



## History of Anthropology Newsletter

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Volume 22  
Issue 2 December 1995

Article 3

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1-1-1995

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## CLIO'S FANCY: DOCUMENTS TO PIQUE THE HISTORICAL IMAGINATION

### "The Stakes for which We Play Are Too High To Allow of Experiment": Colonial Administrators of Papua on Their Anthropological Training by Radcliffe-Brown

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Upon assuming the new Rockefeller Foundation funded chair in anthropology at Sydney in 1926, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown presented a plan for providing training to colonial officers serving in New Guinea. Proposing a year at Sydney for cadets and a shorter "intensive course" for senior officers, the plan was geared particularly for the Mandated Territory of New Guinea; but intensive courses were also organized for officers of the neighboring Territory of Papua, which had been administered by its lieutenant governor, Sir Hubert Murray, since 1908 (PNG: Series G69, folder 7/8, "Teaching of anthropology," 1926-27).

Murray's interests in exploring administrative uses for anthropology were expressed in his appointment of a "Government Anthropologist" in Papua and in his early, instrumental help gaining approval for the Sydney chair, whose Rockefeller support was conditional upon Australian government contributions. Nevertheless, Murray took exception to the preservationist bias of functionalist theory, which seemed to him to suggest that every native custom was indispensable in maintaining social or psychological "integration" — whereas Murray himself saw the promotion of certain types of developmental social change as an essential part of the gradually "civilizing" process toward which colonial administration aimed. For Murray, the really live question was how to balance the imperative for change with a paternalistic toleration motivated by humanistic sympathy as well as by the expediency of avoiding inciting resistance. His model anthropologist was his government anthropologist, F.E. Williams, who was capable of dividing customs into "good, indifferent, and bad" (Williams 1928:99) and who shared, notwithstanding differences of opinion as to specifics, Murray's basic ideal of "dovetailing existing customs into the new civilisation which we are introducing" (Murray 1924:vii).

From this perspective, Murray took exception when Radcliffe-Brown inaugurated the Sydney anthropology journal *Oceania* in April 1930 with an essay by Camilla Wedgwood arguing that "Warfare in Melanesia" served important social functions — which Murray read as a fussing over subtleties "while British subjects (Papuaans) are roasting one another alive within 24 hours of Port Moresby" (quoted in Wise 1985:100). Radcliffe-Brown himself argued the point ("warfare is an element in social integration") the following month in an address — attended by Murray — at the Brisbane meetings of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (Radcliffe-Brown 1930:272). In this context, Murray was not sympathetic when a political tempest — whose origins lay elsewhere (see Stocking 1995:347-49 and Wise 1985:97-103) — soon led to a reduction in the contributions of the Australian states to the Sydney program, threatening the entire arrangement with the Rockefeller Foundation.

Apparently, Murray was forwarded a copy of Radcliffe-Brown's letter—the first excerpted here—urging that the federal government make up the shortfall in state contributions, because "the three most important aspects of our work [at Sydney], namely the training of cadets and officers, the making of a scientific record of the Australian aborigines, and the study of the New Guinea natives with a view to providing the administration with the precise knowledge needed for the handling of practical problems, are all matters that concern the Commonwealth rather than the states" In the letter, Radcliffe-Brown suggested that, "if you consult some of the senior officers of Papua who have attended our short course...

you would obtain from them strong statements of the value of the teaching we provide" (AA: Radcliffe-Brown/McLaren 13 Aug 1930). Murray put this to the test, dispatching a circular questionnaire to senior district officers who had taken the course. The responses obtained, and Murray's discussion of them for the Commonwealth prime minister, are reproduced below.

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[From Radcliffe-Brown to J. G. McLaren, Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, Canberra, 13/8/30]

... With regard to the training of officers of Papua and New Guinea, the three years in which we have been carrying out this work is not long enough to demonstrate its full value. You may remember that in the first conversation that I had with you, I asked for a period of seven years in which to show what anthropology could do on behalf of native administration. I think, however, that if you would consult some of the senior officers of Papua who have attended our short course, such as Humphries or Bastard, you would obtain from them strong statements of the value of the teaching we provide. Moreover, on the basis of the experience of three years, I am proposing to alter our courses next year in such a way as to adapt them even better than hitherto to the special needs of the cadets and officers of the Territories.

In Great Britain the training of the officers of the African Colonies in anthropology is now regarded as an essential part of their preparation for the work of administration. During the past few years, the importance of anthropology in this connection has been increasingly recognized not only in Great Britain but also in France and Holland and by the League of Nations. All other Colonial powers are extending their work in this connection and it would be a great pity if Australia were to fall out of line. . . .

We have also sent some research workers to New Guinea and their results when published will be of considerable value to the administration. We were planning to extend this work so as to institute a systematic sociological survey of the Mandated Territory, paying particular attention to subjects such as land tenure, the economics of native foods, depopulation and the influence of European contact on the native peoples. Some such systematic investigation is absolutely necessary to place the administration of New Guinea on a sound footing and the Government Anthropologist cannot possibly undertake more than a very small portion of what needs to be done. Moreover, the training that we can at present give to the cadets is not by any means what it should be because we have not as yet sufficient knowledge about the social systems of the peoples of New Guinea. As the results of scientific research become available, we can greatly improve the training that we offer to cadets and officers. . . .

[from Murray to Resident Magistrates, November 12, 1930:]

...(1) whether the course, apart from its general interest, has been of any assistance to [you] in the discharge of [your] duty;

(2) if it has been of assistance, whether the assistance has been (a) general, as helping [you] to form a better idea of the general attitude of the native to the Government and European civilisation as they know it; or (b) particular, as helping [you] to come to a correct conclusion on problems which have actually arisen;

(3) if (b), state briefly the problems in which has helped [you], and how it has helped.

[From Sydney H. Chance, Assistant Resident Magistrate, Rigo, C.D. 27/12/30:]

...[T]he Course I did at the Sydney University...has helped me greatly in the discharge of my duties, more particularly in forming correct conclusions in the C.N.M. and also in the taxation field by enabling me to make more correct censuses than I have ever been able to before--compiling a census is NOT easy work as the uninitiated might be led to think, there is more in it than "putting down a list of names"[;] the family groups and relationships are to be considered.

The course has been helpful in settling land disputes, and, in one case, that is where a mother claimed she did not want her daughter to marry a man on account of consanguinity, I was able, by making a chart of the people concerned, to prove that there was nothing to prevent the couple marrying. The real reason was the the mother was selfish and did not want to lose a garden worker. Of course I did not interfere, as it was a marriage proposition, but the problem was an interesting one.

Although we had what Professor Brown called lectures in "Colonial Administration" I am afraid the course was not particularly helpful in giving me a better idea of the general attitude of the natives towards our administration.

I will be perfectly frank and admit that the Course, by giving me a better knowledge of native customs, has tended to make me more lenient towards the natives, but His Excellency himself in one of his Circ. Instructions points out that magistrates are apt to worry too much about matters of no real import and that by doing so they may drive the natives into a phase of passive resistance. This is exactly my point.

In conclusion I will say that I would like to do more study of Anthropology as a science as knowledge is no load to carry about and it cannot but help a person whose "job" is the control and management of primitive people-- There is the danger, of course, that one, when visiting interesting people, will do more anthropology than real work, but I should say that would even better than charging around the country doing five or six villages a day, if that is done I am sure that the residents must think we have no interest in them.

[From A.C. Hall, Assistant Resident Magistrate, Losuia, Trobriands, 27/12/30:]

. . . (i) Yes.

(ii) General.

I attended lectures at the Sydney University from 19th March to the 16th August, 1929, and consider it was time very well and profitably spent. . . .

[From Alex C. Rentoul, Resident Magistrate, Port Moresby, C.D. 28/11/1930:]

...I have given considerable thought to the questions contained therein, but to your Question (i) . . . I regret to have to reply in the negative.

My disappointment with the course is mainly due to the fact that the Sydney Anthropological school under the direction of Professor Radcliffe Brown is primarily a Sociological school, and models itself upon the London school of Professor Malinowski. Before the course had proceeded far it became

apparent to me that the writings of MALINOWSKI and especially his investigations into that small portion of Papuan Melanesia, which he covered, are accepted by Radcliffe Brown with an unquestionable faith surprising in one who has not yet visited this Territory, or had any opportunity of checking the investigations of the Master in whom he so wholeheartedly believes.

I am afraid when I set out I imagined I was about to enjoy a course of Anthropology more after the technological school, but in this I was grievously disappointed. The Sydney school being a sociological school, the study of native society is its main passion.

Apparently the Sydney school has very little sympathy in the work of the technologists--such as Haddon for instance, and those men who spend their days in the collection of data, the study of native customs, and in tracing the drift of cultures and that kind of thing. The subjects of housing, canoe building and agriculture interest this school but little. What they are interested in is the effect of such things upon Society. The description of a native ceremony such as a marriage or funeral, no matter how beautifully done, will fail to interest them unless one is also able to demonstrate to them the effect of such crises upon the social group. Useless it is to describe in detail the building of a canoe from the fall of the tree to the launching of the craft unless the psychological effect of each operation is carefully analysed. It gave me a saddening feeling that much of the work carried out so laborously by officers in the past has been quite useless, but when I went on and learnt to what extremes this school can go in the treatment of the subject, I changed my opinion.

Broadly I think (I may be wrong of course), that the Sydney school, specializing as it does in Sociology is not the school best fitted to train or improve either officers or missionaries for work amongst Papuan tribes. Candidly I found the lectures of Radcliffe Brown more interesting than instructive. His studies of the South African tribes were most entertaining, and his explanation of the complicated social grouping of the Australian Aboriginees [sic] gave opportunity to this gifted lecturer to indulge in what I can only term mental acrobatics.

I at least came away from these entertainments without feeling that I had learnt one scrap more about the Papuans or Melanesians than I already knew.

To Dr. Firth, a New Zealander and graduate of London University, I think we "external students" were indebted for most of the knowledge we did absorb. To this lecturer was entrusted the difficult task of acting as a kind of bridge between the teaching we had missed and introducing us to that which was to come. As these "talks" took place in his own study we were able to come into closer touch with many subjects than we would otherwise have done. Dr. Firth is a very sincere and patient teacher, and I am grateful to him.

My humble opinion is that the course might prove valuable to young cadets about to embark on work amongst a native people, whom up to the present they have been accustomed to look upon as mere "savages" or "heathen." To the fledglings of the 1st and 2nd year Arts it must be not only interesting, but also enlightening to hear that the majority of savages have their own "religious" beliefs, their moral codes, and are possessed of hundreds of tabus and interesting customs, the existence of which they (the students) had hitherto lived in ignorance.

To the average intelligent officer working in the Papuan outback, and with a service of say 10 to 15 years behind him, these things have, or should have, become as an open book, learnt in the hard routine of experience with natives amongst whom he has lived as magistrate, referee, helper, and amateur

medical man. By that experience he should have acquired much of the knowledge which is merely touched upon by Radcliffe Brown, and no matter how fascinated he might become by that Professor's lectures on more abstract subjects, I think he would find, as I did, that the extra knowledge acquired would hardly assist him in grappling the better with a land dispute at Hanuabada village, or in the bringing of a nervous tribe under comfortable Government control.

I came from these lectures with a quantity of data enabling me at any time to set about the compilation of a complicated family tree showing the ramifications of the typical Papuan tribe. Without this preliminary step I was assured that I should never be able properly to grapple with the problems of any tribe amongst whom I should find myself. That was a saddening prediction, but fortunately I did not believe it.

I am afraid that Professor Radcliffe Brown has no great admiration for the methods or results of this Administration. (I may be wrong in this, but I certainly gathered this idea).

I rather sympathize with this Professor in his position. Surrounded as he is at present by an academic atmosphere, it is perhaps inevitable that he should assume a critical attitude towards those toiling in the field. I am afraid that this professor has become so facile in his single subject that he feels certain that, could he but spare the time to come and examine our native society, as Malinowski did that of the Trobriands, he could point out to us in a very short time the tremendous mistakes we have made.

Perhaps, however, if Radcliffe Brown decided upon such a step, some little time spent amongst the lime stone ridges of Central Papua might give him an insight into the difficulties, which are quietly faced and overcome by an Administration, which is grappling successfully with realities, and which has not had much time to expend on the abstract questions of social anthropology.

If it be not out of place in this letter, I would like to ask that if the exigencies of the service permit, I might be stationed for a time at Misima, as I would there find myself again within the field that Malinowski has covered, and I would like to examine at first hand some aspects of the KULA circle of wealth from another angle. That is, of course, after my work in Port Moresby has been completed. .

..

[From W. R. Humphries, Resident Magistrate, N.E.D., Cape Nelson, 16/12/30:]

... (i) Yes; undoubtedly.

(ii) I would not say that it has helped me to a clearer understanding of the attitude of the natives to the Government and civilisation. It has helped me rather to a better understanding of the natives attitude toward things native, towards his family, group, ancestors, relations, his duties and responsibilities.

(iii) Yes, it has helped me particularly.

In November of last year I was called upon to settle a dispute as to the ownership of certain sago trees near LEBAI. A. had planted on B's land. Years ago I should have been guided by European law. Now instead I tested what I had learned during the Course. I found that B having given A leave to plant the trees made A's title to them good, but only to the trees actually planted with permission--not to the trees growing about them by accident or design.

I was called upon recently to take action in connection with the offensive behaviour of some girls at NANIU Mission Station towards certain male relatives. A school girl had been mildly punished or was threatened with punishment (I forget which) if she persisted with such behaviour. I refused to interfere because I knew (thanks to the Course) of such a thing as joking relationship. Sexes of the same generation often abuse and joke at the expense of their relatives whom they must not marry. The school girl in question was related to her victim. The Missionary saw my point, said the practice was common (though it had not been understood) and that hence forth it would not be interdicted. I might mention that the men concerned never complain.

Two years ago at SINIFARA I was on the point of punishing a man who had wilfully destroyed a number of very fine coconut trees belonging to his father. I did not do so. I accepted the man's explanation that he had destroyed the trees because of his grief for his father who had recently died. I learned that it was the custom. I did not understand it thoroughly until I had taken the Course in Anthropology. It was a real problem until then. Now I don't worry about it. It is no more wasteful and expensive than European funerals. If the trees were not cut down . . . , discontent would go unassuaged. The point now is how much harm done, how much good. I endeavour to keep the destruction within bounds by suitable suggestions.

These three instances come readily to mind. But I am using the knowledge I gained during the Course in connection with other problems active at present--incarceration of widows, establishment of friendly relations between hostile groups, e.g. BARUGA and the so called DORIRI.

And with regard to (ii) I must say that what is helping me to a clearer understanding of the attitude of the natives toward the Government are the Conferences or Council Meetings that I am holding or arranging throughout the Division. I have just returned from several very successful meetings on the north-coast. Through these council meetings I have learned in six months more than I learned in six years formerly on this subject--the attitude of the native towards the Government and civilisation. . . .

[From Leo Austen, Resident Magistrate, Kikori district]

... (i) Yes

(ii. a) ...I am rather chary of believing that I understand or have a better idea of the general attitude of the native towards the Govt. and European civilization. I think since taking the course I am inclined to believe that I know less of this attitude than I thought I did previously.

(b) Yes; Matrimonial troubles (out of Court) Civil Claims and sometimes Court evidence. This is rather vague, but the main help has been to know when lies are being told or when a custom is being twisted to suit one of the parties. In general administration a knowledge of anthropology helps me in issuing orders and seeing they do not clash with native custom, when such is harmless, e.g. an order is issued to repair or build a dubu. Later the dubu on next visit is found incomplected. Natives say they have been dancing. Naturally on the face of it this would seem rank disobedience. In reality, no. The dance may have been something special that rendered it impossible to repair the dubu until such had been finished or the dance might have been held elsewhere on account of its sacredness. Both were reasonable excuses, when one delved, but unless one did probably all the information obtained was "Oh, we have been to a dance". This is only one example.

[From E.M. Bastard, Resident Magistrate, Northern Division, 8/12/30]

...the course has been of general assistance to me in my dealing with the natives, it has been a decided help in settling the numerous troubles brought before one, which come under the heading of Civil Claims, and, when one has referred to a Councillor or elderly man for "custom" in a certain case, with the slight knowledge of Anthropology obtained, one has had confidence or otherwise in the reply. I have been able to read Anthropological works in connection with Papua more intelligently than previously. I now realise that all ritual has some significance and most probably a definite purpose, also, the fact that houses are round or square, village laid out in streets, or forming a circle, etc. etc. did not convey to me previously that there was possibly a reason for same. I cannot say that the Course has so far helped me to come to a correct solution on any particular problem, but, would quote that when Ex. V.C. SIRIRIBA of SINEMI sent his equipment to BUNA by his brother, who stated that the wife of SIRIRIBA had died, and that SIRIRIBA had gone into seclusion for some months, I realised the native's point of view and accepted the action as his resignation, whereas, possibly without the slight knowledge of Anthropology one might not have understood the position so thoroughly

[From Lieutenant-Governor J. H. P. Murray, Port Moresby, to The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, Canberra, 9/2/31]

...I think that, taking the answers generally, one may come to the conclusion that the Course has been beneficial to the majority of the officers; though not so beneficial as some of the more enthusiastic devotees of anthropology might have expected. It will be seen that Mr. Humphries is the only one who gives concrete instances of cases where a knowledge of anthropology has helped him; and the instances he gives can not be taken very seriously. Everyone in the services knows that our law does not apply to native land, and that one man may own the land and another the coconuts growing on it; so that, when land is bought, the owner of the coconuts must often be paid as well as the owner of the land. Mr. Humphries (whom I have seen since) admits that he knew this, but he says that the existence of what he calls "joking relationships" was unknown to him before he attended the Course. This is surprising--I thought that everyone knew of this--but of course I accept Mr. Humphries' statement.

The third instance hardly supports his contention; for he decided the case, and decided it rightly, before he went to the Course. Any one in the service would have decided in the same way, quite apart from any knowledge of anthropology.

Mr. Austen gives a good example of how a knowledge of anthropology might assist an Officer, in the instance of the dubu which remained unfinished on account of a dance. An impatient and inexperienced officer might in such a case make a mistake from which a knowledge of anthropology might save him.

Mr. Chance did not find the lecture on colonial administration very helpful, but that is not surprising, as the Professor has, I think, had no experience of administration. I think that the others did not attend these lectures. Some of the officers say that they learned nothing about Papuan customs that they did not know before, but it was not thought that they would. It would be too much to expect the Professor to have detailed information about all the varying details of Papuan life; all that was expected was that he would give officers a general knowledge of his subject, so as to put them on their inquiry about native customs which they otherwise might miss. It was hoped also that the course would lead officers to take a broader view of native life, and to adopt a more lenient attitude, generally. And this hope has been realized.



Some years ago I issued a circular as follows: "Unnecessary interference with native life should be avoided. Continual fussing over matters which are really of no great importance may drive the harassed native into an attitude of passive resistance from which it may take long to dislodge him."

Mr. Chance pays me the compliment of saying that the lesson which I tried to convey in this Circular was the same as that which was conveyed to him by the Course.

On the other hand, Mr. Rentoul, who is one of the best of our Magistrates, has no good word to say of the Course; he derived no benefit from it, though he found it interesting, as indeed, from the personality of the Professor, it must have been. The precise nature of Mr. Rentoul's objections to the Course is not quite clear to me, but I think that they are connected with a new development which is called, I believe, "functional anthropology", and of which Professor Malinowski, Professor Radcliffe-Brown, and anthropologists of the younger school as e. g. Captain Pitt Rivers and Mr. Fortune, are supporters. The functional anthropologists give up the attempt to guess at the origins of any particular culture, and confine themselves to the study of the culture and its functions as it exists at the present day. And in this they seem to me to act very sensibly, as I think Mr. Rentoul would agree.

But the functional anthropologist goes further than this. He studies the function of each element of the culture and finds (as he very well may) that even the most unpromising have, or, in certain conditions, might have, a germ of good; and then he makes what I venture to consider a fatal mistake, for he leaves the sphere of anthropology and enters that of administration, and demands from the administrator that certain cultural element should remain undisturbed. An anthropologist has of course as much right of criticism as any one else, but when he has left his own sphere he has no right to lay down the law; and this is just what some anthropologists fail to recognize....

An extremist of the school which I have mentioned might demand that head hunting should continue, for head hunting has in many places been a strong influence for tribal cohesion, and its suppression has been regarded as one of the main factors in the depopulation of Melanesia; and, by the exercise of a little ingenuity, a good case might be made out for cannibalism as well. I am not aware that any of these anthropologists have actually gone as far as this, but they are all, I think, strong supporters of sorcery--and by sorcery I mean "black magic" --not harmless garden, hunting and fishing magic, but magic carried out with the intent to cause death and bodily harm. The argument is that the fear of sorcery may sometimes have a good effect as a deterrent; this may be true, though I must confess that I have never come across any evidence of it, but our reply is that it is, much more often, a very great evil. Half the cases of murder that come before the Central Court have sorcery at the bottom of them.

But I do not think that the younger men bother at all about good or ill effects. Here is the account given by our anthropologist, Mr. Williams, of Mr. Fortune's views on sorcery:

He is ready to admit that it (sorcery) is a bad thing, but I do not think that aspect of the matter troubles him in the least--as why should it of course? He takes the anthropologist's point of view pure and simple; he is interested in sorcery as it exists; and candidly I think he has given very little thought as to the means or even the expediency of getting rid of it.

I do not think that it can be necessary to defend our action in punishing sorcery; the Regulation was originally passed by Sir William MacGregor, and must be approved by any administrator with experience of Papuan conditions--in fact it has been selected for special approval by a very learned anthropologist [C. G. Seligman] in a recent volume of the Encyclopaedia Britannica ....But Professors Brown and Malinowski would probably disapprove of it--in fact I know tht the latter does. So it is

probably true, as Mr. Rentoul says, that the Professor has not a very high opinion of our administration in Papua, and his disapproval would extend also, I presume, to the Mandated Territory and all the other numerous colonies and territories where sorcery is punished.

It would of course be regrettable if the exposition by the Professor of his administrative opinions made our Officers discontented with the Papuan administration; but I do not think that this is likely, even assuming that Mr. Rentoul, out of deference to the Professor, is understating the case. Our Officers will realise that the Professor is, in matters of administration, only an amateur, though doubtless a very highly gifted amateur, and one endowed with an extraordinarily picturesque style of self-expression, and it is improbable that they would ever think of accepting his views in preference to those of the Papuan Government.

Consequently I do not think that any obstacle should be put in the way of Officers wishing to attend these lectures; on the contrary I think it is a good thing that they should attend--but not young Officers. This was my original impression and it has been strengthened by the opinions expressed by Mr. Humpries and Mr. Bastard. It is their opinion, and mine also, that the effect of the Course might be to turn him from an administrative officer into an anthropologist--which is just what we want to avoid.

The attacks made upon this administration by Captain Pitt Rivers and by Mr. Fortune will doubtless be remembered. The ground of their criticism was that they looked upon administration as practical anthropology, to be judged as good or bad according to anthropological standards. This is I think the view also of Professor Radcliffe-Brown.

But it is a claim that no administrator can admit for a moment. M. Beau, in delivering the report of the Mandates Commission in the Tanganyika case, gave expression to a statement which is surely self evident, namely that "the maintenance of order is the first duty of the Governor", and M. Orts, in the same case, declares that the maintenance of order is the essential condition of all forms of freedom. And of course without order all pretence at administration becomes impossible. Order is the keystone of all government; but anthropology has no particular concern with the maintenance of order. How then can it be maintained that native administration is merely a form of anthropology?

Next in importance to the maintenance of order comes the care of public health, the sanitation of the villages, the prevention of disease and so forth, but this is the task of medical science, not of anthropology. And so on with education and many other matters. Indeed I do not know that I can put my contention better than in quoting the words of our Government Anthropologist [F. E. Williams]: "But, at any rate, against extinction there are still the other remedies to try--improved garden-culture, diet, competitive enterprise and games, mothercraft, medical attention, medical investigation, &c." Not one of these has any connection with anthropology.

No one has admitted more readily than myself the great help that anthropology can give to administration; what I wish to protest against, and what appears to me really dangerous, is the attempt of the former to usurp the sphere that belongs of right to the latter. It must be remembered that anthropology is quite a new science, and that its methods are still tentative and its principles unsettled. Fifty years ago the science of anthropology was hardly known. There is, I believe, a French proverb which warns us of the danger of trusting a science which has not "had time to grow a beard", and though anthropology has perhaps had time to grow its beard, the beard is not a very full one, and "functional" anthropology can have no beard at all. Certainly the science of anthropology in general and possibly even this particular school of anthropology may be of great value in their own sphere, but they cannot

be allowed to encroach upon the province of administration. In administration the stakes for which we play are too high to allow of experiment and chance work--for they are nothing less than the lives and the happiness of our fellow men; so while we welcome very warmly all the help that anthropologists can give us, we can not submit to their dictation.

It is our duty to advance not only the "well being" but also the development of the native race (Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations), and it seems obvious that their development must involve the gradual disappearance of many of their customs, for, as Lord Lugard has said, "no one would wish to perpetuate the conditions of tribal life." In the December number of "Man" there appears an address by this very high authority, in which he speaks particularly of the help that anthropology can give in discovering the existence of customary laws, which, he says, are often hidden from sight by the white man's laws which are piled on top of them. Probably all Government Officers in all British colonies and territories are instructed to give effect to native custom, but when native custom lies hidden away so carefully it must be very difficult to find. And in the search anthropology may help most materially.

But anthropology must be content with discovering the custom and explaining its reason and its application; it is for the administrator, and not for the anthropologist, to decide whether the custom is worth preserving. The anthropologist may of course criticise; but he must not sit in judgment.

And on this point I do not think I can do better than repeat the words of Mr. F.E. Williams: "I believe that the anthropologist almost always becomes imbued with a real regard for native welfare, though his view point is often remote from those of either Government or Mission. The only thing to do is to stress his opinions and to try and make converts; though of course, on the other hand, he should be prepared to see points of view other than his own, and not bank too securely on anthropological infallibility. There are often enough aspects of a practical question that will entirely escape the scientific specialist. I have been told to my face that anthropologists are largely deficient in one important quality--viz. common sense, and I am bound to think that there is often something to the charge."

The principles of the "functional school" if pressed to their logical conclusion must end in a refusal to admit "that the white race can under any circumstances govern the black or the brown--that the two cultures are so widely different that any contact between them is impossible, unless it is to result in the oppression and final disappearance of the latter under the influence of the former." I have dealt with this before in my dispatch . . . of 24th May, 1928. Admittedly it is true that, as Sir Charles Eliot said, "when white and black meet white mates black in a very few moves", but it is the duty of the Government to help black against his more skilful opponent, and to develop his powers until he reaches a position more near to equality. To do this demands the abolition of many customs, and involves the gradual disappearance of many more, including some which we should like to preserve.

The argument that, because native administration is difficult, it is therefore impossible, is one which is confuted by numerous and striking examples. A man sitting in a library can, if he takes enough time and trouble, prove that motion is impossible; but when he gets up and goes to his dinner his action refutes his argument. So an anthropologist may prove to his own satisfaction that native administration is impossible, but the facts contradict him, and I have noticed that anthropologists (with the exception of Dr. Wirz) always seek for their investigations a district in which Government influence has been long and firmly established.

"Mr. Fortune talks against the Government and the Mission," said a native to the Head of the

Methodist Mission, "but if it were not for the Government and the Mission we would have killed and eaten him long ago."

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While there are many things that could be said about these documents, one notable aspect is a pattern of cross-purposes centering around the issue of cultural preservation versus social change--cross-purposes marked by a disjunction in the temporal priority or intervention and research, by a reciprocal implication of gross amateurism, and by an unexpected inversion of moral/ideological/political import. Although three of Murray's six administrators had published ethnographic observations (Austen 1923; Bastard 1922; Rentoul 1922)--and Rentoul would later dispute Malinowski on physiological paternity (1932)--for Radcliffe-Brown, they were clearly amateurs when it came to anthropology. From his point of view, the "satisfactory control of social change" was dependent on a prior "skilled systematic investigation" by "the trained scientist" (1931:271, 277). At nearly every juncture, he used colonial concerns as a means to advance his own professional research agenda, which was modeled on "the ideal of the experimental sciences" with their "laboratory methods" (1931: 277-78); what he offered in return was a promissory note of future utility. From Murray's point of view, however, it was Radcliffe-Brown who was the amateur, who had neither "experience of administration" nor of Papuan customs. Furthermore, some of his functionalist "supporters" (notably George Pitt-Rivers and Reo Fortune) seemed to Murray little better than cranks, whose ability to function ethnographically was dependent on the abolition of the very customs whose function they defended. Murray appreciated that anthropology might encourage officers "to take a broader view," and adopt "a more lenient attitude." But he worried that anthropological training might distort administrative priorities--especially in the case of impressionable young cadet officers. And he was concerned lest anthropologists usurp control over administrative decisions regarding social change, which could not await the promised payoff of research, but had to be dealt with in the here and now. Nor should "our fellow men"--the administered natives--be subjected to novel theories merely for science's sake: "in administration the stakes for which we play are too high to allow of experiment." In this context, we encounter a striking inversion of present day expectations concerning the relations of functional anthropology and colonialism. Whereas Radcliffe-Brown, in the Brisbane address Murray had heard, questioned the right of the British empire to "exercise control over [the] destinies of the peoples of India and Africa" (1931:279), Murray felt that "the principles of the 'functional school,' if pressed to their logical conclusion, must end in a refusal to admit 'that the white race can under any circumstances govern the black or the brown. . . .'" Rather than serving as the handmaiden of colonialism, Murray feared that it might prove a hindrance.

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## SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

**Mrs. Uhlenbeck's Blackfeet Fieldnotes.** Mrs. C. C. Uhlenbeck accompanied her linguist husband in his fieldwork, June-September 1911, on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. Six notebooks of her journal, in Dutch, are in the Glenbow Archives, Calgary, Alberta: #M8116, "Blackfoot reservation Donderdag 8 Juni-Zondag 17 September 1911." On July 10, she recorded the shotgun suicide of D. C. Duvall, Wissler's Piegan collaborator, which occurred on the last day of the Sun Dance [Medicine Lodge]. On the same day she records a conversation with Mr. and Mrs. George Bird Grinnell, and the grueling buggy trip to Joe Tatsey's allotment on Badger Creek. Anybody who reads Dutch and has the time to translate this unique journal would be doing a real service to ethnohistory. Mrs. Uhlenbeck's handwriting is quite legible and her Dutch is colloquial but educated [contributed by Alice Kehoe].

## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Anita Herle (Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology) is co-ordinating a research project involving a publication and exhibition to mark the centenary of the Cambridge Expedition to the Torres Straits led by A. C. Haddon in 1898, including interdisciplinary papers on the Expedition and its legacies.

John P. Jackson (History of Science and Technology, University of Minnesota) is pursuing a dissertation on the research and advocacy of social scientists (including Robert Redfield) active in the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund's campaign to desegregate public schools, culminating in the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*.

Paul Kramer (History, Princeton) is working on a study of anthropology in the Philippines during the early United States Occupation, 1898-1919, treating the collaboration and conflict between scholars and officials, the inheritance and transformation of the discipline in its movement to the Pacific, and links between government and science in Progressive America and the colonies.