope that you are both well & wish that I could get home to England for a time.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 49

Melbourne.

Ap 15.03

My dear Frazer

By this week's mail I have sent home to Mr. Macmillan the ms. & illustrations of our new work. It has cost me the whole of the long vac. & every spare minute during the year & I am not at all satisfied with it and, were time no object, would like to start afresh. When you read it please remember that it has been written under rather hard conditions as the very day almost on which I came back, feeling none too ready for hard work after a summer in the gulf country, I had to sit down to University lectures & Museum work. I have asked Macmillan to send you copies of the proof & shall be very grateful to you if you can spare time to go through some of it.

Chapters 1 & 2 will not interest you at all so please do not trouble about them. They are merely introductory & also deal with physical features etc.

Chapter III I want to ask your advice about. It deals with the social organisation & in it I have included or rather repeated material dealing with the Urabunna Tribe & group marriage which has already appeared in 'The Native Tribes'. I have done this mainly on account of Crawley's book & also because I do not know how Westermarck has dealt with the subject in his 2nd Edit. & partly also because it was more or less necessary to give a general kind of account of the whole thing. However if you would be good enough to read through the first part of the chapter & tell me whether or no you think any part should be left out I should be grateful. The succeeding chapters will be more interesting to you.

There is a certain amount of new material & the chapter dealing with Burial & mourning ceremonies (Chapter 17) gives I think a much more complete account of this matter than has yet been known.

The accounts, especially that of ceremonies in the Warramunga tribe, are of value as they are complete even to minute details or at least they are as complete as I think a white man could possibly make them. As you will understand the material embodied in this chapter cost us a great deal of both physical & mental expenditure. The very intimate relation between a man & his totem comes out well in these ceremonies and even better still in the case of the more northern tribes.

Chapter 12 the Fire Ceremony is something quite new – a kind of primitive & highly moral saturnalia.

[NB *from this point there is a red line down the side of the text*] Chapter 16 will not at all please Lang. There is nothing like a single 'High God of the Mysteries' amongst these tribes & I feel persuaded that the 'moral' injunctions laid upon the youths at initiation in savage tribes have had their origin in the desire of the older men to keep the best things for themselves. It does not seem to have struck Lang that these savages have, as he argues, such a simple pure & high-souled idea of the existence of a primitive Deity that it is at least a very remarkable thing that all knowledge of this Deity is kept perfectly hidden from the women and that indeed they are deliberately deceived in regard to this matter.

I feel sure that the accounts which we have of Baiame & Daramulum are very misleading & that, quite innocently, the white man has 'read into' the idea of the native his own ideas in regard to a Deity simply because he could not free himself from the idea that there could [insert] not [end insert] be a race of people who had no idea of a 'supreme being'. I do not think that there is really any direct evidence of any Australian native belief in a 'supreme being' in our sense of the term. [*end of the red line alongside text*]

Chapter 21 dealing with various customs concerned with the giving of blood – Hair – teeth knocking out etc. is the last which will interest you. Chapter 23, 24 & 25 deal with implements, clothing & decorative art. These have been included so as to make the work more complete. The illustrating of them has cost me a great amount of time & trouble which I have much grudged.

However I think that you will find in our work a good many things which will interest & will also I hope be of use to you in your work.

I hope that your eyes are not giving you any further trouble but that you are able to go ahead without any interruption.

Last week my wife left Melbourne on a visit to England. I would very much have liked to have come but that was not possible. In the first place my year away in the wilds makes it impossible for me to apply yet for leave of absence & in the second our University has fallen upon bad time.

The accountant was discovered last year to have embezzled £35000 of our securities. The leading newspaper here has published a series of scurrilous attacks upon us holding the Professors up to the public as highly over-paid incompetent persons who do little work. Australia is a wonderful place & were it not for the chance of doing some ethnographic work I should very much regret the day when I left England.

I was very glad indeed to see that the Anthropol. Inst. has recognized at last Howitt's work. During the last week or two I have been going through, once more, the ms. of his work on the S.E. tribes which he left with me while he is serving on a Royal Commission in quest of a suitable place for building a capital city for this noble Australian Commonwealth which those of us who have the honour of paying taxes to support a most inordinate number of public servants most fervently hope will not be built during our times.

It is really a great piece of work though I could wish that more of it were at first hand. His account of the organisation of the various tribes is splendid. In regard to the relationship existing between a man & his totem he has very little to say for the simple reason that he knew very little personally of a native tribe in a really primitive state. Lang quotes him as our one great authority but omits to mention that at the initiation ceremony which he, Lang, quotes there were certain things done because the young men had been so much in contact with the white men!

[NB *from this point there is a red line down the side of the text*] For his account of the initiation ceremonies of the central tribes Howitt relies upon correspondents & after some experience I have come to the conclusion that it is absolutely unsafe to place any reliance upon the statements of even an educated white man in regard to matters of this kind unless he is a man who is trained in research or is guided by such an one. [end of red line]

I cannot as yet think of any suitable & short title for our new work. "Australian savages" I like but it is rather too comprehensive: "The Native Tribes of the Northern Territory" is more accurate but then it will have to be increased in length by the words "of Australia" which makes it very unwieldy but otherwise people will naturally think that it refers to America. On the whole I incline to 'Australian Savages'. Can you suggest a better title?

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 50

Melbourne

June 7. 03

My dear Frazer,

I was delighted to get your letter today and to find that you were in such vigorous form. I have been wondering what you have thought of Lang & Haddon & others. Of the former's very recent writings I have seen but little and cannot help thinking that he is riding his theories to death.

He seems to me only to take hold of a certain number of facts in each case which seem as if they might support his theory to the entire neglect of every other fact which does not do this. However I fancy that his writings – at least his recent ones – are of a most ephemeral nature and that we need not take him as seriously as he does himself.

Haddon's address I read when it came out and wrote him a criticism of the same at some length which for some reason I did not send and only tore up a few days ago -- finding it amongst some forgotten papers.

His theory of the origin of totemism or rather of the names of totemic groups seemed to me most crude & devoid of any foundation. It all depended upon the assumption that certain articles of food grew in certain places practically to the exclusion of others and that thus they formed the one & only or at least the chief food of the people inhabiting those areas respectively. His theory could only hold true if we could show that now or at some time past Kangaroos grew in one area, witchetty grubs in another, black snakes in another & so on but of this we have not a shadow of evidence. Of course we do not get say crocodiles in Central Australia and therefore we do not get a crocodile totem group there but at the same time when crocodiles do grow there we get & apparently always did plenty of other articles of food which also give their names to totemic groups. To take another example in some of the central parts 'yams' form the chief vegetable food of the natives & probably have done so from time immemorial & yet at Tennants Creek amongst the Warramunga tribe where they rely to a large extent upon yams as vegetable food the yam totem is a most insignificant one. All of this kind of theorizing is exasperating to anyone who knows the natives at first hand.

I am very much interested in your remarks with regard to people at home looking upon the Arunta etc. with their social & ritual systems & customs as peculiar and in the nature of a 'sport'. If it be a 'sport' it is one which occupies a big area extending from Lake Eyre in the south to the northern coast of the continent to our personal knowledge & I have not a shadow of a doubt but that if we could get into the interior of N.S.W., Queensland & right through West Australia we should find much the same thing. Surely the 'Amerinds' with their most elaborate shamanistic rituals – far more elaborate than those of our Australinds – cannot be regarded as more 'primitive' than the latter.

In the ms. sent home I have simply described our work without any remarks upon this subject save such as you will see in the introductory chapter in which I refer to the fact that the truly central tribes are evidently more primitive than the northern ones with their gradually increasing development of 'father-right' & decrease of such ceremonies as those of intichiuma. Also I have pointed out that it is easy to derive the Waramunga & northern customs & beliefs from those of the Arunta but not vice versa. After reading your letter I think that it might be admirable to say something more about this perhaps in the preface & also to draw attention to the fact that the points wherein our tribes differ apparently so much from other described tribes in Australia by other writers are not really points of difference but are simply due to the fact that we have been able to study matters more deeply than other workers. Roth is beginning to find out the same class of things amongst the Queensland natives & has now got clear evidence of the belief in children not being the result of sexual intercourse but due to the fact that spirits enter women. He told me that he had some evidence of this before we published but did not like to publish it – was afraid to. He has also given up his old ideas as to the nonexistence of totemism amongst his people. Most of the natives he is amongst or has been so far are semi- (or more) civilized but I fancy he is getting on to better work but games & language seem to have a great charm for him.

Of course we cannot expect to find such strong development of customs like those of intichiuma amongst the coastal tribes and unfortunately Howitt's own experience lies mainly amongst the most modified tribes – those of the S.E. corner of the continent. He practically knows but little of the interior tribes at first hand and never had the chance while he was journeying through the country of studying their inner customs & beliefs – in fact in those days with no such work as yours & Tylor's to guide him there was little to show him what to look for in this line & therefore [sic] there will be little reference in his book to customs associated with totemism other than in regard to its relationship to marriage.

I hope he will not use the terms sex-totems & individual totems. They are entirely different matters from totemism proper. The only thing I do not feel quite happy about in his work is the way in which he is obliged to rely upon correspondents for information. In matters such as class divisions which can be checked this does not signify much but when it is a question of beliefs then I much mistrust ordinary people's evidence. He has in some remarks of Gason on the question of subincision & the way in which only a few men were subincised in the Urabunna tribe & how these men were looked up to & held in respect by the other men which is sheer nonsense & yet sound quite right. Gason was by no means the highly intelligent man whom Lang tries to make out - he was an uneducated & quite scientifically untrained man and though he was friendly with the natives I do not believe him to have been capable of putting himself in the native position & of leaving on one side the prejudices of a white man. When one has been told the many extraordinary things which I have, and all in good faith by intelligent men, concerning the natives you begin to trust no one unless he has made a special study of the subject & was [insert] also [end insert] capable of doing this which Gason was not.

I am very sorry to hear that Tylor is going to take Amerind totemism as the standard. If this be done by most workers then it seems to me that we had better invent another term for ours & use an Australind term – say 'Kobong' or the Waramunga – 'Mungai' & call the system 'Kobongism' or 'Mungai-ism'.

I have not seen Mr McGee's paper on the Seri Indians – in fact I have been so busy writing & getting through Museum & University work that I have done but little anthropologic reading – have not even read 'Folklore' but will have a glance through McGee in a day or two.

I am very dissatisfied with the ms. sent home to Macmillan so do not be afraid to criticize severely. For one thing I have not sufficiently made clear the gradual changes in regard to such matters as intichiuma, beliefs in ancestors & origin of spirit individuals from them etc side by side with fundamental agreement. However if you can point out how I can improve it

be as severe as ever you like and if you think any parts in need either of expansion or of condensing please let me know.

Crawley is evidently on the war path again & has written twice for information on points. His last question was to ask if I know of any facts pointing to previous customs of incest between father & daughters: or anything to show strained relations between father & son due to jealousy about use of the daughters. To all of which I could only answer 'no'. In reply to some criticism he says "As to fear of danger from the first act of sexual intercourse I suppose it to be subconscious".

Howitt ought to have finished the finding of a federal capital by now & will soon be back at his work. This federal capital is a farcical thing & I grudge every day that he spends upon the work. However he is in first rate form – looking younger than ever though he is now well over 70 & a most marvellous man. He spent an evening with me not long ago on a flying visit to Melbourne & we went at it hammer & tongs. Never having had any experience other than a superficial one with the central tribes & knowing personally only the much modified coastal tribes he does not at all believe in the primitiveness of the Arunta. What we would like very much like to do some day would be to get amongst the Urabunna a central tribe with maternal descent.

Lang insists on the Dieri being more 'primitive' than the Arunta (which in certain respects they are – maternal descent to wit) and that they do not have the belief as to reincarnation & intichiuma ceremonies of the Arunta. It is quite true that we have no evidence of this but when Siebert began seriously to study them he found the Mura mura ancestors who are as clearly as possible the equivalents (or I believe them to be) of the Alcheringa ancestors of the Arunta & if Gillen & I could get a month amongst them – not at the mission station where Siebert is – it would be a matter of very great surprise to me if we did not find intichiuma in full swing. At present it is impossible to tackle the west but I have my eye on a spot though University work makes it quite impossible for me to get away yet-a-while & I do not know what our respective wives would say. Also this anthrop. work means that I cannot possibly get leave of absence to visit England which is a serious drawback.

Kindest regards to Mrs Frazer: I hope that you are both very well – probably when this reaches Cambridge you will be away somewhere on the continent. Every now & again you might spare a moment to pity we poor exiles who are cut off from all such delights. I like the sunshine here but it is a woefully monotonous & philistine land.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.

P.S. Roscoe's green locust ceremony reminds me of one amongst the Warramunga (who also perform intichiuma proper) in which members of any totemic group can rub one another over with stones supposed to represent parts of a kangaroo with the object of making themselves able to catch the animal but also the rubbing & redacting of the [insert] same [end insert] stones is supposed to be beneficial in causing young kangaroos to emanate from them. His ceremony seems to *[continued in margin of page 7, written vertically in margin a continuation from post script on last page]* me to be a relic of an older form and food should be so abundant in Uganda that intichiuma ceremonies would be likely either not to exist at all or only in the form of traces as in the gulf country here where food is abundant. *[end margin note]*

Frazer 51
Melbourne
June 13. 03

My dear Frazer,

I have just been reading through Lang's "Social Origin etc." & write to warn you against a man named R.H. Mathews whom you once quoted in a paper sent out to the Aust. Ass. when Fison was Sec. On p 38 Lang writes "Perhaps the most recent, lucid, and well informed writer on the various divisions which regulate the marriage of [insert] the [end insert] Australian tribes is Mr. R.H. Mathews" – he then goes on to give certain tables culled from the same writer. The first two of them are practically based on Howitt's work the third dealing with the 'Wombya' tribe is based though Mr. Mathews does not say so on information derived from a correspondent. The latter gave our 'well informed' Mr. M. the correct intermarrying classes with the descent of the children. But Mr. M. proceeds to arrange the classes so as to fit in with indirect maternal descent & remarks as quoted by Lang that the women remain true to their phratry which is precisely the reverse of what takes place. Mr. M's idea was to make the

Wombya (real name Umbaia) fit in with the Kamilaru system whereas in reality this tribe has the indirect paternal descent system. Later on in his paper Mr. M. (un-noticed by Lang) arranges the classes so that they fall into what he calls moieties because he finds quite rightly that the totem follows the father! That is in this tribe according to Mr. M. the 'classes' follow the mother & the totem the father!

I have pointed this out to Lang & have told him that owing to the fact that Mr. M. appropriates without acknowledgement work done by others & is utterly unreliable neither Howitt, Fison, Roth, Gillen nor myself will have anything to do with him.

The truth is that Mr. M. pours out so many papers that critics at home also of course cannot know anything of the way in which he gets his information are apt to think that he is reliable. Lang seems to me to be in a hopeless kind of 'muddle'. At the present time he is full of the idea of the primitive savage as a man of really high 'moral' character who believes in a great supreme being & therefor [sic] on this belief is not compatible with such a 'primitive' idea as that of 'communal marriage' he is against the latter & is inclined to support Crawley.

For the time being we must expect to find that Lang's ideas will be accepted but in future years when the evidence is carefully & dispassionately weighed I think that the verdict will not be in his favour.

I have serious thoughts of paying with Gillen a short flying visit to the nearest tribe with maternal descent – the Urabunna – just to see whether it really has intichiuma and whether it believes in reincarnation. If it has the former then the bottom is pretty well knocked out of Lang's criticism that the Arunta etc are 'sports'. I see that he keeps harping on them in the new work.

These 'sports' if such a thing be have a wonderfully wide distribution in Australia and would have a far wider one if only we knew as much of other tribes as we do of the Central ones. I am hankering after the west but cannot at present see how to get time to go there as it is absolutely impossible, nor would it be fair to the University, for me to get away yet awhile for any length of time. Oh for a minute slice of Carnegie's millions which would make me independent of the University. As it is & having given "hostages unto fate" in the form of a wife & two children I must meanwhile be content to devote spare time to anthropologic work & also what spare means I have.

(Private) that last expedition cost me £500 beyond the £1000 which Mr Syme most generously gave me. No one but Fison knows this & I only mention it to show you that work of this kind out here means not only time but money if we are to be able to study the native in his natural state. However if our work provides you with material for yours we shall feel fully compensated. Gillen & myself often used to 'chortle' over bits which we thought would be of value to you.

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 52
Trinity Coll.
Cambridge
21 June 1903

My dear Spencer

Many apologies for having kept these two sheet so long. But, apart from being busy with other work I found the account of the relationships very hard reading, though I daresay it could not be made plainer than you have made it. But I would strongly advise the addition of m. or f. to each of the names respectively in the tables of descent, in order to distinguish the sexes. In some parts you may think I have got rather muddled, and perhaps I have. If so, forgive my scrawls, but I have done my best, which may be bad. There is a certain trifling lack of uniformity in the spelling of ~~the~~ some of the native words, which I have called your attention to – e.g. Chupila and Tjupila. It does not matter which form is adopted, but having adopted one it is best to stick with it. Again as to such trifles as capital letters, do you prefer Alcheringaa, Intichiuma, Churinga, [insert] Alatumja [end insert] or alcheringa, intichiuma, churinga, [insert] alatumja [end insert]? I think I prefer the capitals, as more distinctive, marking out these important native words from the English context; and in Native Tribes of Central Australia capitals have, I think, been adopted throughout. So perhaps for the sake of uniformity we should keep to them. But that is of course as you like.

I learn from reviews of Lang's book "Social Origins" that he supposes the patriarchal family to have been the unit of society since man emerged from the lower animals, and the classes

and subclasses to have been formed, not by subdivision of a larger unit, but by the accretion of a number of smaller units. This is a pretty specimen of progress and discernment in anthropology.

The rest of the proofs I hope to send at very short intervals.

Don't you think it might be useful to give a complete list of all the totem clans you met with (among the Arunta &c as well as among the new tribes), with a brief statement as to the use made of each totem object by the natives? E.g. when the snakes are edible (as perhaps they all are), this might be mentioned. Ordinarily we in England don't think of snakes as food, and so might wonder why ~~se~~ ceremonies are performed for their multiplication. Considering the important part which totemism plays in the economy of your tribes, it is of interest to know what exactly is the economic use of each totem.

My wife joins me in very kind messages. We trust you are flourishing

Yours very sincerely

J.G. Frazer

Frazer 53

Melbourne

July 6.03

My dear Frazer,

To my surprise the first proof of the book came this evening in the form of your corrected slips – probably that from Macmillans will come in a day or two. Anyhow it is a relief to see proof and the sooner it is through the press the better pleased shall I be. Meanwhile I shall be very deeply grateful for any corrections as to style or anything else. As to style you know well what I think of yours and how much I envy you:- after receiving your letter today I just went & read the ending up of the 'Golden Bough' once more & thought that if ever I could write in that way I should 'die happy'. It is quite true as you say that I 'reel off' but then it is such second rate stuff when it is 'reeled off' that I often feel annoyed & yet I have not the capacity to make it better. In the whole transcript sent home I don't think there are more than a few hundred words altered from the original rough ms. as scribbled out as hard as I could go where once I had gone over the field notes and thought the matter out. It is the latter which takes the time & the arrangement of material beforehand.

My writing always strikes me as colourless & monotonous & the utmost that I can hope to do is to make the meaning clear & I am always expecting to find some literary critic saying that 'it is a pity that the writer does not take the trouble to go carefully over his ms. & polish up the style'. However your generous comments have made me feel that at least matters might have been worse. Most English scientific people write abominably -- save a few distinguished exceptions like Huxly [sic] and Foster – and I think that it is just as important for scientific matters to be well written as it is for litterary [sic] matter. When I have written a sentence 'it gets into my head' if you understand what I mean & even when I feel that it could be altered with advantage I cannot see how to do it.

As to your writing I cannot understand where the 'stiffness & artificiality' is. No one would suspect that you did much scratching & blotting & the apparent ease with which you deal with an enormous amount of detail and fit each thing into its proper place is astounding. The difficulty which I have had in piecing together facts derived from different tribes to form some idea of what your difficulties must have been in writing the 'Golden Bough'.

Since writing last to you I have decided to make a hasty visit to the Urabunna tribe. As Howitt is dealing with the more southern tribes especially the Dieri we have not troubled much about these but I can see that it is of great importance to settle one or two points amongst a tribe such as the Urabunna when descent is counted in the female line. Lang keeps 'harping' on the point that it is only the 'Arunta sport' in which we meet with intichiuma & that for anything like 'original' evidence we must go to tribes like the Dieri where the descent is maternal. I have also rather avoided the latter & the Urabunna because they have been so long in contact with white men. In some parts however we can still get hold of the old men & during the last week I have made arrangements with Gillen to pay a flying visit to the Urabunna in the neighbourhood of Lake Eyre.

I just want to settle the point as to whether these 'maternal' tribes have intichiuma etc. or not. We have arranged through a friend – the owner of a cattle run – to have a number of old men brought to gather for a few days in a secluded spot. Gillen & myself will camp with them & if we do not succeed in finding out a good deal about ceremonies such as intichiuma I shall be much surprised. It will be something if we can show that such ceremonies of fundamental

importance exist in what Lang regards as primitive tribes. We shall also enquire into other points such as the re-incarnation of ancestors – though in regard to this I am a little doubtful. This may mean a little delay in the sending back of proofs but I think that if we can show in the Urabunna, which is practically identical in all important parts with the Dieri, the existence of ceremonies similar to those of the male-descent tribes like the Arunta we shall have done something. I leave Melbourne on July 29th &, all being well, shall be back again on Aug 23rd. I have serious thoughts of holding back the proof dealing with intichiuma totemic ceremonies etc. until after our return as I feel sure that we may be able to add a few bits of material importance. The other alternative is to put what we get if worth anything into an appendix & to draw attention to this in footnotes. If you would be able to spare time and be so good as to glance over the paged proofs it would save at least three month's time and I could send you immediately after my return a number of footnotes which would simply read "see appendix for further information with regard to the Urabunna tribe" & in the preface I could draw attention to this.

Lang's last work has 'riled' me. he has a marvellous aptitude for getting hold of facts which will support any theory which for the time being he is supporting & utterly ignoring all others & it would give me the greatest pleasure to be able to prove the existence of intichiuma in one of his beloved maternal-descent tribes. It might rather disconcert him.

Surely when he finds reincarnation & intichiuma scattered broadcast over the central area he will realize that the Arunta is not a mere sport.

I am just writing a preface & am drawing attention to the fact, as you suggested we should do, that it is only because our knowledge of the Arunta etc. is more detailed than is the case of other tribes that it seems to stand out as a 'sport'.

Lang of course will fall back upon Howitt but the fact is that the latter never had the chance of studying the central tribes personally save in ~~the most~~ [insert] a more or less [end insert] superficial way & that all of his recent knowledge of them is derived from a missionary Siebert who is a German & a most estimable man but I do not believe that he has got at the bottom of things.

Very many thanks for your suggestion in regard to the name of the book. Curiously enough the title at the head of the proof sheets is the one which you suggest. I sent home to Macmillan tentatively the longer title of 'The native tribes of the Northern Territory of Australia'. The printer has reduced this most wisely to exactly your title of 'The Native Tribes of Northern Australia' and at that it shall remain.

It is not exactly correct but it is much preferable to the longer one & I must explain matters in the preface.

With the great amount of work which you have to do I feel rather ashamed of troubling you but you can hardly realize what your most generous help & appreciation means to a man working in these remote parts.

I trust that your eyes are not giving you any further trouble & that both you & Mrs Frazer are able to continue your work with ease. What about Mrs. Frazer's book on 'dances'.

Any information or illustrations in regard to Australian natives we shall of course be only too glad to supply as far as we can.

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 54

Melbourne

July 14.03 [Added] ?14 [end addition]

My dear Frazer,

Your third batch of proof has come today. I really do not know how to thank you for your generous help. The minute care with which you correct them makes me feel that you are spending time upon them which you can ill spare & might be spent with much greater profit upon your own work. If in the preface I only say that we are deeply indebted to you for reading over & correcting our proofs etc I trust that you will understand that this is only a very lame acknowledgement of our indebtedness to you. Yesterday evening I spent some long time trying to think how I could best acknowledge your help, while writing the preface, but the result was unsatisfactory.

I noted your remark in regard to the paragraph stating that the ~~Arunta~~ 'tide of change' had not as yet affected the Arunta. The 'tide of change' has reference solely to totemic matters but I

have altered the text slightly so as to make things clear & I think that in the revised proof you will find that this is made clear.

You will before this have seen that there is a par. in slip 60 which does not quite fit in with what was written in the introductory chapter in regard to the Arunta being the most unmodified tribe in regard to totemic matters. This chapter was written before the introductory one in fact it was really one of the first written out & in arranging the ms. for the press I did not properly revise it. I was thinking when writing it of one aspect of the matter only and intend to alter it so as to make it read that the Arunta nation was probably the most primitive.

I have enclosed one or two points to which would you be good enough to attend in connection with the paged proof. If once more you could spare time to run through this I should be most grateful & it would save some three or four months of time. All of the corrections on the slips are in red ink and so can be easily seen and of course you are at full liberty to make any alterations you think wise.

You will observe that I am as far as possible avoiding the use of the letter 'ch'. They are not at all understood by foreigners and are most puzzling & misleading. Tj is just as good for British readers & preferable for foreigners. In some cases where a word such as Churinga or Alcheringa has been frequently used I am allowing it to stand but in others such as Chupilla & Umbitchana I am altering it and am consistently (or at least hope so) using Tj in all new words.

The proof reader must be a demon of cuteness – he spots every inconsistency.

I am going to detail the proof after the relationship chapter until after return from Lake Eyre.

If we find intichiuma in a 'maternal' tribe in full swing & more especially a belief in reincarnation I shall feel inclined to cable to you. Perhaps you will think I am laying too much store on this matter but it seems to be one of very considerable importance.

The totem chapters troubled me when reading the proof. It is not as clear as it might be and I rather wish it had been somewhat expanded – however it is too late now and of course cognate matter is dealt with in other chapters such as that on Intichiuma.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.

1) On col. 6 of slips proof occur the words

~~Bat~~

Banta lilluna (ie name given to Warramunga by outsiders)

This is not quite correct – correct term for insertion on paged proof will come next mail

2) Throughout Chupilla [insert] (or Tjupilla) [end insert] to read

Tjupila

Frazer 55

Melbourne

July 24:03

My dear Frazer,

I have just finished correcting proof up to the end of slip 190 & there are a great many more corrections than I thought there would be due chiefly to my carelessness in the matter of the use of capitals. So far I have received your proof up to slip 48+. [Insert] + Since writing this have received up to slip 96. [end insert] On slip 50 I have added a footnote of considerable length dealing with a point on which Durkheim in his article in "L'année sociologique" (1902) on Totemism lays much stress & in regard to which he is quite astray as also he is on many other points. It appears to be most difficult to write an account like ours without conveying a wrong idea. Durkheim writes of sacred groves & caves & spots so sacred that they are only approached by the native in fear & trembling.

He talks of 'ce système religieux' & finds in the achilpa (wild cat) "une sorte de culte publique, commun à toute la tribu ...". His whole article is full of misconceptions and he does not appear in the least to realize the fact that the Arunta as you said simply appear to be different from other Australian tribes because we know more about them. Possibly our present work may help to dispel this illusion but unfortunately it will be followed by Howitt's in which there is no reference to anything like the idea of reincarnation or to ceremonies such as those of Intichiuma.

So far as his own personal work goes Howitt's is of course first class but then the tribes whom he knew personally & intimately were amongst the most modified to wit the Kurnai & S.E. coastal tribes. He certainly was amongst the Dieri but only knew this tribe slightly & by no means intimately. His later knowledge of it is derived from the German missionary Siebert &

my experience is that the German or Moravian missionaries may be most excellent men and are admirably adapted to studying the language of a tribe but they never really understand the native & the latter never 'opens himself' to a German missionary. In Australia the only 'missionaries' who are to be trusted in regard to native beliefs are the Jesuits & unfortunately they write but little.

I am afraid that you will find Howitt's work quoted as a final authority against the existence of fundamental ceremonies such as those of intichiuma in the central tribes. He himself of course never saw anything of the ~~the~~ kind for the simple reason that he only knew the central tribes in a most superficial kind of way & was not able to spend time enough amongst them to learn anything of sacred matters.

His whole knowledge of initiation rites amongst them is derived from Gason's writings & Gason was an absolutely uneducated man. He was in fact simply a 'policeman' who interested himself in the natives & nothing more. Howitt's chapter on initiation of the S.E. coast tribes, which he knew personally, in his new work is very fine. I wish he had had the chance instead of Gason of seeing the Dieri ceremony. G. has written some stuff part of which I feel sure is nonsense.

July 27.

Our corrected proof up to slip 96 is just come. Very many thanks for it. My brain is nearly addled with the relationship chapter and I have metaphorically been 'kicking myself' for having given you so much trouble. I never dreamt that you would go through it in such minute detail or at the risk of a few blunders remaining in it would have blunders remaining in it would have begged you not to waste so much of your valuable time. I cannot see how to make things simpler.

When it is printed off and you can refer more easily to the series of tables perhaps it will be better.

As to those genealogical tables – my original ones have all the males in black and all the females in red so as to differentiate them at a glance but the printer went his own way with the result that you have had much needless trouble. I think also that I see one way in which you have ~~get~~ got on the wrong track. In a table which you give to show that the arrangement as shown by us do not prevent the marriage of children of brothers & sisters you arrange the subclasses thus

[table]

If you refer to the table on slip 27 you will see what I mean. Male A's children are D. His sisters children are G. Now D must not marry H.

I fear that the relationship chapter must be intricate. It sounds simpler in some other writers because they have not gone into such detail and merely show what subclass are intermarriageable.

[NB *Text from here has red line beside it*] In regard to capitals – I had begun correcting with the idea of knocking them all out except in the case of "Intichiuma" & of native names of ceremonies [insert] totems [end insert] which are more or less proper names but I have altered this.

[NB *text from here is underlined in red*] Native terms of relationship are all in italics with small letters, Intichiuma, Alatunja, Churinga, Alcheringa are all in Roman with Caps. [*end red underlining*]

You will see that Kabbidji when speaking to the Warramunga (not the Kaitish) is altered to Tjapeltjeri. I think it is only retained in one place and that is at the top of slip 41.

I have been once more through the proofs in search of wrong use of the word totem. As a matter of fact it is scarcely correct to speak of "men and women of the totem" or even the "descent of the totem". However I presume that the meaning of these convenient phrases is not likely to be misunderstood. I have added a footnote to the Wollunqua in consequence of your remark – to show that it is the totem and not the totemic group which is dominant.

Very many thanks to you for all your trouble.

I am just [insert] July 31 [end insert] off to Adelaide to meet Gillen and we go north on Monday: meanwhile I am holding back proofs after those sent today as it will only mean three weeks delay and if we do get hold of intichiuma etc it will be as well to have it in the body of the work.

Would you please be good enough to glance at the footnote attached to slip 50 on the proof which for this purpose I have addressed to you. If you think it inadvisable to print it please consign it to the fire or erase any part you think better left out such as perhaps the phrase

"holds up his hands in pious horror and". Then will you please send the proof on to the printer. You will find it rather red.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.

You will be very sorry to hear that Howitt has very suddenly lost his wife. He was away in New South Wales when she died. I am rather anxious about him as he is now an old man and they were deeply attached to one another. The blow will be a very severe one to him.

W.B.S.

Frazer 56

Prof Baldwin Spencer

The University

Melbourne

Australia

Trin. Coll. Cambridge. 21 Aug. 1903

How would "The northern tribes of Central Australia" do for a title? It would be quite exact, and as short as "The Natives of tribes of central Northern Australia", which is inexact. On the other hand it would not range so well with your former title "The native tribes of Central Australia." But it would not be so liable to be confounded with it. On the whole I incline to recommend "The northern tribes of Central Australia" as the best title for the book.

I trust that all goes well with you on your new expedition.

yours ever

J.G. Frazer

Frazer 57

Melbourne.

Aug 27. 03.

My dear Frazer,

I am just back again in Melbourne after a most interesting short time spent amongst the Urapunna tribe.

Gillen & myself left Adelaide on Aug. 3rd. & after three days miserable railway journey on a narrow guage [sic] line which runs up to the W. of Lake Eyre we reached an outlying cattle station owned by an old friend of Gillens. Thanks to him we got into touch at once with half a dozen ancient natives & took them off to a retired spot where we made a camp. At this time of the year the weather is simply perfect – nothing but brilliant blue skies, more brilliant even than as those of Italy, & lovely clear nights. I wish you could have been with us for a day or two. Our camp simply consisted of a brake of boughs to protect us from the cold wind at night & on the leeward side of this we opened our rugs & slept out in the open with a good fire to keep our toes warm.

The natives pitched their camp amongst some acacias close by & I think that they enjoyed themselves as much as we did. Every morning we had two or three hours with them & then sent them off for a ramble amongst the hills, after that we had another hour or two with them as you cannot safely work the savage brain for too long at a stretch. Then when evening came on we lit our fire & the natives theirs & Gillen & myself discussed matters over our pipes & listened to the black fellows singing away as they always do at night at their corroboree [sic] songs until we fell asleep.

Thanks to our acquaintance with the Arunta we soon got into the thick of things & when once we had got hold of their words for 'totem', 'alcheringa', 'tabooed' etc we soon made headway. They knew the Arunta terms & so we had little difficulty.

As our time was very limited we confined ourselves mainly to the questions of reincarnation & intichiuma & were delighted to find that they are firm believers in reincarnation & also perform intichiuma. I felt sure that we should find intichiuma but with a strict descent of the totem in the maternal line I was a little doubtful as to whether we should find reincarnation.

Lang of course says that we must go to the 'maternal-descent' tribes if we want to find out anything 'primitive' & now I am thankful to say that we can provided him with the idea of reincarnation & with intichiuma in a typical maternal descent tribe with only two 'classes' which are the exact equivalents of the Matteri [sic] & Kiraru of the Dieri. The Urapunna & Dieri are contiguous & closely allied & I have not the slightest doubt but that in reality the beliefs of the Dieri are similar to those of the Urapunna. The gist of the matter so far as reincarnation is concerned is as follows. In the Ularaka (= alcheringa) there were a small number of ancestral

half human, or animal (or plant) creatures who wandered about performing ceremonies & giving rise when they performed ceremonies & giving rise when they performed ceremonies to the different natural features such as springs, rocks, creeks etc. When they performed ceremonies or 'sat down' there they left behind them what the Urabanna call mai-aurli (or sometimes murra-murra – evidently the equivalent of the same totem in the Dieri). These were spirit individuals & these mai aurli are constantly undergoing reincarnation. Some of these old mai aurli changed into men & women who thus became the founders as it were of various totemic groups. If the old ancestor was a snake then some of the mai-aurli whom he left behind him changed into snake men & women & so on through the various totems.

This gives us their idea as to the origin of the different totemic groups.

In regard to reincarnation their ideas are really more complicated & less 'primitive' than those of the Arunta.

They say that when a man dies his spirit goes back to his old alcheringa spot (that is where the old ancestor left him in mai-aurli form in the alcheringa). Sooner or later he is reincarnated but he absolutely declines to go into any woman who belongs to the same moiety of the tribe & therefore to the same totem group as his last mother. At each reincarnation the individual changes his or her moiety, totem & also sex. If a man be a Matthurie then in his next reincarnation he is born a Kirara woman of another totem. This Kirara woman changes at the next reincarnation into a Matthurie man & so on ad inf.

If the spirit of a Matthurie man should go into a Matthurie woman it would cause the death of the latter & any premature births or deaths of women in childbirth are attributed to the wrong spirit child having gone into the woman.

The Urabanna are just as strong believers in spirit children & reincarnations as the Arunta but though they are a maternal-descent tribe their ideas are by no means so simple as are those of the Arunta. It looks very much as if at bottom all Australian tribes (other than perhaps highly modified coastal tribes such as the Kurnai) had fundamentally the same beliefs. Some tribes like the Urabanna may have retained a more primitive organisation & become more modified in other ways while others like the Arunta & Kaitish may have developed further in the way of ~~elas~~ organisation & have at the same time retained more primitive ideas with regard to reincarnation, intichiuma etc.

The all-round 'primitiveness' of the female-descent tribes simply means that we know very little about them.

In regard to Intichiuma, there is no doubt but that this exists in the Urabanna. The rain men are responsible for the production of rain the lizard men perform ceremonies to make lizards 'jump up': the snake men do the same & so on. We saw the rain & snake ceremonies.

I am at present busy with adding notes to the proof as this fresh evidence must be published. It will not occupy many more pages as I am putting it as shortly as possible but it must go in. My only fear is that we are rather treading on Howitt's ground. He has for long been at work on the Dieri but when Lang's last book came out I felt that it was essential to get up amongst a maternal-descent tribe & find out whether or no it had any ideas in regard to reincarnation & intichiuma.

Siebert is of course a very good man & has done good work but the fact that he is a German & that in my experience the central natives dislike & have a profound contempt for Germans made me feel sure that he had not got to the bottom of things. No missionary unless he is a Roman Catholic – at least this is true in Australia – ever really understands the natives. The forms & ceremonies of the R.C. church appeal to the black fellow – probably because they remind him of his own alcheringa rites & ceremonies - & the R.C. missionary – who is always an educated & broad minded man which is more than the German or Englishman is – knows much more about the black fellow than any other missionary does & yet he declines to publish.

Aug 31.

Today I received the last slips of the book & within two weeks hope to send the whole home again.

The number of corrections is abominable especially in the matter of capitals. I hardly like to ask you to go through the paged proof as the corrections & additions are so many. If you can really spare the time to do this I need hardly say that we shall be perfectly satisfied with any changes that you think fit to make.

The printers do their work so well that in the matter of corrections I think they may be trusted & all that requires to be done is to see that the capitals are right & that the 'English' is passable.

In regard to your suggestion as to publishing a list of totems. I purposely avoided this. Unless you can spend a life time amongst the tribes this is scarcely possible. We have made it a matter of principle not to publish anything unless we had it at first hand & one of the most striking features of the native is that he professes the most complete ignorance of anything concerning the sacred matters of any group except those with which he is personally associated. Any list of totems which we could publish would be most misleading. I will add a note saying that our list of totems contains only those with members of which we came into personal contact & that practically every material object gives its name to a totemic group. As you suggest I will add something in regard to food. As a matter of fact the native eats everything which is edible but as you say it does not occur to the average white man that snakes & grubs are edible.

Many thanks for your reminder with regard to the 'boning' of men in the Kaitish who eat too much of their totem.

It is quite true but in writing up our notes I somehow omitted it.

The first account which we had of the Kaitish man eating his totem was wrong & I think that I corrected this in a subsequent letter to you.

I do not know whether the native meant to mislead us but one has to be most careful when dealing with natives as they are apt to tell you things which they think you will understand more easily than what is real truth.

If you ask a native (such as a Kaitish man) whether he eats his totem he will probably answer 'yes' & it is only by a good deal of further enquiring that you find out that the eating is confined to the time when he makes Intichiuma.

On the other hand another man will tell you that he does not eat it & then it takes a good deal of further enquiring to find out that he does eat it when making Intichiuma. In fact as you will understand it is a very difficult matter to get accurate information from natives & the trouble is that a great deal of what has been printed has been published by men who did not realize this fact.

I am afraid that our new book will have to run into two volumes. The printed matter apart from preface glossary & index runs to about 600 pp. & the illustrations will occupy about 200. The sale will be small and I am afraid that Macmillan will 'fight shy' of further Australian work.

Howitt is now at work finishing off his book. I was afraid that the death of his wife would be a very great blow to him but he is a fine old man & I am hoping that the work of preparing his book for the press may be a blessing to him. I wish that you knew him personally.

I hope you are making good headway with the new G.B. & that your health keeps well. Of course make any use that you like of letters or anything else though in the case of letters, later ones may contradict or modify statements in earlier ones.

Kindest regards to Mrs Frazer. I wish that we could see you out here.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.

There are one or two new things in your last letter I will reply to next mail : at present I am trying to overtake arrears in work.

W.B.S.

Frazer 58

Melbourne

Sept 8.03

My dear Frazer,

By this mail I am sending home the proof so far as column 476-168. I have worked over it several times & hope that there are not many mistakes left uncorrected.

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

Except in the case of a very few words such as Alcheringa & Churinga I have purposely used tj for ch. The tj is just as good & ch must be a great trial to a foreigner. All through I have adopted the Italian pronunciation for vowels in fact I have attempted to write all native words so that a foreigner would know how to pronounce them. They are accentuated in the glossary. Even when dealing with written material sent to me by Gillen I have been puzzled as to whether the ch. was like ch in Church or to be sounded like k & therefore determined to avoid it. I hope you have no very strong feelings on the matter.

I have as you suggested added certain things and have put that Kaitish 'boning' business in three places. Very many thanks for drawing my attention to it: I cannot think how I overlooked it. The bit in an early letter about freely eating the totem is wrong & was corrected in a subsequent letter.

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

In regard to the custom after intichiuma of the grass seed) [sic] of throwing out the seed from the mouths: the idea is certainly that of making the seed as they say 'jump up' but it is supposed to be a major thing and I do not think that they have any actual idea that the actual seed which they spit out will germinate: the action is supposed to make the grass grow all over the country. Of course they themselves have not the faintest idea of sowing seeds or of agriculture even in the remotest degree but of course it is conceivable that some time or another in the history of mankind some intichiuma-performing savages may have noticed that some seeds thus thrown out for magic purposes did actually germinate & may thus have started on an agricultural career but this is beyond the present Australian native.

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

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

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

Durkheim's criticisms on which Lang lays store are to a considerable extent based upon a misapprehension of the real facts.

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

On the proof sent home today are additions dealing with Intichiuma in the Urabunna and also Initiation. I am convinced that in different tribes in different parts we have various elements in regard to customs & beliefs in varying stages of development.

There is no such thing as an all round 'primitive' tribe. One group of tribes such as the Dieri & Urabunna may have retained a more primitive form of organisation than another group such as the Arunta & Kaitish but at the same time the latter may be more primitive in regard to other matters such as intichiuma. In addition to this when you come to investigate matters more closely even (apart from its presumably primitive form of maternal descent) the Dieri etc are much more complicated in their organisation than appears on the surface.

Matteri & Kirara are really divided into groups equivalent to the subclasses of the Arunta though they have no names for them. It is just the old tale of the danger of drawing any conclusion from negative evidence.

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

A letter from Dr Tylor this mail: I asked Macmillan to send him proof but he does not make any criticisms except those of general interest in the work & -- what I much fear cannot be avoided -- the intricacy of the organisation matters. I am afraid there is nothing for it but to let people get tied up in knots & tear their hair over this part of the business.

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

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.

[*On separate sheet, in red*]

Correction to be made on paged proof

On slip 6 [insert] line 6 [end insert] for "Banta lillilima" read

"Bata aurinnia

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

Frazer 59

Melbourne

Sept 22.03

My dear Frazer,

Very many thanks for your letter of Aug. 17.

I have just written the preface as you suggested. The short review in the Mit. d Anth. Gesellschaf in Wien, I had seen some months ago by chance -- & wrote to the author drawing his attention to par 2 in the preface of the book. However in view of your opinion as to the general denseness of the human intellect I have added a par. to the preface which will I hope make the matter clear.

If there be anything in the preface to which you object save the concluding part which is very poor & feeble recognition of your help please strike it out or alter it as you think advisable as I have told Mr. Macmillan that I do not want to see proofs of this & that you will be good enough to pass it for the press.

I have sent home today all of the typoscript [sic] so that some one in the printers office can insert the pages in the index.

So far I have not received any proofs of illustrations & am obliged to hold over a few of the later proof sheets until these come as I had not inserted the references to certain of the figures.

The more important parts of our Urabunna work have been incorporated in the proof. I am convinced that just as certain animals have developed along certain lines so certain savage tribes have developed along certain lines. There is no such thing as an 'all round' primitive savage tribe. Amongst animals some have retained primitive features in regard to certain parts of their anatomy & have been specialized in regard to other parts and in just the same way certain savage tribes have retained primitive features in regard to certain things & have become specialized & more highly developed along other lines.

I cannot help thinking that the Arunta & Kaitish people have retained primitive ideas in regard to totemic matters while at the same time they have ~~rela~~ developed to a relatively high degree in regard to the 'class' system.

The ideas of the Urabunna tribe in regard to counting descent in the maternal line are probably more 'primitive' than those of the Arunta but at the same time their ideas in regard to the change of the totem at each successive reincarnation are decidedly less primitive than are those of the Arunta.

Amongst the lower forms of animals there is no such thing as an 'all round' higher development. They develop along special lines retaining primitive features in regard to certain ~~primitive~~ structures & organs while at the same time they become more highly developed in others. May we not suspect that the lower races of mankind -- that amongst them no one tribe has retained an 'all round' primitive state as regards customs or has acquired an 'all-round' higher stage. Lang & others seem to take it for granted that because the Dieri & other tribes count descent in the female line they are therefor [sic] in a more 'primitive' state in regard to all other beliefs & customs. This seems to me to be a fundamental error & liable to lead us far astray from the truth.

I have been going over our notes with the object of writing up a list of the various totems -- stating whether they were edible or not. As I told you before the list is a very incomplete one because it is most difficult to find out what totemic groups exist in any tribe unless you can come into personal contact with all the members of the tribe. No man likes to speak much

about any totem save his own. Each man has a very special interest in his own totem & regards it as belonging to himself & his totemic 'brothers' & resents anyone who is outside the totemic group interfering with matters concerning it.

The result is that it is a most difficult matter to make any native give you any information about totems other than his own & this even extends to the mention of other totems.

We soon learned that it was of no use whatever to try & get any information concerning the totems of individuals other than those with whom we came into personal contact & therefore we made no attempt to get in any tribe a complete list of totems – simply because any list we could draw up would be misleading.

A man like the incorrigible R.H. Mathews who publishes more bad information than anyone else will go and give lists of this kind which he has received from any Tom Dick & Harry up country. Not long ago he published an extensive paper dealing with a lot of the Central Aust. tribes so far as their organisation was concerned.

Knowing nothing at first hand he simply sat down and arranged the classes into moieties so as to make them fit in with maternal descent. This individual appropriates work from anyone but he writes so much & in such varied publications that I am afraid people may take him seriously.

Sept 28

The letter did not go last mail and by good luck I held over the title page & preface also. Your card with the suggested title came yesterday. Very many thanks for it. On the whole I think it the best – the only danger is a liability of confusion between 'Native Tribes' and 'Northern Tribes'. However I do not really like the "Natives tribes of Northern Australia" as it is too comprehensive & also misleading & am thankfully adopting your last suggestion.

In two weeks at most the last proof ought to have gone home: my only fear is that they have not thought it worth while to send proofs of the illustrations in which case there will be delay. If they do not come soon I must see if I can strike the references out as no one save myself could insert them.

I hope you are making head way with your work & that the new edition will soon be in the press. Also I trust that you are able to make steady progress with your other projected work & that you may have health & strength to carry out your plans.

Kindest regards to Mrs Frazer, I am afraid that she must be doing anything but blessing us for giving you so much extra work & I am afraid that the revise will cost many hours of your time. I tried to make the corrections as clear as possible but they were too numerous.

With most sincere thanks to you once more

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 60

Melbourne

Dec. 2. 03

My dear Frazer,

I have only just time for a line this mail as I am in the thick of Exams. but did you ever receive from me slip proofs of cols 25-64? I sent them to you because there was one point on which I wanted your advice in respect of a footnote dealing with Durkheim's criticism of the arrangement of the Arunta "classes" to fit in with the Urabunna state of affairs.

Macmillan writing 14 Oct. says they have not received it. I shudder at the thought of having to go once more through all that abominable relationship stuff & also foolishly I did not keep a copy of my additions. I have an idea that you must have received it and sent it on to the printer direct & not through Macmillans.

Am delighted to hear that the new edit. of the G.B. is making progress: your next edit. will out-size the Pausanias.

I hope you have good news of Mrs Frazer's daughter & are yourself quite well.

In haste

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

P.S.

Please do exactly what you think best in the matter of any changes in the proof: I need hardly say once more that anything you think right will be perfectly satisfactory Tylors objection seem to me to be trivial I will write to Mr Roth. W.B.S.

Frazer 61
Melbourne
Dec. 9. 03

My dear Frazer,

I am afraid that by some chance a few proof sheets which I sent home to you have miscarried. In connection with the subject of the rearrangement of the Arunta sub classes to make them fit with the Urabunna system I had written a foot note criticising Durkheim's remarks which appeared in L'année sociologique for 1902. On Aug. 5. I posted the proof to you and at the same time wrote asking your advice as to whether to publish the note or not. They cannot have reached you as Macmillans write that they are missing and have sent out duplicates for correction. These sheets contain the abominable relationship matter so I have been plaguing [sic] through them again and return them by this mail to Macmillans. Will you be good enough to cross out anything which you think better omitted in the footnote on Durkheim – the whole thing if you think it advisable. His article is full of misinterpretations and errors of various kinds but it is ingenious & I thought it possibly advisable to refer to the point mentioned in the note. However I shall be quite content with your decision.

I have just had to write a long letter to Long in reply to one of his enclosing a short paper by a Lutheran missionary named Strehlow stationed at the outlying Mission station in the S.W. corner of Arunta land. This station has been dragging along a miserable existence under the guidance of semi-educated Lutheran missionaries for 20 years past. Though Gillen & I myself have not worked in that part yet the missionaries are very hostile to us because they regard the native customs as 'abominable' and any investigation into them impious. Twenty years ago a man named Kempe one of the first missionaries seized upon the word Altjera (= our Alcheri) and adopted it as the word for "God". He knew nothing of its significance to the natives or of its association with the word "Alcheringa" (Alcheri – dream ringa – of or belonging to) but he saw that it had some special or sacred significance. Now after [insert] these [end insert] twenty years (when the station has not been closed or the missionaries away) of endeavouring to teach the poor natives that Altjera means "God" Strehlow comes forward with the momentous discovery that in the Arunta "there is a Being of the highest order called Altjera or Altjera mara" (mara = good). That Twanyirika has wife & child and "is the leader of the circumcision". That "Altjera is the highest divinity. He is the creator of the world and maker of men" (sounds rather scriptural). The paper only occupies 1 1/2 pp. foolscap but has more utter misleading nonsense packed into a small space than I recollect having come across before.

"Remarks" (hostile in tone to G. & myself) are appended by some one – I don't know whom & then the whole thing is forwarded to Long who send it on to me for perusal & comment prior to its translation & appearance in "Folklore". Lang says "of course it may be said that all my savage friends gull the missionaries to exactly the same way also Mr Howitt & other laymen." If the other evidence for a "High God" is on a par with this the whole thing is a perfect farce but what can one do. I have written to Lang thanking him for his courtesy in sending the ms. & criticising it. ~~Also~~ In addition to suggesting that possibly the native told Strehlow that Altjera meant God because Strehlow had told him for many years past that it did (and a savage is not altogether devoid of 'cuteness when a good meal is in view) I have also drawn Lang's attention to the following naive remarks in Strehlow's paper:- "Merkwurdigerweise hat dies wort Altjera eine grosse Ahulicheit mit traumen (= altjererema). Man kann namlich in der hierigen Sprache von jedein substativ – etc – Verben bilden, indem man des Endings. A abwurth und die Endinbg erema, die ein Werden, oder ilama die ein Machen ausdrückt anhangst ... von der angegeb... Regel zwuckzuschliessen wurde Altjera = Traum bedenten. Freilich ziehen die Aranda (= Arunta) diesen Ruckschluss nicht. Fur traum als Abstiaktum habin ni kein wort. Doch schient aus der Veruandschaft dieser Worter Altjera (Gott) und Altjererama (traumen) herow zu gelien, dass .. Gott ihuerr ricker ein traumhafter wezen ist obgleich en wie geragt, Realitat besitzt."

I have also told Lang that after watching sundry initiation ceremonies through from start to finish ~~that~~ Strehlow is talking rubbish when he speaks of Twanyirika as the leader of the ceremonies and that the native would no more allow S. to be present than they would tell him the whole truth: what they have told him is just what they tell the women "Altjera" says Strehlow "passes as director of the dance & festivities [insert] he has given them for this the sacred stones & wood (that is tjurunga and rula churinga)" . I have told Lang that, after spending months watching the natives preparing for & performing their ceremonies, to meet with this rubbish from a man who not only has never seen a ceremony but spends a good

part of his time telling the few natives who frequent the station that all of their ceremonies are wicked, is rather too much of a good thing.

However if you see it stated that the Arunta can now be added to the long list of savage tribes who believe in an "All Father" & "High God" you will understand what it means. The trouble is how are people to determine what is the truth and what is not.

I hope you keep well & are making good headway with the G.B. Dont you think that a holiday trip out to Australia would do you & Mrs. Frazer much good.

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 62
Melbourne
Dec. 15.03

My dear Frazer,

I hope that you have not had any trouble in regard to the proof slips 25-56 which have gone astray. Curiously enough these were the only ones which I did not post direct to Macmillans as I was anxious to get your opinion in regard to a note which was added dealing with a criticism of Durkheims.

I therefor [sic] sent them to you & at the same time with a letter asking you to be good enough to read the footnote & strike the whole or any part out if you thought it advisable to do so. On my papers this is dated as posted to you on Aug. 5. but on July 30. I left Melbourne for my trip up north into the Urabunna country leaving this particular part of the proof and this letter to go by the mail on Aug. 5. My assistant who always posts my letters & keeps an account of postage has the entry for this mail but I have a boy who takes the letters to the post & I fancy that he is the miscreant. However it does not very much matter. By last mail I sent home the corrected slips.

Dec. 16. 03

Excuse only a few hurried lines but the mail has just come in & with it page proofs of the preface. I am not sure whether the prints are expecting me to correct & return this & therefore send it to you if you have already passed it for press it may be consigned to the w.p.b. but if not please forward it. There is one word I would like to insert and that is "almost" on page XV. Will write soon

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 63
Melbourne
Feb. 23. 04

My dear Frazer,

I have just returned from a visit to New Zealand. At the end of last year my medical advisor told me that I must stop work. I was decidedly "run down" & unable to work so took his advice & went over to New Zealand where the Austr. Ass. for the Adv. of Sci. was meeting. I had to take the Presidency of the Anthrop. Sect. & wrote for the same an address on "Totemism in Australia". This I had to write at short notice & scarcely felt equal to the task but by next mail I hope to send you a copy of it. I treated it under three heads (1) social (2) ceremonial or dramatic & (3) magical. The social refers to totemic matters as regulating marriage etc., the dramatic as concerned with the Arunta & Warramunga ceremonies representations of the supposed doings of ancestors of the totemic groups & the magical with intichiuma & other similar ceremonies connected with the totems. I think that the dramatic or ceremonial aspect is really quite distinct from the magical though in the Warramunga the two rather overlap. We have however such ceremonies as the Engwura which have for their object the presentation of performances which relate simply to the doings of the Alcheringa ancestors and have no relation at all to the magical ceremonies of intichiuma etc so that I think it is of importance to draw attention to the dramatic aspects of totemism in addition to the magical.

Even in the Warramunga where the greater part of the intichiuma ceremonies are 'dramatic' we still see vestiges of the magical & the two series are really quite distinct from one another. So far I have only been able to just glance through your two lots of ms. one dealing with the beliefs in 'supreme beings' so called & the other with the meaning of the initiation ceremonies. The former I quite agree with: the latter I must go through carefully. The only thing that strikes

me at first sight is the lack of evidence in support of it and I have not yet been able to read it carefully enough to offer any criticism.

I have come back to an abominable lot of routine work at the University & Museum but will write to you as soon as I can get a little spare time.

Mr Crawley has very kindly sent me a copy of a paper on the origin of Exogamy which I have been through. He asks me for a criticism but as he starts with the assumption that the family is the original unit & that no such thing as group marriage ever existed I am afraid that we have no common premise. However I will go over it carefully.

You will be glad to hear that Howitt & Miss Howitt are coming to England. They leave here on April 26. on the "Ophir". He will see his book through the press. I believe that the ms. is already in Macmillan's hands.

Before receiving your letter I had sent home a second connected proof of the missing sheets of our book & hope that before this it is through the press. I am very sorry to have caused you any additional trouble & hope that the new edition of the G.B. is well on its way.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Frazer. I trust you are both quite well. Excuse only a few lines but I am rather more than usually busy.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

Since writing this note I have had returned from the printers pp 65-80 with a request to fill in descriptions of two illustrations. The proofs of the latter were sent out to me (no originals being returned) without any numbers on them or printed descriptions so that I could not correct any mistakes & took it for granted that all was right. This means another delay. I hope they have looked through the remaining illustrations to see that the descriptions etc are there W.B.S.

Frazer 64

Melbourne

March 18.04

My dear Frazer,

I am afraid that you must have thought me very negligent in not returning earlier your ms. relating to the 'religion' of the Australians & the theory of the meaning of circumcision & subincision. Since returning from New Zealand I have been head over ears [sic] in work of various kinds – which had to be done. To my regret I have had to take the Presidency of the Professorial Board and as you can imagine this means an exasperating waste of time in routine work. However at length I have been two or three times through your ms. & have written a few notes but am afraid that I can help you but little. First of all in regard to the extract from the G.B. on religion. The whole of it I thoroughly agree with save one or two small points noted in red ink.

In the letter quoted on p. 6. I have altered two things. That Gason was 'illiterate' is quite true but it is one thing to say this in a letter & another in print. "In broken English" I have deleted because I do not ~~naturally~~ know how far it is actually true. If you are agreeable I would like these changes made. Gason supplied the information that only certain of the men were subincised & that only those who were purposely left alone could beget children. Howitt had this in his first draft but has now I think omitted it. It is absolute nonsense & makes me regard Gaso as very unreliable especially when taken in conjunction with his Mura-mura. At the same time as you say he did some valuable work.

If I have not told you of it before you will find the red ink account of how Herr Strehlow of the Hermansburg [sic] mission discovered the existence of a "high god" amongst the Arunta rather interesting & instructive. It will probably be published in Germany and quoted & requoted as the evidence of one who knows the natives intimately. I cannot think how it was that I missed Schulze's paper & in some future publication must give him credit for what so far as it goes is a good piece of work.

The little bit of indirect evidence as to the meaning of "altjera" is excellent. If you should happen to see Strehlow's notes published will you let me know as I should like to have a word on the subject. [*Added note in margin*] Lang sent me Strehlow's notes more or less 'in confidence' so please do not take any notice of them or my remarks thereon unless publication takes place. [*end note*] I wrote to Lang fully about it but naturally the thing that struck him most was its agreement with certain other accounts. Strehlow's is certainly quite wrong & one wonders now how far the other similar ones are wrong.

When Howitt's work is published I intend to go carefully through the whole of the Australian evidence in detail. I have been elected the next President of the Aust. Ass. for Adv. of Sci. (the modest counterpart in these antipodean wilds of the Brit. Ass.) & thought of taking for my subject that of the 'religion' of the Australian natives. My fear however is that I can have little to say which you will not have said much better in the new G.B.

Now as to your theory of the significance of circumcision etc. It is certainly attractive but what I feel most at present is the extremely slender nature of the evidence.

The use of blood to strengthen individuals by whom it is drunk or on whose bodies it is smeared is surely wide spread and does not seem to me to have any special significance in regard to your theory. In regard to the disposal of the foreskin the only tribe I think in which its disposal can be regarded as supporting your theory directly is the Kaitish & even there may we not suppose that the placing of the skin in (according to Alcheringa tradition) the nanja is simply associated with the fact that the nanja is most intimately connected with the individual & therefor [sic] a very natural place in which to deposit any part of himself. In the southern Arunta the skin is buried in the ground at a spot quite apart from the nanja. In one or two tribes it is actually eaten by certain relatives, as is the blood, and in this case cannot be supposed to have anything to do with ensuring the reincarnation of the individual.

The teeth seem to be always thrown (when they are thrown) towards the mother's alcheringa camp not towards that of the individual. Might this not be equally well supposed to be a custom associated with others the object of which is to show the woman that the youth has passed from the control of the women & has entered the ranks of the men.

It is curious that it should not on your theory be ~~passed~~ thrown towards the owner's alcheringa camp which it never is.

I cannot call to mind any custom which supports your theory.

There is one aspect of the matter which seems to me to be rather important. Men, women & children are all supposed to undergo reincarnation & yet neither the children nor the women take any precaution (except on your theory in the sporadic case of tooth extraction) to secure reincarnation *. [insert] * Tooth extraction only of course takes place amongst the women in those tribes in which it has ceased to have any sacred significance as an initiatory rite. [end insert] The Gnanji believe that women do not undergo reincarnation & yet they perform upon them exactly the same ceremonies as do the Arunta.

You speak of the 'feeble soul'. Now I do not think that the native regards the soul of a dead person (except possibly in the case of very old people among the Kaitish) as being in any way feeble or requiring to be strengthened. In most of the tribes I think that they regard the soul or spirit part of every individual when he or she dies as anything but feeble. When we were working amongst the Warramunga there was an old man who was almost decrepit but a great repository of tribal lore and Gillen & myself were much afraid on one or two occasions that he might die in which event our work would have come to a close as not one of the natives would have stayed near the spot at which his spirit part was hovering around. There was not the faintest idea of his soul or spirit being feeble or of its needing any strengthening in order to undergo reincarnation.

The cases which you cite of burying the foreskin or the bones by the side of water pools certainly indicate a belief that the parts thus buried have vital energy which will assist the growth of such things as lilies on which the natives feed. This is 'on all fours' with the general belief that the natives can control the food supply by magic but it does not seem to me to have any association, of necessity, with securing the reincarnation of the spirit.

Every individual's nanja is sacred and nothing deposited there may be touched & I rather think that the placing of the tooth or foreskin, as the case may be, in such a place is a precaution against any evil minded person gaining possession of such a detached part of the individual for the purpose of working evil magic. At the same time it is quite true that the central tribes do not think that anyone, nowadays, can work evil magic by means of the possession of the tooth or hair of any individual.

If the native had the slightest idea of intercourse having any connection with procreation then it would be much more easy to understand the association of the idea of vital energy with such a part of the body as the severed foreskin but as they have not I cannot understand how the idea arose. They do however imagine in some cases that there is some very special connection between a man and his extracted tooth. Howitt gives an instance of a man walking some 200 miles to secure from him the tooth which he (Howitt) had in his possession and which belonged to a man who was, I think, ill. I rather think that the idea at the bottom of this was that evil magic might be worked in connection with the tooth. On the other hand the

central natives distinctly told us that they were not at all frightened of anyone getting hold of their teeth after they had been thrown towards the mother's alcheringa camp.

[*This section bracketed off with a red line*] The objections to your theory so far as I see at present are (1) that young persons of both sexes who have not undergone any rite of initiation are supposed to be reincarnated without any difficulty (2) that women do the same without any special provision being made to supply their spirits with a store of vital energies and (3) that the natives have no idea whatever of the soul or spirit part of the individual being in a feeble state & requiring any strengthening in order to secure reincarnation.

The general idea amongst the natives is that the older a man is the stronger is his spirit part & except perhaps in the one instance noted amongst the Kaitish I feel sure that they have no idea of a "feeble ghost". [*end bracketing red line*]

In addition to this I can see no relation between your theory and the practises of subincision. Nothing, so far as I can remember, is done with the blood which could indicate any idea of using it as a receptacle for vital surgery or as in any way associated with reincarnation. It is a difficult thing to understand why a tooth should be selected as the storehouse of energy: one could understand a lock of hair better. Also though I do not know that this is actually the case, it would be somewhat natural for a savage to regard the penis, owing [insert] owing [end insert] to its erectile property, as something different from any other part of the body which again would tell in favour of your theory as he would, or might, regard it as especially endowed with life. I wish now that we had inquired into the matter but even a savage has certain ideas of what we should call 'decency' & he does not talk to a white man readily on such subjects. It is however rather significant that the Arunta have only one term 'pura' which they apply in common to the penis & a tail.

There are two features in common to the two typical initiatory ceremonies (1) that the operation is a painful one & requires a certain amount of endurance & (2) that it leaves a lasting and visible mark so that the individual can easily be recognized as an initiated man. I fancy that the latter is a feature of some importance.

In regard to the navel string & after birth I am afraid that we can help you but little. I cannot call to mind a single case in which any special custom was connected with the after birth though I remember making inquiries. The Kaitish & Warramunga & Binbinga ceremonies in regard to the navel string are described in "Northern Tribes" col. 238 cap. XXI under the heading 'childbirth'. So far as I can remember the after birth is always buried.

As to using any information of ours – I hope you will always feel perfectly free to do this when & however you think best – whether it has been published or not. Howitt will be here on his way through before long so that you will probably see him shortly as he is sure to go to Cambridge. I do not know whether he sent you a copy of his "totem" chapter but it was not a very long one as unfortunately he had not in the early days devoted much attention to the subject other than from the 'social side' – in fact the tribes which he knew best – [illegible] of Victoria – were too highly modified to have very much of the magical or ceremonial aspects left amongst them. I think that I told you that in an address which I gave on Totemism in New Zealand I treated it under these aspects (1) Social (2) ceremonial or dramatic (3) magical.

I hope the new G.B. goes on well. You will soon have it in 6 vols.

With best wishes to yourself & Mrs. Frazer

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 65

Trinity Coll.

Cambridge

19 April 1904

My dear Spencer

I was very sorry to hear from your last letter, received a few days ago, that you had been overworking and were obliged to rest. I don't wonder at it. It is a marvel to me how you can get through all you do – the excessively laborious and trying work of exploration, and then the literary work of putting your results into a book, in addition to all your teaching and administration work as a professor. How I wish that you could be set free for anthropology entirely! It would be the best thing for the advancement of the subject that I can think of.

Meantime – which I fear means a long time, for where is the money to come from to found a professorship of anthropology at Melbourne or anywhere else? I hope you will try to take things easier and not strain your energies to such an extent as you have been doing of late.

You have now got your book off your hands, and may look forward to getting some reward for your long labours in the praise and gratitude of anthropologists and (I hope) in the more tangible shape of cash. I am sure the book will succeed, and that its very high merits will be recognised. It is a wonderful feat to have collected that mass of materials in comparatively so short a time. [insert] & to have presented it in so lucid a form. [end insert]

I was disgusted to hear of Lang's getting hold of the missionary (I forget his name) and using him to attack you. His stuff has not yet appeared in Folk-lore, apparently, but I have not seen the last number. If he prints the rubbish, you should point out clearly how little the evidence is worth, drawn as it is from [insert] a [end insert] tribe that has been long under missionary influence. Lang seems to me [insert] to be [end insert] sinking lower and lower, and clutching at any straws that may break his fall. I have quite ceased to take any notice of him or to read what he writes. His last two books I have not even noticed opened, much less read.

I passed the last sheets of your book for the press a few days ago. They (the printers) seemed to have the list of illustrations complete. I hope you will find the book correctly printed. I think that between us we can have let very few actual misprints escape. And I think that the use of italics and capitals is pretty consistent.

The small verbal changes I made here and there will probably be imperceptible to you, except that I changed "lifts up his hands in holy horror" (about which I gathered you had some doubts yourself) into "protests against it". In the preface I did not alter a word, but ~~changed~~ [insert] corrected [end insert] the date of the publication of your first book. The date was 1899, you had put 1898.

The Clarks have printed Howitt's book at an astonishing pace – 382 slips (= 764) pages in less than a month. I am glad to hear that Howitt is coming to England to correct the proofs. It will be good for the book and good for him by giving him change and variety of scene after his great loss. I shall be very happy to make his personal acquaintance. In a letter received from him the other day he announces the very interesting discovery that he has found totems amongst the Kurnai at last. And what is more he has found what I would call negative Intichiuma for diminishing noxious totems, as distinguished from the commoner positive Intichiuma for increasing useful totems. When sharks became too plentiful, a man whose totem was the shark would "sing" the sharks, and they went away.

If traces of Intichiuma are thus found in the most unlikely tribe of all to have preserved them, we are pretty safe in inferring that every tribe in Australia must have had them. ~~them~~ This will help to stop the mouths of the asses who bray about the Central tribes being sports.

The new edition [insert] of the G.B. [end insert] goes very slowly indeed just now. I am adding some new sections or chapters, which give me a good deal of trouble.

I am glad you approve of what I say as to the forms of religion in Australia. As to the suggested explanation of the initiation rites, I admit it rests on very little evidence, but there seemed to me enough evidence to justify me in putting forward the theory tentatively as an hypothesis. I expect you to criticise quite freely, adducing any contrary facts that may occur to you.

My wife is in Paris with her daughter just now, or would join me in all kind messages. My hearty regards and congratulations to you and Gillen on the completion of your splendid book.

yours very sincerely
J.G. Frazer

Frazer 66
Melbourne.
Aug 15. 04

My dear Frazer

I hope your work goes on well. We have been so busy here that I have had little time for writing. A week or two ago I had a letter from Howitt in regard to the "all father" question & this week he sends me a note which he is adding to his chapter. I had not the faintest idea when writing to you of throwing any doubt on Howitt's work & writing – very far from it – but what I do feel is that if we could investigate the tribes afresh & in their primitive state with our present knowledge we should I feel certain find that the ideas which have held been with regard to their belief in anything like an 'all-father', in our sense of the term would be considerably modified. At most he is regarded as a kindly disposed superior human being and not as a deity. To say that the Aust. tribes have a belief in a single 'god' is to read into their beliefs our idea of a 'god'. When Howitt witnessed the Kurnai ceremony the tribe was practically, I think, civilized – in fact he himself summoned the remnants for the purpose &

though the younger than older men in charge of the affair told him that they did as their fathers had done yet inasmuch as they had for years discontinued the practice I cannot help feeling – knowing how rapidly old customs vanish & are forgotten – that it is at least open to doubt whether their ideas had not become hazy & inevitably modified by long intercourse with white men.

However you will have discussed the matter with Howitt & I hope have come to some satisfactory conclusion. Today I saw Roth & he was speaking of how Lang had taken hold of a statement of his & twisted it or expressed it so as to apparently make him (Roth) an adherent of the view that the natives with whom he was dealing had an idea of a single “god” which Roth emphatically says they have not.

I see that Lang has twice ‘reviewed’ us in the Athenaeum [insert] July 9 & 16 [end insert]. As I expected he simply makes it an occasion for putting forth his views on one or two points. Apparently he only notices the evidence from the Urabunna to point out that it is of no value as the Urabunna are neighbours of the Arunta. He does not make the slightest attempt to give the public any idea of the contents of the book. In fact it is not a review at all but a very one sided criticism in which the sole object of the writer is to uphold one or two theories of his own with which we do not happen to agree. His remarks on group marriage are puerile. I am only sorry that the ‘review’ cannot be signed by the author.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Frazer. I hope that you have been able to see something of Howitt whom I am sure you will like as much as I do. His book ought to be out soon.

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 67
Melbourne
Dec. 13. 04

My dear Frazer,

I am afraid you must have been thinking bad things of me but during the last year i have been acting as President of the Professorial Board and as we have been making radical changes in the University I have had a most extraordinary number of meetings to attend and routine work to get through. In a week with my wife & two girls I am off to New Zealand and until then am tied hand & foot. This note is to once more ask your help & I think that Howitt will be writing to you and Professor Ridgeway on the same matter.

Fison has had another attack and there is no doubt but that his health has completely broken down and that his working days are past. He is in very poor circumstances & the outlook for the future unless we can help him is very serious.

His sources of income have been

(1) allowance as supernumerary clergyman in the Wesleyan church

(2) £100 per annum as editor of the “Spectator” the Wesleyan paper in Victoria.

The latter income will vanish as he will be quite unable to do the requisite work and all that he can hope for will be trifling sums for occasional contributions.

His daughters manage to get a small sum by teaching some twenty little children. Beyond this they have nothing.

Would it not be possible to get a pension for him – to have him placed on the Civil List? We are not sure and cannot find out exactly how to set to work but I have drawn up the accompanying short statement and am getting it signed by such persons out here whose names may be of service, as there is no time to be lost. Can you spare time to help us in England & to put the petition in proper form.

The following influential people at home would we believe help if they were approached –
F.W. Fison M.P. for South Yorcks (he is Lorimer Fison’s nephew).

Sir Richard Jebb (~~Lady Jeff~~ Lady Jebb is F’s mother’s brother’s daughter – a very important relationship in the Urabunna but I am not sure how far it counts in England. However F. knows him and more especially I think Lady Jebb.)

Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain who wrote a complimentary despatch to Sir Henry Jackson late Governor of Fiji on F’s “Land Tenure in Fiji”

Sir Henry Jackson late Governor of Fiji ?where is he.

Rt. Hon. Arnold Forster (adopted son of W.E. Forster who is partner of F’s brother & knows F.).

Sir Henry Fowler

Prof. Goldwin Smith at whose instance, being acquainted with Fison's work in Fiji, Morgan first wrote to F.

After discussing the matter Howitt & myself determined to write and ask if you & Professor Ridgeway would be good enough to take the matter up. I have sent a copy of the statement to Sir Wm. Macgregor, Governor of Newfoundland & asked him to return it signed to you & probably by next mail I will send you such signatures as we have obtained out here.

I hope that your new edition makes steady progress. Howitt very much enjoyed his time at Cambridge & I am very glad that you have seen him. With kind regards to Mrs Frazer

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer.

I enclose a copy of the petition but please alter the wording if it be in any way incorrect

Frazer 68
Trinity College
Cambridge
5 Feb. 1908

My dear Spencer

I find a reference by Lang to a paper of yours on exogamy in the Report of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science for 1905. I have never seen the paper, and as the Reports are not easily accessible here in England I should be much obliged if you would send me a copy of it and of any other occasional papers you may ~~de~~ publish from time to time. No one can well be more interested in your work or admire it more than I do.

Today I have received the first part of Strehlow's book on the Arunta. It deals mainly with the legends of the Alcheringa. I wish you would tell me what you think of it and of Mr Strehlow as an anthropologist.

We shall shortly move to Liverpool, where I have taken a lease of a house for four years. One of the first things I intend to do when I settle there is to get funds for an expedition to Western Australia to be conducted by you and Gillen. I want to see that done and to read "The native tribes of Western Australia by Baldwin Spencer & F.J. Gillen" before I die. I wrote to you about this before. Do let me know what you think of it, whether you and Gillen would go, and what it would cost, so that I may have a fairly exact notion of what sum to ask for. Also I wish if possible to relieve J. Roscoe of his mission work in Central Africa and set him free there entirely for anthropology. We should learn very much more from him. I know no keener anthropologist than he. My inaugural address at Liverpool is not to be till May 14th. It is then that I mean to broach my plan for promoting research in the field, so there is plenty of time yet for me to hear from you about this plan of mine about West Australia which I have much at heart.

I am bringing out a new and much enlarged version of Totemism. I am adding a geographical survey of all the principal facts about totemism known at present. I have devoted more than 100 pages (8vo) to the Central and Northern tribes described by you, and am more than ever filled with admiration of the solidity and splendour of your work.

I do trust you are well and not killing yourself with over-work. Do let me hear from you about yourself and everything.

With our united kindest regards I am always
yours very sincerely

J.G. Frazer

I look forward with great interest to reading Howitt's paper, which is, I believe to be published in the next number of the Anthropological Institute.

I was much grieved to hear of the death of our good friend Lorimer Fison. I admired and loved him. I have sent in a petition on behalf of Mrs Fison and her daughters to the Prime Minister, but the matter is not yet decided. If successful I will telegraph to Mrs Fison. I will enclose a copy of the petition.

What do you think of my new anthropological questions?

All kind messages to Howitt if you see him.

Frazer 69
Rowmore House
Garelochhead
Dumbartonshire
14 March 1908

My dear Spencer

I was much grieved to hear a few days ago of the death of our friend Dr Howitt. It is a great loss to Australian anthropology. I had hoped that he might yet live to do good work and to correct many of the current misapprehensions and misrepresentations of Australian facts. His forthcoming paper in the *Anthropological Journal* will, I believe, be an important contribution in that direction. I have been asked to write an obituary notice of him for *Folk-lore*. I have said that I could not write it for the next number, but might write it for the next but one. Could you give me any facts as to his early life and work? I know nothing but what appears in his published books and papers. I will write to Miss Howitt also for particulars. I hope that you will write a notice of him for one of the scientific periodicals.

The petition which we got up on behalf of Mrs Fison and her daughters for a pension on the Civil List has not been granted. I wrote to Howitt telling him of our failure and suggesting that a petition to the same effect should be addressed to the Victorian Government. At the same time I sent him copies of our petition and of the Prime Minister's reply (through his private secretary), thinking that these might be useful in applying to the Victorian Government. My letter and its enclosures would reach him too late. If you approve of the plan of appealing to the Victorian Government for help, will you undertake to bring the appeal before them? In that case I would suggest that you obtain from Miss Howitt the copies of the petition which I sent to her and also the letter of the Prime Minister's private secretary, to be used by you as you may think fit in promoting the object of the petition. I would send you more copies of the petition, but here in Scotland I have none beside me.

I have written to you already about my great desire that you and Gillen should make an anthropological expedition to Western Australia, and my hope that at Liverpool I may be able to raise funds for the expedition. I was speaking to Sir John Murray, of the *Challenger*, a few days ago, and he took up the scheme warmly and offered to contribute £200 to it. I imagine (please correct me if I am wrong) that £2000 would suffice for the work, so that if I could get nine other men to promise equal contributions, the funds for the expedition would be provided. I am hopeful of succeeding at Liverpool, where Sir Robert Boyce (of the Tropical School of Medicine), the Lord Mayor (Dr Caton), and Lord Mountmorres are all interested in my anthropological work and plans. If the funds are raised in Liverpool, and the plan is carried out, I think it would be right that your book on the subject should appear as a publication of the University of Liverpool, Department of Anthropology, and that the ethnological objects collected, together with copies of the photographs, phonographic records &c., should go to Liverpool University. Would you agree to this? If I remember aright, you have many unpublished photographs. How would it do to publish all your photographs complete in an album with explanatory notes? I am anxious to establish at Liverpool an institute for the prosecution of anthropological work in the field, and should like to inaugurate it by an expedition by you and Gillen to Western Australia, for there is nothing that I have more at heart than that. My general scheme for the obtaining of records of savage races will be propounded in my inaugural lecture at Liverpool on May 14th, and it would be a very happy omen of its success if I could announce on that occasion that an expedition to W. Australia had already been arranged for and the funds subscribed. So I am very anxious to know whether, if the money is found, you and Gillen will go. If you have not already answered when this reaches you, will you please telegraph your answer, in order that I may be informed in good time? "Yes" or "No" would be a sufficient answer. If you and Gillen cannot go, I am afraid the scheme will break down altogether. For I could not accept money for an expedition unless I could answer for the competence of the men who are to go on it, and I know of no men but you and Gillen who are competent for this piece of work.

In regard to Howitt, I should be glad to learn when he went to Australia, what the nature of his professional work was, how he came to study anthropology, what his early relations with Fison were &c. I think of asking Macmillan to publish a collection of Howitt and Fison's scattered papers, for it seems to me that these papers are not altogether superseded by Howitt's book. If such a volume of papers were published, I should like to prefix to it a brief biographical notice of the two men.

I shall be much obliged if you will answer this letter as soon and as fully as you conveniently can.

To my reprint of *Totemism* I am adding my papers in the *Fortnightly* and a new "Geographical Survey of Totemism", which threatens to run into two volumes.

I trust that you keep well. With the united kind regards of my wife and myself

I am

Yours very sincerely
J.G. Frazer

Frazer 70
24 Abercromby Square
Liverpool
19 April 1908
My dear Spencer

I received your letter of March 10th last night. The death of our friends Fison and Howitt so soon after each other has been a great grief to me. But I am very glad to have known and esteemed them both personally as men as well as anthropologists. Their visits to Cambridge were memorable events to me. I was so proud of you four men and happy to think of you as a band of brothers. I knew of no other such band, and now two are gone. You and I, I hope, will try to stick more closely together for the loss, in spite of the distance between us. I have, as you know, the warmest admiration for your work and the fullest confidence in its accuracy and fidelity. I value it all the more by comparison with the work of others, and it makes me sick to think of the sophistry and misrepresentations of which your facts and Howitt's have been the object. But I believe that these misrepresentations will pass away like clouds and be forgotten, while your facts and the sound and true inferences which you and Howitt and Fison drew from them will remain. I wish, my dear Spencer, I could see you again and shake hands with you. When is that to be?

I have proposed to Macmillan that they should publish a collected edition of the scattered anthropological papers of Howitt and Fison. It seems to me that these papers contain some things of value which Howitt has not embodied in his book. One striking example of this I communicated to him shortly before his death and published in "Man". It is the explanation of the classes and subclasses as intended to prevent the marriage, first of ~~parents~~ a brothers with sisters, & second of parents with children. Since Howitt's visit to Cambridge I had imagined that the perception of this truth was a discovery of mine, and so he represented it in his book. But in fact he had enunciated the same truth in an early paper published many years ago. I am glad that I discovered the facts and did him justice both publicly and privately [insert] before his death [end insert] (for I wrote to him at once and the letter reached him in life).

Macmillan has agreed to publish such a volume of collected papers on condition that I am responsible for the selecting and editing of the papers, and that I prefix a biographical notice of both men. The profits, if any, would be divided between the publishers (who would take all risks) and the families of the authors. It might be a little difficult to apportion the shares between the two families, since the greater part of the work would be Howitt's.

What do you think of this plan? Do you think that Howitt would have approved of republishing papers, some parts of which he regarded as superseded by his book? And if you approve, please let me know what papers you think should be included. My idea would be to reprint all the papers mentioned by Howitt in the preface to his book (pp. VIII – IX) together with his paper on the Dieri (Journ. Anthropol. Inst. XX), his paper "On the organisation of Australian tribes" in Transactions of the Royal Society of Victoria, 1889; and perhaps his "Remarks on the class systems collected by Mr Palmer" Journ. Anthropol. Inst. XIII. Also I would include Fison's articles on Fijian customs in the Journ. Anthropol. Institute. But I do not think it would be desirable to include the recent controversial papers which Howitt published against Lang. I am sorry that you and Gillen cannot yet go to West Australia, but I am glad you both have [insert] the expedition [end insert] in view; it is one of the pieces of work I have set my heart on seeing done before I die. I told you in my last letter that Sir John Murray of the Challenger has subscribed £200 for the expedition.

My new book on totemism is to include, first, a reprint of the old book, second a reprint of my four papers in the Fortnightly, and third a Geographical Survey of Totemism, which will form the bulk of the book. I intend to describe all the principal facts of totemism so far [insert] as [end insert] they are known at present in geographical or ~~es~~ ethnographical order I begin with Central and North Central Australia, drawing my ~~materia~~ materials of course exclusively from you and Gillen; then I take up South East Australia, using chiefly Howitt's facts. That is as far as I have got just now, and # [insert] what I have already printed [end insert] will make about 450 pages. So you see I am making the "Geographical Survey" pretty full. From what you tell me about Strehlow it seems to me that I cannot safely use his evidence; so I intend to make no use of it. I wish you would publish your reasons for distrusting his evidence, such as you

have stated them to me, so that I could refer to them. The shakiness of Strehlow's facts ought to be known here in Europe. As for the fellow R. H. Mathews, of course I shall not even mention him or any of his multitudinous writings. He wrote to me twice in a tone which shewed the character of the man. I did not answer ~~them~~ [insert] his letters [end insert] and shall hold no communication with him.

I am sorry that our efforts to procure a Civil List pension for Mrs Fison and her daughters were unsuccessful. I hope that something may be got out of the Victorian Government. But I have already written to you about that.

It is too soon yet to say whether I shall like Liverpool or not. But we have a very comfortable house and I have an excellent study with my books well arranged in it. I intend to lecture very little, indeed only to read a little of what I have ready for publication. I have announced four lectures on totemism in Central Australia, which will be an abstract and digest of your facts such as I have made it for my book.

The deaths of Howitt and Fison are a heavy loss to you. When you have done your work in West Australia, perhaps you will return and settle in England? I wish for our sakes we had you here, but so long as there is field work to be done in Australia, I suppose that it is better you should stay where you are. Is there much left to be gathered in Queensland? Do you ever think of going there? Why has Roth left it?

With kindest regards from us both I am always, my dear Spencer, yours very sincerely
J.G. Frazer

I hope you will write to me oftener than you have done of late years. I also have been very remiss as a correspondent.

Frazer 71

[Darley,
Armadale]

University

Melbourne

Sept 13.1911.

My dear Frazer,

It is so long since I have written that I owe you many & most sincere apologies for my silence. About four months ago – just before I left Melbourne for the north of Australia – I found amongst my papers an unfinished letter to you which I thought had been sent.

It was written to thank you for the copy of your great work on "Totemism & Exogamy [sic]" and, when going through my papers before leaving Melbourne I was very sorry to find that by some mischance I had not sent it.

During the past few years I have been simply head over ears in work connected with the University & other bodies and have had no chance whatever of doing anything in the way of research.

The death of Howitt & Fison was a severe blow because they were the only men in Victoria who really understood ethnology.

I am sorry to say that very soon after Howitt's death my old colleague & comrade Gillen became very ill. He has been attacked by some obscure form of disease that the medical men do not understand. It has left him helpless – he cannot walk & when he got into this state I felt much like giving up anthropologic work altogether which was why I wired to you that it was impossible for me to go to the west as at that time I did not care to go out unless he could come with me.

However this year the Commonwealth Government of Australia agreed to send a small party up to the Northern Territory to make preliminary investigations & I went as leader of this.

It was delightful to be once more amongst the natives & though our time was very limited I was able to secure some valuable information.

We went to Darwin & from there across to Melville Island. Then we returned to Darwin and travelled south about two hundred miles & then across the continent to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The principal things that I found were that [*Remainder of paragraph underlined in red*] amongst all the tribes the idea of reincarnation is universal & so also is the idea that sexual connection has nothing, of necessity, to do with procreation. The latter fact is interesting because we now know that this belief exists amongst all the tribes extending from south to north across the centre of Australia.

I did not find in any of these northern tribes anything like 'Intichiuma' ceremonies nor could I find any restrictions in regard to eating the totemic animal or plant. The absence of 'intichiuma' ceremonies is doubtless to be associated with the fact that the tribes in the far north live under conditions very different from those of the central area. They never suffer from drought or lack of food supply.

This seems to show that the 'Intichiuma' ceremonies are a special development of tribes that live in parts such as Central Australia where the food supply is precarious.

It is one of the most difficult things that you come across when working amongst Australian tribes – to discover the relationship between a man & his totem. Unless I had known a good deal about other tribes it would have been impossible for me even to find out that the Northern Territory tribes had any totemic system at all & it needs much further work before we are in a position to say anything very definite in regards to such matters.

I found that even the men who had been living amongst them for twenty or thirty years & were supposed to know all about them knew practically nothing.

In one or two tribes along the Roper River I came across a very curious totemic system. A man must marry a woman of a particular totem but the children belong to a different totem from that of either their father or mother. For example a rain man must marry a "paddy-melon" (species of small kangaroo) woman and their children are Euro (a kangaroo). A 'porcupine' man marries a lizard woman and their children are bats. In these tribes each 'class' has certain totems associated with it. I much wish that I could have been able to study this system in greater detail than was possible because it is quite different from anything that I had met with before. In these tribes the natives were quite clear upon the point that the spirit children know the right lubra into whom they must go.

In all of the tribes I found that the women & children believe that the sound of the bull-roarer is the voice of a great spirit that comes to take away the boys when they are initiated & also that the boys are told during the initiation ceremony when they are shown the churinga for the first time that the noise is not the voice of a spirit but is made by the churinga the latter having been used by one of the mythic ancestors of the tribe.

I could find no trace of anything like a belief in a supreme being & with, of course, differences in detail, the beliefs of these northern tribes are closely similar to those of the central tribes.

Our time was so short that I thought it advisable to concentrate my work on certain points of fundamental importance & therefore did little except study the organisation, classificatory system, totemic system & initiatory rites. Very much remains to be done & if it is to be done at all it must be done immediately. The Commonwealth Government is about to undertake measures for the settlement of the Northern Territory which means that the aborigines will very rapidly become 'civilized' – that is will lose all their old customs & beliefs.

I am hoping to be able to get away north this summer during our long vacation. It is a very bad time of the year in that part of the world – damp heat with mosquitos & malaria but it is my only chance & so I am asking the University Council to grant me leave of absence as I much wish to investigate one particular tribe that inhabits Melville Island.

This tribe is practically uncontaminated & I want to be able to study it as completely as possible. I can do this as there is one white man there who has the complete confidence of the natives. He is a great buffalo hunter & has promised me to give me a month or two of his time during the summer months when he cannot hunt buffaloes. It will not be altogether pleasant owing to climatic conditions but it is the only chance that I have of doing this work & unless I do it now it will never be done.

Most fortunately our University Council contains men who are fully realized of the fact that work of this kind is important so that I think that I will be able to get away.

The Commonwealth Government paid all the expenses of our last trip & I think that it will defray my ordinary expenses if I go north again but if it does not I shall go & pay for myself.

What I really want is a year to spend amongst the tribes & I have an idea of applying for leave of absence in order to do this. However this at present is merely an idea but I will write to you later about it.

For several years I have been kept very busy with routine work as President of the Professional Board and am feeling that if I am to do any ethnologic work in the field I must get away from this kind of work or it will be too late. My one regret is that Gillen cannot come with me.

These expeditions also mean that I cannot get home to England & staying out here there is a great tendency to become 'fossilized' unless one can come in contact personally with workers in Europe. When the University grants me leave of absence to go to the Northern Territory

this is instead of granting me leave to go to England. However much as I would like to come home it is more important to do the work out here.

I was very much interested a day or two ago when Professor Tucker whose name you may know as a classical scholar – he is an old Fellow of Johns & Professor of Classics in our University – asked me if I knew anything of a belief amongst savages of sexual connections not of necessity being associated with procreation. When I asked him why he told me that he had been studying the ancient myths & had been much struck with the fact that certain of these – such as those dealing with the birth of children after women had bathed in waters reputed to be haunted by river gods could only be explained on the theory that the ancient belief – not amongst the Greeks but amongst their ancestors – was that these waters were the home of spirit children who went into the women when they bathed. This was only one instance.

He had not read our work & told me that he fully expected me to say that it was quite impossible that any such idea could exist at the present day but that he was quite convinced after his study of the ancient myths that the latter pointed back to a time when the belief of procreation not being associated with sexual intercourse was prevalent.

I told him of our results amongst the Central Australian tribes which entirely fit in with the conclusions at which he has quite independently arrived and now he is reading your “Totemism & Exogamy”.

I am thinking of writing a paper for the Anthropological Institute on this question. Lang & others write of this belief as if it were confined to the Arunta & therefore simply a “freak”. Lang quotes our old friend Howitt as one who studied the Australian natives in their primitive state. As a matter of fact all of Howitt’s work in Victoria was done amongst natives who had long been civilized & had lost their old beliefs. The only wild natives that he met were those in the centre & amongst these he saw nothing whatever of their sacred ceremonies in fact he knew nothing of the existence of such things because at that time he had not met Fison & had never seriously studied them. It is not to be wondered at that Howitt did not come across this belief. Also he was chiefly interested in the organisation question.

I ought to be starting off just about the time that you receive this as I hope to leave Melbourne on Nov. 1st for Darwin. If possible I shall stay up there till about the beginning of February but it will be horribly hot & damp.

With kindest regards & most sincere apologies for my long silence

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 72

Melbourne

July 27. 1913

My dear Frazer,

I have been owing you a letter for a long time but after a year’s absence it is difficult to get into the groove of University & other work, and on the top of all this, to write up results.

On the whole I did fairly well more especially as it was new ground and I was amongst tribes who knew me not. At first one feels hopelessly lost but thanks to one or two men who knew the natives I got into touch with them. Most unfortunately Departmental work occupied much of my time and an accident due to a spear hitting my right shin bone – a pure accident as I drove the spear in myself – laid me low for more than two months during the cool season when otherwise I should have been out amongst the natives.

However on Melville Island & on the Alligator Rivers I got some very good results – nothing absolutely new but good corroboration & also extension in some ways of previous work.

In 1911 I could find no trace of Intichiuma ceremonies but last year with much more opportunity for study I came across undoubted traces of them – in fact the ceremonies themselves.

In regard to the procreation question I got most interesting evidence – better in some respects than we had before. In the Kakadu tribe on the Alligator River the belief is that when a person dies his spirit part goes out & stays with his bones. They call this spirit Yalmuru. After a time the Yalmuru divides into two parts itself and an Iwaiyu. The latter being to the Yalmuru much what a man’s shadow is to a man.

When the Yalmuru decides to be born again he & this iwaiyu go out and the latter in the form of a small frog [?pig] goes into some food – a yam or a fish for example. The Yalmuru leads the future father to the food – helps him to catch or find it. The Iwaiyu jumps out & is caught

by the Yalmuru. At right time the two come to the camp the Iwaiyu smells the father & mother – feels their hair and breast etc – and then after satisfying itself that the lubra is the right one to be its mother goes inside her.

Later on the Yalmuru comes up at night and whispers in the fathers ear saying that the child inside the mother is so & so mentioning the actual name of the ancestor who is being reincarnated & also telling the father what the child's totem is.

Another very interesting thing in connection with the Yalmuru is that when the child is grown up into a man the Yalmuru comes some night & tells him that he -- ie the Yalmuru – is growing old, his eyes are dim and his bones sore & that he wants to rest altogether. He then tells the Iwaiyu, that is the spirit of the man, that he must look after the future child and its totem. As the natives said Baranga yalmuru wariji ge: iwaiyu megeiri yalmuru, which means the old yalmuru is done for completely, the Iwaiyu is the new Yalmuru. As I have said in the account that I hope to get out soon – it suggested two things first a very crude expression of the idea “the King is dead: long live the king” and second of a foreshadowing of Weismann's theory of the continuity of the Germ Plasma. There is constant splitting off of a [insert] new [end insert] spirit from an old one – one half persists the other dies but a perfect continuity is preserved.

The Alligator natives have detailed traditions – as also have all the tribes – of how great ancestors wandered over the country leaving numbers of spirit children behind them who have been reincarnated time after time. They know also who everyone is a reincarnation of as the names are perpetuated – in fact the Yalmuru always tells the father who the child is and warns him that no other name must be given to it.

It takes a long time & most patient worming out to get much from the natives & I wish I could have had more opportunity. However you will be interested in some of the results.

I can see that in the future workers who come in contact as most will do now with more or less civilized natives will not come across these beliefs because naturally they are the first to change when a few half castes have appeared on the scene but I am more than ever convinced that beliefs with regard to procreation more or less like those of the Arunta & Kakadu tribes are very widely spread – in fact if we could have had evidence from the south before the natives were contaminated in Victoria & New South Wales & S. Australia I feel sure we should have come across the same thing there.

I hope to get through my notes in a month or two but can only get a very broken time in which to work at them.

Kindest regards to yourself & Mrs. Frazer. There is just the remotest chance that I may have to make a flying visit to England on business at the end of this year but please do not say anything about it as no one knows out here & it is only a chance.

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer.

Frazer 73
University.
Melbourne.
Oct 3. 13

My dear Frazer,

This is only a line to say that I have arranged to come home for a flying visit on business matters really) [sic] at the end of this year. I leave here early in December & should be home about the middle of January. It is of course a bad time of the year but I am bringing with me my Kinematographies and Phonograph Records which I hope to be able to show to some of the English anthropologists as they will give them a better idea of our Australian savages than anything else.

At the present time I am trying to write up the results of my last visit to the Northern Territory & hope to complete this in about a month but I find it difficult to get continuous time.

I see that Brown has just published a paper in the A.I. Journal. To my surprize & disappointment he seems to have come into contact mainly with decadent tribes. Also he seems inclined to generalize from his knowledge of them in regard to Australian tribes as a whole which is dangerous. One thing seems to stand out both in his work and in that of Mrs. Bates – that the Western natives in most important respects are very similar to the Central. When I know the exact date of my leaving I will write again meanwhile with kindest regards to yourself and Mrs. Frazer

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

P.S. I am sending you a copy of a short paper that came out while I was in the N.T. in case the Department did not send one

W.B.S.

Frazer 74

[Darley,
Armada]le]

University
Melbourne

Nov. 15. 13

My dear Frazer,

I have taken my passage home in the P. & O. steam 'Mongolia' leaving her on Dec. 2nd. I shall come overland from Marseilles & reach London early in January. My address there will be Morley's Hotel and after I have got through the preliminary stages of some business I hope to see you in Cambridge if you should happen to be there at that time of the year. I shall only have about four weeks in England as I must be back in Melbourne in the middle of March.

I am very hard at work with Examinations but, on the voyage home, hope to complete a book dealing with the work that I did last year in the Northern Territory.

My time there was so much occupied with routine work as Head of the Aboriginal Department & I lost so much valuable time at the best time of the year for travelling owing to an accident to my leg, but my results are by no means what I wish they were. However they are I think good so far as they go & probably represent my last contribution to field anthropological work because it is not likely that I shall be able to go into the wilds again. Neither my wife nor myself are growing younger. My wife has been most self-sacrificing in regard to my work & has had as you can imagine many anxious times. She is not in good health & it would not be right for me to go out again so I must regard my field work as finished – except perhaps for minor works which will not mean long absence from home.

While going through my notes I have often wished that I could get back again to clear up certain points but these are more or less matters of details & I do not think that any further investigation of our [insert] central [end insert] tribes would yield anything of primary importance. I do not know whether Brown has much more to say about the West Australian natives but they seem to be very much like the Central ones in all fundamental points & I think that we have now a fairly good knowledge of the Australian tribes generally – except of course the west and Arnhem's land where they are too wild to do anything with at present. I fancy however that these are much the same as the Kakadu amongst whom I was working last year.

With kindest regards to yourself and Mrs. Frazer

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.

P.S. I hear that several anthropologists are coming out with the Brit. Ass next year. Some of them seem to think that we keep tribes of wild aboriginals in our back yards to work at when we feel so disposed.

W.B.S.

Frazer 75

Thank you for your letter just received

We look forward to seeing you at the Albemarle Club 37 Dover Street on Monday 18th at 7 p.m. Morning dress

No. 1 Brick Court
Middle Temple, E.C.

15th Dec. 1916

My dear Spencer

I was delighted to hear of your being in England, and I look forward eagerly to seeing you and having a talk with you. I would not miss it for much. My Wife has already written proposing various dates for you to come to us. You must not go without seeing us. I wish to talk to you about various things, particularly about another anthropological work which I wish you to write – a sort of general view of the social organization and totemism of the Australian natives giving us your mature views in the subject, with criticisms of the various theories that have been propounded (Durkheim's, my own, &c) and a consideration of the questions raised

[insert] indirectly [end insert] by Rivers in his Social History of Melanesia, with regard to the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the Australian race, the diffusion of culture in the Australian and neighbouring areas, the progress or degradation of culture among the Australians, &c. The book should be a statement of the general conclusions which you have reached on these topics as the result of many years of observation and reflection. It seems to me that science has almost a right to ask such a book from you. Think of it seriously.

I have contrived to catch a cold which has confined me to the house today and will probably confine me tomorrow also, so that I could see you any time you cared to call. But of course my Wife also wishes much to see you and would be sorry to miss you. She is out just now and I am not sure of her movements tomorrow.

Counting on seeing you some time without fail, and with kindest regards

I ever am

yours very sincerely

J.G. Frazer

Frazer 76

[Morley's Hotel,
Trafalgar Square,
London. W.C.]

16.12.16

My dear Frazer,

I was very glad to receive your letter this evening and hope that your cold is better. I have been obliged to travel about a good deal since reaching England and am doing my best to shake off the worst cold that I have had for long. This is truly a charming climate. I had to hang about at Waterloo Station this morning awaiting the arrival of a train in the fog for two weary hours which has not improved matters. However I am very much looking forward to seeing you on Monday. As you know, Anthropology is a "sick" subject with me – in fact I have been so busy with other things since last we met that I have done little in that direction beyond being I hope of some little help to a man called Malinowski who in doing the best work that I think has yet been done in Papua – he has made an intensive study of the natives of the Trobriand Islands and his work will interest you much when it is published.

River's "Melanesia" I have read but do not feel that I have got a real "grip" of it. There is rather too much theorizing in it to please me & one has a suspicion that he tends to argue in a circle. However we will talk matter over on Monday when it will be a great pleasure to see you.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer

Frazer 77

[University of Oxford
Pitt Rivers Museum]

11 July 1964

Two letters from Sir James Frazer (J.G. Frazer) to Sir Baldwin Spencer (W.B. Spencer); 15 Dec. 1916 (with added notes from Lily Frazer, his wife) & 18 September 1921.

Sent by Mrs C.H. Rowan, Balnarring, Victoria, Australia through Dorothy, Lady Young, 106 Oakwood Court, London W. 14 Both are Spencer's daughters. [*This is written by TK Penniman I would say*]

1 Brick Court

Middle Temple, E.C.

18th September 1916

My dear Spencer,

I was delighted to get and read your Presidential Address to the last meeting of the Australasian Association. From it I am glad to see that you have not quite deserted the anthropological shop for the Muses' Hill. I had somehow pictured you as seated on the top of that eminence, surrounded by artists and poets, twangling [sic] a golden lyre, and lifting up your voice in the divine chorus or circling in the dance about the altar. But it appears that you can still descend from these Olympic heights to common life and simple savages.

Needless to say I was much interested, and I may add pleased, to see you repelling the attempts of Rivers to land his betel people, or his kava people, or whatever the baffled colonists may have been, on the shores of Australia. So far as I could judge, you repulsed

these Johnnies [sic] with great slaughter. I suppose the survivors will be dumped somewhere else.

In your Address you speak of three distinct modes of making fire as practised among the Australian aborigines. What are the modes? I should be greatly obliged if you would send me a few lines indicating them. I have some idea of taking up the early history of fire as a subject of investigation. It has never, so far as I know, been seriously tackled, and it is worth investigating, considering the immense importance which the discovery of fire has had in moulding human destiny. I have already written a pretty long chapter containing many legends of the first discovery of fire, but they do not go far to reveal the way in which men first learned to produce fire. Probably we shall never get beyond a more or less plausible conjecture. I incline to the view (not all novel [sic] or original) that men first learned to produce fire accidentally in the process of boring one stick with another or of chipping flints. But I wish to make a fairly complete collection of facts as to primitive modes of kindling fire, noting the geographical diffusion of the various modes and the natural conditions (in regard to the different sorts of woods and minerals &c.) which may have favoured the discovery. Henry Balfour, who has studied the question for many years, tells me that the easiest way of making fire is the fire-drill made of two pieces of bamboo, he himself can make fire in this way in forty seconds. The stick-and-groove method, he says, is difficult and tedious.

I have undertaken to give three annual courses of lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge. The first course will be on the "Belief in immortality and the Worship of the Dead in Polynesia and Micronesia." They will be a continuation of my Gifford lectures and will form a second volume to that work.

When you write, as I hope you will do soon, tell me about yourself and what you are doing. Have you retired from the chair at Melbourne?

My Wife is well, but she had two very serious illnesses the last two winters, both of them in Paris. She has just completed and passed for the press a French translation of "Adonis." which will be published by the Musée Guimet in Paris.

Roscoe is bringing out a popular account of his recent expedition to Central Africa. It will be followed by a full scientific account in several volumes. He has brought back very interesting materials.

My Wife joins me in kindest regards to you. Will you not come over and see us? In any case, write soon.

Yours always most sincerely
J.G. Frazer

Frazer 78

Queen Anne's Mansions, St James's Park, London, S.W. 1

5th October, 1927

My dear Spencer,

I return your proof. Few things in life would give me so much pleasure as such a dedication. So our names will go down linked together, yours, I am sure, to a distant posterity and it will carry mine with it; for your reputation rests, and will long rest, on the fundamental facts of human history which you have discovered and which, but for you, might have remained unknown. You have opened up, in my opinion, a deeper mine into the past of human institutions than any one else has ever done; the rest seem by comparison to be scratching the surface. I have worked at the products you have brought up from the mine, as hundreds of people are doing and will do, for generations to come. I look forward with intense interest to the publication of your book, containing the mature results of your long investigations. I cannot be too thankful that you have been granted the strength of body and vigour of mind to carry them to completion, and I trust that you will be spared yet for many years to do more work for anthropology.

In a fortnight or so you will receive a volume containing some of the general results of my studies in the form of extracts from my published writings. There is nothing new in it (except a brief note on totemism on p. 363) but perhaps you will read over again some of the old passages for the sake of your friend. If you do you will see in the section dealing with Man in Society how much my thoughts have been occupied with the problems raised by your discoveries.

When do you leave for Australia? We must meet before you go. There seems still so much to think about and to say I wish your book could have come out before your departure so that we might speak of it together.

My dear Spencer, I thank you from my heart for the honour you have done me.
I am
always your attached friend and thankful learner
James G. Frazer

Frazer 79

Hotel Terminus-St Lazare, Paris, Christmas Eve, 1928

My dear Spencer,

Your friendly card with its Christmas greeting and good wishes is very welcome to us both, and we cordially reciprocate your good wishes for the New Year. May you have health and strength and leisure to carry on your splendid work for yet many years to come for the greater good of science, especially the science of primitive man. I thank you heartily for the two fine volumes of "Wanderings in Wild Australia," which I am reading at leisure moments with enjoyment and profit. What between your graphic descriptions and the numerous photographs and drawings (most of them, I see, from your hand or camera) one seems to follow you in your wanderings and to see everything with your eyes. You do well to fill in the natural background against which your natives led their strange life and played their queer pranks. It is not a beautiful nature, but as you say it is fascinating, at least you make it so for your readers. I intend to read the two big volumes solidly through, after which I am sure that I shall be better able to understand the life and thought of the aborigines. It is a wonderful picture of prehistoric, yet living, man that you and Gillen have opened up to us. Without you two the thing would never have been done. I remember that in one of your early letters you spoke of the wild enthusiasm with which Gillen pursued the enquiry. It is no wonder. Such a chance has been given to very few men, and when it comes it so seldom happens that the right men are there to take it. On the whole, take it all in all, Australia has been very fortunate in its men, from Eyre and Grey down (in point of time) to Howitt, Roth, Gillen and yourself. All have been Englishmen (I do not speak of Strehlow, whose work I have not studied), I do not remember that there has been any Scotchmen to speak of among them.

I wish you would write and let us know your plans. We hope we shall still find you in England on our return. But the date of our return is uncertain, depending largely on my wife's health, which, though not bad, is not so good as we could wish. We may go for a time to the Riviera for the sake of sunshine before returning to the cloudy skies of England. However, we ought not to grumble after the splendid summer and autumn of this year, of which you have been able to judge for yourself.

I continue my long labours at Ovid, correcting proofs and examining photographs [insert] of manuscripts, a rather tedious task [end insert]. However, the commentary is now in pages and practically in its final form. If, or rather when, you write let me know your decision as to your future plans of work. Is it to be Tierra del Fuego or Australia? You know I am for Australia and bear a grudge at the bad man unknown who is poaching on what should be your preserves. Is there any chance of your coming over to Paris? We expect to be here till well on in January. My Wife joins me in affectionate greetings and in all hearty good wishes for the New Year.

Yours always very sincerely

James G. Frazer

My Wife bids me tell you to come and join us here as you did early in the year. Come at any time you will always be more than welcome

Frazer 80

Roosting and private temporary postal address: General Northern Hotel

Kings +

London

N.1

[British Museum

London: W.C.1

May 28, 1932

Dear Mr. Penniman

I long wanted to thank you for endless things--; &, I fancy, I cannot do better than [insert] to [illegible] [end insert] by enclosing J.G.'s Glasgow speech --; for this I have been waiting. A few -- very few copies were sent to me [insert] at first [end insert] by J.G.'s friend: Mr. G.W. Macfarlane, who, on his own pottering at [insert] about [end insert] the Notebooks i.e.

pottering means that I think of their publications they can be Rotographed i.e. first white on black but by a second process more Black on White – To-day J.G.'s special intimate Note book went to the photographers & will next week, gives specimen – His [illegible] a lengthy nor costly [insert] affair [end insert] – memoirs see what can be done – We settle at C... [illegible] in July & till December 00 & ... well? I dont let Megrass [?] grow under the Semismen [?] nor [insert] under [end insert] Notebooks nor [insert] under [end insert] Noting Ever gratefully Lilly Frazer

Frazer 81

Goldsmith Building, London E.C.4

4th November 1930

Dear Mr. Penniman,

I have pleasure in enclosing the proofs of my Spencer articles corrected You would have had them sooner, but after leaving Oxford we paid a visit to a friend in the West of England, from which we only returned last night. Of course I never thought of returning the proofs to any one but you from whom I had received them. I have made a few corrections, so I am venturing to ask for a revise in second proof, which I hope you will kindly grant.

I should be glad to know when the volume is likely to be published. I have a special reason for asking, for I should like to include my article in a volume of collected papers which I am preparing, always of course on the condition that the Clarendon Press and the editors of the memorial volume appears first. I spoke to Dr. Marett about this on Friday last at Exeter, and he very kindly said that he had no objection to my proposal and that he would use his influence with the Delegates of the Clarendon Press to secure their consent. My own volume is being set up in type, but it can hardly be published before the spring, say March or April. Do you expect the Spencer volume to appear before that? If I ~~was~~ [insert] were [end insert] assured of that and of the consent of the Clarendon Press I would have my Spencer article set up in type in the meantime, but would keep back the volume till after the appearance of yours.

Though the meeting on Thursday last was in a sense a very sad one, yet I was glad to be present at it and was and am very grateful to you and the Oxford Anthropological Society for inviting my Wife and me to it. Spencer's friendship was one of the very greatest privileges of my life and I am proud to think that I am to be associated with him in the memorial volume. In my opinion it is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of his scientific work and the splendid qualities of the men which went to the making of it.

With very kind regards, in which my Wife joins me,

I am

Yours very sincerely

James G. Frazer

This morning we received a very Kind and touching letter from Mrs. Young.

My Wife understood from Dr James that you are succeeding him in the Presidency of the Folk-lore Society. If that is so we hope that you will sometime come to see me in the Temple when you are in London.

Transcribed by Alison Petch June / July 2015.