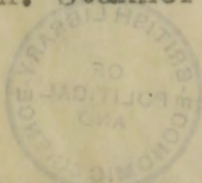


ECONOMIC CHANGE IN NORTH
AUSTRALIAN TRIBES.

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

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MAP 1. Northern Territory.

MAP 2. Farms and Tribal Camps on the Daly river.

MAP 3. Traditional Tribal Territories.

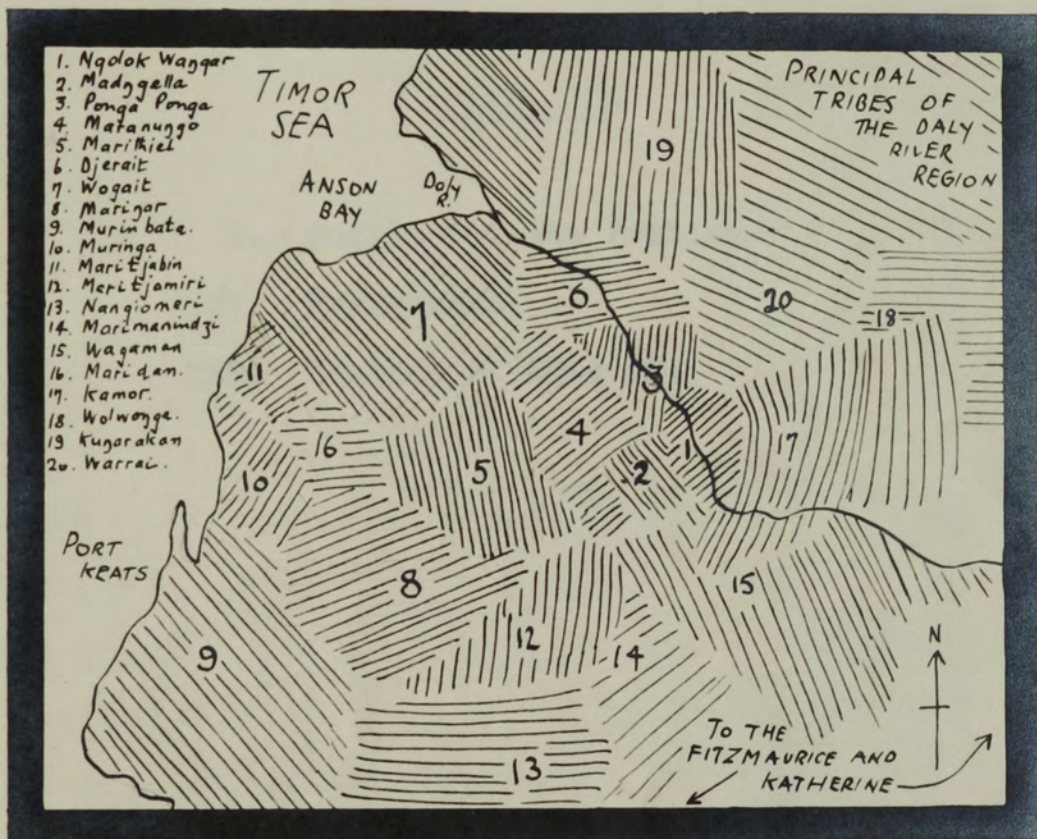
MAP 4. Inter-tribal Trading Links.

11.

Nine diagrams.



MAP I



MAP III

PART I.

- I. Outline of the Problem.
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CHAPTER I.OUTLINE.

1.

The economic life of any people centres around their use of their resources.

This essay will give an outline of the economic life of some North Australian tribes. It will describe the nature of their resources; the ways in which they enter the social life of the tribes; the ways in which, and the principles upon which, these resources are allocated between the ends to which, in use, they are directed; and some comments will be offered upon the distinctive features of the primitive Australian economy.

In the concluding chapter a brief examination will be made of some issues, of importance for cultural and economic theory, which are revealed in the course of the essay.

11.

What are aboriginal resources?

The Australian blacks live in an uncultivated wilderness. Their life has an outward restlessness which has earned them the repute of being feckless nomads, travelling light, stopping

nowhere long, their only possessions a few crude chattels, their homes the roughest and most temporary of shelters.

The tribal camps of North Australia seem to bear out the suggestion that underlies much anthropological description of the aborigines, the suggestion that there is little in aboriginal life which could be called a social economy.

What resources could such a people be said to have?

The traditional camps of the tribes are simple clearings in the shelter of scrub, timber, or hills. Sometimes they are over the lip of a gulley where the wind will not reach. Sometimes they are just inside the edge of a tree-belt, or high where the mosquitoes do not rise on the slope of rising ground, or deep in jungle as a protection from sorcerers and raiding parties.

Rarely are they more than a bare patch of earth, the grass and scrub rudely cleared away, and roughly circled by a row of fire-places spaced wide enough apart to allow a man and his wife and children always to sleep between two fires.

Where they are more exposed, a low screen of bushes may be piled a few feet high to serve as a wind-break, or the ground near the fires slightly hollowed. In these hollows the natives lie at night, covered by sheets of pliant paper-bark, often without covering at all.

On the Waliwali (Daŕly river) farms the camps of the changing tribes are little better - tumbledown huts of bark, battered-out tins, and rough-cut poles. They are in most cases without windows or chimneys. The floors are bare earth. In the warmer months of Pundumiri, the dry season, the native workers sleep out in the open, sometimes even in the north-west monsoon season, and go within the smoky, hot cribs only when driven there by the rain or the mosquitoes. When they leave the farms for their bush walkabouts, to roam over the well-watered plains of Kaiyir and the billabong country of Komani and Moill, they revert to the old ways and camp and sleep in the open in traditional fashion.

Most of the Waliwali bush-camps are midway between the lower and the upper floodbanks of the river, where the jungle grows thickly, and the shade is always deep and cool. To reach them one plunges on rough tracks down a steep bank for twenty or thirty feet. In the dry season the river is another thirty or forty feet below. In the wet season it pours in a racing yellow flood twenty feet above some of the winter camps. When it obliterates them, new camps are made.

The farm huts are placed on higher ground, towards or on top of the riverside ridges, where the floods seldom reach.

But in the camps of bush and river tribes alike all that

is left behind when the aborigines move on are a few sheets of bark, grinding stones, and discarded tools. The tribes' material possessions are evidently very few. In the inhabited camps there are to be seen stone spears from the Dim-Dim and Dilg hills, other spears and weapons made locally, boomerangs from the rarely visited countries beyond Kimul, spear-throwers, firewood, fishing nets, bark containers, dilly bags, wax and gum from the spinifex steppes far to the south, red ochre from Kundjawulung, sheets of bark stripped from the neighbouring ti-tree forest. The number of articles may run perhaps to some scores, but rarely more.

These are the main visible body of material resources with which the blacks have wrested a living as hunters and foragers. At first sight it seems a pitiable store with which to face a sub-tropical environment.

But an examination shows that the tribes have in actuality a much more complex economic life and equipment than these superficial aspects suggest.

III.

Aboriginal resources are to be thought of as all the environmental objects which are in their service. To be a "resource" an object has to be appraised for a use to which it may be put. The only limits to what may be resources are, on the one hand, the limits set by nature, and, on the other,

the limits set by aboriginal knowledge, technical ability, and their wants. As in any society, nature may suggest to the aborigines objects for utilization, may even suggest ways of exploitation, but the final selection of what their resources are depends upon factors essentially social. The emphasis of this chapter will be less upon the natural determinants, and the material and technological aspects, of resources, than upon these social factors.

The concept of resources is highly relative and, correspondingly therefore, limited. All the environmental "possessions" of the Waliwali tribes might in one sense be deemed their resources. But we must limit the concept to those things which are actually of service to them, for not all material objects in the environment which could be of service (such as gold) are actually used.¹ We may,

1. The notion of value is examined in some detail in Chapter VII, but it may be pointed out here that there are several possible meanings of the term which will be distinguished in this essay. The value of resources may be either their utility, as it is reckoned by the aborigines themselves, or as it is objectively apparent to the anthropologist; or it may mean their economic (exchange) value, that is, the power of the objects to command other objects in exchange; or it may mean their esteem-value, which is closely allied to the exchange-value; or it may perhaps mean their value in one or more of several other senses - the contribution they make to the whole of the culture of which they are a part; or their value in satisfying the needs postulated by cultural theory; or we might attempt to assess the value of specific resources according to relevant European scales (e.g. dietetic value). It is, no doubt, legitimate to use the term value in any of these senses, so long as it is clear in which sense it is being used. It is, however, confusing to use "value", as many anthropologists do, in the sense of "value in general", that is to say, as a generic concept of which all the other "values" are specific kinds. I do not believe that anthropology can make intelligent use of the term or the concept in this sense, certainly not in a discussion of primitive economics.

therefore, speak of resources as environmental objects which have a utility, or perhaps a value, in terms of the end, or objective, towards which their use may be directed.¹

Native personnel, their knowledge, energies, skill, and technical equipment may also all be considered part of their resources.

IV.

Before giving an outline of the actual content of aboriginal resources, and before taking up some further problems, something may be said of the general economic relations between the aborigines and the physical environment.

Traditionally the aborigines have had to maintain themselves as a social group in an uncultivated wilderness. Their environment, their social landscape, has been the unaltered natural landscape. As hunters and foragers, not pausing

1. In the majority of tribes, gold is not part of tribal resources, though it might be if natives acted upon all the knowledge in their possession. There are cases on the north-west coast and in other parts of North Australia where gold is brought by the aborigines to whites for sale. The same applies to tin, tantalite, and to other metals and minerals for which there is an economic demand among whites. But as a general rule there is no consistent attempt on the part of the aborigines to locate, work, or fossick for the metals and minerals sought by white and Chinese miners. Where natives have been associated with mining activities it is not as entrepreneurs, partners, or profit-sharers, but as labourers.

anywhere for long, building no substantial habitations, they have not transformed their physical surroundings in any way comparable with the changes wrought by the pastoral, agricultural, and industrial civilizations.

The fact of tribal occupation does, however, on occasions, lead to changes in the surrounding landscape, but these are exceptional. The cases which do occur are worth noting.

The timber immediately around waterholes in dry country may be seen thinned out, in some cases almost destroyed, the result of generations of searching for firewood. The timberline has been forced ever further away from the water. A certain amount of soil erosion has started in this way. This, by disturbing the (often delicate) local balance between vegetation and rainfall, may lead in the usual sequence to loss of topsoil, drift, gulleying and dune-formation. The most serious consequence for the aborigines is that it may affect their local food supply, destroy vegetation, drive out game, and throw back the productivity of a region for several years. Again, fires started by hunters may sweep wide areas of grassland and savannah. In the seasons of high wind this also may lead to local erosion. The rain is usually so poor and the soil so meagre in nutriment that the grass and shrub-growth are not over-strong. The grey haze which blankets the entire North in the windy early winter,

and narrows the visibility of ships far out in the Timor and Arafura Seas, is evidence of a serious annual loss of light surface soils. Some, at least, must be attributed to these indirect effects of aboriginal land occupation. In general, however, the blacks leave little mark on the landscape. Few traces remain of many of the tribes of North Australia, such as the Dim-Dim, the Kamor, the Warral and the Tjerait.

But, though their positive effect on the environment is so small, natural forces are constantly at work upon native economic and social life. The bush tribes live only on the resources with which the environment supplies them, sometimes freely, but more usually with scarcity, and they are at the mercy of seasonal and cyclical disturbances. When and if the animal and vegetable species reappear seasonally, and while they last, the aborigines eat. When they do not reappear, the tribes go without, or go short, or eat something else. There is no evidence of any attempt to conserve animals, plants, seeds, tubers or vegetable products. One or two wholly exceptional instances have been reliably reported of natives attempting to store vegetable food,¹ but the practice is not common. The aborigines seem on the whole to be

¹ Roth has reported that some West Australian natives re-inserted the head of a wild yam in the earth: "So as to be sure of a future crop".

prodigal and opportunist with food. Their traditional grip on life may be said to depend upon the unaided seasonal increase of their hunting and foraging territories, an increase which must at times have been so fluctuating and uncertain as to draw out the thread of their existence almost to breaking point.

Bad seasons verging into drought, and extremely unreliable rain, are part of the common order of their life, yet the tribes persist in apparent prodigality with their food resources. When food is there, they do not usually stint themselves. They do not throw small fish back into the water even if the catch is big enough to give sufficient and to spare for all. They do not re-stock waterholes and rivers if the fish population is on the decline. When they strike a yam patch they are likely to eat all the yams, big and little, which it contains. A doe-kangaroo carrying a kid in its pouch is as welcome as any other kangaroo. The kid is killed and eaten like the mother. But they are not without sumptuary rules, and it is a gross error to believe that they do not "provide for the future".

The belief, so easily suggested by these scattered particles of fact, that they are feckless, give no economic thought to the morrow, and that they shiftlessly wander in an almost animalian search for food, is a caricature.

Provision for the future is inseparable from the process of persisting social life. Technology itself is provision for the future. A spear is an evidence of future needs foreseen and prepared against. Part of the essence of social economy is, in fact, provision for the satisfaction of future wants.¹ The following chapters will show the ways in which the aborigines make such provision.

V.

The uncultivated environment of the tribes supplies them, for a minimum of co-operative activity, with a surprisingly large fund of resources. These can provisionally be listed under the headings of (i) food and (ii) raw materials of an inedible kind. Some of (i) and (ii) appear at later stages in the aboriginal economy as (iii) manufactured articles.

1. The natives of Victoria are reported to have taken great care in the maintenance of some of their fixed productive equipment. "They take great care of birds' nests, sink wells, and ported the natural water-holes against the encroachments of animals. They cover the springs with stones and branches, and show, by burning off the grass, and in many other ways, that they foresee future needs". (Smyth, *op. cit.* I, p.143)

"The Aborigines of Victoria".

2. Fison and Howitt have recorded their discovery in Central Australia of a closely woven grass container in which there was about a bushel of grass-seed, carefully hidden under a shrub. It was apparently stored there against future need.

European contact has, on the whole, added far more proportionately to (ii) and (iii) than to (i), which is one reason why aboriginal technology tends to decay and drop out of use long before their dietary habits, and in general before their social institutions are deeply affected.

The food resources of the Daly tribes are extensive. The natives distinguish two kinds of food - mi (all edible vegetable substances) and awo (flesh foods). The surrounding country, which lies within the 40" rainbelt, is deeply and complexly dissected by watercourses, and for most of the year has an abundance of surface water in the main channels of the streams and rivers, in pandanus-fringed billabongs, pools, rockholes and swamps. Many of these waters are deep and cool even in midwinter (the dry season) and are thickened often to choking point with lilies and waterweeds, many of which are also edible. The unfrequented reaches of the outer billabongs and streams are laned and blackened by enormous flocks of ducks, pygmy geese, pelicans, black-and-white geese, ibis, heron, and hundreds of other birds. Even in waterways which have been shot for nearly a century by white settlers the wildfowl still congregate in large flights, and away from the river, on billabongs like Korambaienda and the Serpentine Lagoon, the numbers are often enormous. The variety and volume of vegetable food available at some distance

from the river is almost comparable - yams, water-lily pods and stems, nuts, tubers, wild fruits, edible gums, grass seeds, and so on. There seem to be fewer grass seeds than in Central Australia. Perhaps they are less used, at least under current circumstances. In the rougher and more timbered country away from the river flats there is the eagerly sought sugar-bag (wild honey) of several varieties. Natives consider this a very "strong" (i.e. sustaining) food. It is in flesh foods, however, that the river country is preeminently rich. There are kangaroos, wallabies, opossums, crocodiles, turtle, fish, mussels, snakes, lizards, waterfowl, birds, eggs, shrimps, grubs, flying-foxes. I have recorded hundreds of food varieties recognised by the tribes as either mi or awo.

In use, these food species give rise to certain by-products which may be grouped with a number of other objects and materials under (ii), those I have termed "raw materials". These by-products include the teeth, claws, bones, hair, skin, sinews, and fat of animals and fish; the feathers and down of birds; the blood of the kangaroo and other large animals. They are made use of in a number of ways - blood to stain the shafts of spear throwers, sinews to lash and half spears, teeth and claws for necklaces, bones for tools, fat for cosmetics, hair for thread and twine, feathers for adornment

and domestic implements (the wings of geese are tied together and used as fans, fire-blowers, and mosquito killers). The daily food search thus bring a constant stream of useful or potentially useful raw materials into the camp economy. In point of fact, a great deal of this type of raw material is wasted, or simply not preserved for use. As the need for it becomes apparent the materials wanted are set aside. Objects of this kind do not enter in an unmanufactured state into the inter-tribal exchange described later.¹ Since materials of a broadly similar kind are available to every tribe from its own local sources there is no ~~longer~~ inter-tribal demand for them. So that around any native camp may be seen the decayed remnants of birds and animals which might have been in part utilized for economic purposes.

There are many other raw materials which are not of the food by-product type. These are obtained from a variety of sources and used for a wide variety of purposes. The twigs and leaves of the narcotic pitjuri (*hopwoodii duboisia*) are used as a stimulant; it is mixed with the white ash of an eucalypt which in burning leaves a residue containing a high percentage of free calcium sulphate, the alkali in which liberates the stimulating alkaloid pitjuline. There are

¹.v. Chap. VII.

also barks and fibres stripped from trees and leaves. The pandanus palm is particularly valuable for these. The long bark sheaths of many eucalypts are used as body-belts with which to climb tall branchless trees. Circular strips of bark are prised off trees of narrow girths and worked up to form waist-cinctures for ceremonial occasions. There are special stones and rocks (such as chert, quartzites, and granitic types) which are knapped and flaked or ground down to make spear heads, knives, axes and scrapers. Special woods (such as kapok, mangrove, bamboo, ironwood, mulga, and bloodwood) are collected to make canoes, spear-throwers, spear shafts and heads, clubs, corroboree-sticks, churinga, and musical instruments. There are materials specifically (or mainly) intended and used for bodily decoration (such as human hair, red ochre, limonite, kaolin, and mud).

In any camp during the drowsy afternoon hours when because of the heat the game hides in the thick grass or jungle and hunting is thus almost useless, or when food is plentiful, men and women may be seen working up these materials into the third group, which I distinguished as "manufactured" articles.

A thorough inventory of camp possessions of this kind reveals a surprisingly great variety - dug-out canoes, bamboos for poling, spears of almost a dozen varieties, spear throwers,

of two types (one for the light duelling or small game spears, the other for the large hunting and fighting spears), mesh nets and baskets, belts of human hair, necklaces, forehead bands and circlets, waist cinctures, fire-blowers, armlets, bark-containers. Hidden away from the camp, under stones in gulleys where women never go, or in cavities in the side of knolls, in hollow trees, or deep under the fallen leaves in patches of jungle, are other manufactured articles - the sacred ^{Churinga} ~~Jurisa~~ and bull-roarers. The women, like the men, have their own secret stores of personally valuable, intimate, perhaps even sacred possessions. In any camp where European influence is at all marked, a motley collection is found also of "swags", blankets, shirts, trousers, print-dresses, loin-cloths, bandana handkerchiefs, knives, razors, hair clippers, leather belts, billy-cans, pipes, fishing lines and hooks, small tin containers, and so on.

One will see also articles of native origin which are not made locally - boomerang, throwing sticks, stone spears, mangrove spears, pearl shell ornaments, hair-belts, ochre taken from deposits hundreds of miles away.

VI.

These resources, of which a fuller list will be found in an Appendix, stand in an orderly relation to native social life. There is ready evidence of this in a number of native

classifications of such objects.

(i) There is, first, a generic classification of raw materials and manufactured articles. These are referred to as ninymer, a term which conveys a meaning of something non-edible, material, and valuable.

(ii) My suggested classification of tribal resources into food, raw materials, and manufactured articles must thus in native terminology be regrouped into three - mi food, awo food, and ninymer, valuable material objects. But all material objects are not ninymer. Wood from trees which have no specific uses, and firewood, are not ninymer. Nor are rock and stones, or fibres or grasses, which are not suitable for some clearly identified use.

(iii) There are other linguistic classifications. The aborigines have a number of linguistic categories of which we have no clear counterparts. The Ngolek-Wanggar, for instance, classify all objects into four groups, each denoted by an affixed particle.¹

(iv) Another classification could be drawn up by the totemic affiliation of resources.

A great many objects of the environment are linked

1. V. Capell. Unpublished Ms.

totemically, on a basis of ritual privilege or constraint, with individuals and groups of individuals in each tribe.

There are totemic links with individuals, local patrilineal^{lineal} clans, hordes, matrilineal clans, moieties, and sub-sections. The details of these linkages will not be given here but it may be pointed out that the functional economics of totemism are extremely important, and have tended to be overlooked in Australian anthropology. A Marithiel, for instance, may have as many as three food species as his patrilineal local totems. The avoidance of the totem as food is not strongly marked in this area, but a man must observe a certain restraint in his conduct towards his totems. A local clan, a group which may be composed of a man, his brothers, their children, and their male children's children, may thus all be obliged to observe restraint towards use of certain food species. This is obviously an extremely important limiting condition on the optimum social use of resources. If we consider the conditions of the tribal economy (in which scores of families may be concerned) at any point of time, with the use of a substantial section of its resources limited in this way, we see in this phase of totemism a fruitful field for study and theoretic development. The existence of one type of totemism can thus be of extreme

importance to tribal material welfare; the co-existence of several types of totemism (as there is on the Daly) would seem to present a tribe with the possibility of a serious limitation to the fully effective use of its material resources.

We have in all tribes patrilineal local totemism of a non-cult type, in some tribes also moiety totemism and sex totemism, and now a matrilineal non-cult totemism and sub-section totemism is spreading to some tribes in the area (the Wangiomeri and the Wagaman) and being enthusiastically adopted.

(v) If we admit totemic linkage as a form of classification we may extend this principle of grouping to all the ritual linkages observable between individuals and groups on the one hand and resources on the other. In this case the results are very interesting. We are able to establish the following ritual linkages:

- a. in the case of males, during three initiatory stages they are forbidden to wear certain decorative objects, or make use of a wide range of food stuffs, and other males are obliged
1. One interesting investigation which might be made would be to see what correlation exists between totemic restraint towards food species and ecological conditions. My impression is that we may find a greater restraint in areas where food is more scarce. Totemism seems to be developed into a more complex structure in arid central and north-central Australia than it is in fertile North Australia.
2. There seems to be no good reason why we should not regard ritual selection of objects as logically and functionally comparable to linguistic identification. In both cases conceptual isolation and categorization are involved. Functionally the effects are comparable, especially from the viewpoint of economics. They both lead to a substantial modification of conduct towards resources.

at certain periods of those stages to procure and themselves abstain from eating specific foodstuffs in order to release the young men from tyayait isolation. There are obvious effects upon the use of some resources, and upon the production of others, as the result of this custom.

b. in the case of females, at puberty and in pregnancy similar restrictions apply. Males are indirectly involved in these avoidances. The economic effects are comparable.

c. there are a few foods which males are supposed not to eat under any circumstances. These are held to be women's foods. No particular penalties for breach of the custom are involved, but they impose a conventional restraint upon men's relation to such resources.

d. some of these ritual linkages (to be discussed in more detail later) are conventionally ended by the obligatory exchange of gifts of ninymer. The economic effects of the ritual linkages are inseparable from these transactions, and deserve much closer scrutiny than they have been given.

(vi) The aborigines explicitly recognise certain other empirical differences between some of their resources, and
(vii) They base some aspects of their behaviour upon the implicit recognition of still further differences. (One such difference is drawn according to the local origin, that is, the local source, of any material object). Origin in this sense is of great interest to the aborigines. The source of

objects is known to many more people than the user. One result is that an artifact, such as a spear, which comes to the tribe from a distant source seems to be preferred for some social purposes to one of local origin. Men use hunting spears which have come to them by exchange with other tribes though they also make and use their own hunting spears, but they seem even to prefer to use spears made by other men, the "display value" of a spear, or a pearl shell ornament, or a boomerang, commonly and publicly known to have come from a distant tribe, is greater than that of a similar object of domestic tribal origin. So much is clear from the open behaviour of men of possessions on social occasions (such as camp festivities, fights, and initiations) when a degree of self-display is permitted which on other occasions would be deprecated.

(vii) The apparent prodigality of the native with food resources illustrates what I have called an implied classification of economic objects. This prodigality, one soon comes to see, is in sharp contrast with the aborigine's attitude towards other resources. He does not waste, or squander, or deal lightly with ninymer. This points to a distinction between resources, expressed in conduct rather than in words.

The distinction is very noticeable in the intichiuma or

or tal ceremonies, the so-called "increase rites"¹ which are widely spread, but are not universal, in Australia. In the Daly region they are very poorly developed; on the river they no longer exist.

As far as I have been able to inform myself none of these tal ceremonies take as their focus for increase by magic any of the tribal resources, whose supply is fixed or declining. Thus, one does not seem to find tal ceremonies to "increase" red ochre supplies, or stone for spears, or wax for hafting spears. The tal ceremonies are concerned principally with those resources which are variable and uncertain, or subject to seasonal influences, or known at times not to reappear periodically or seasonally in the quantities which in common experience are customary. A great many of the objects, natural species, and phenomena, which are the subject of tal ceremonies can hardly be spoken of as tribal economic "resources" e.g.

1. These tal rites are magical practices which in native belief are intended to, and in fact are thought to, bring about what is conventionally spoken of in Australian anthropology as the "increase" of certain natural species i.e. some of the tribal resources. In my opinion it would probably be better, perhaps more accurate, and would certainly be nearer the ideas of those aborigines I know, to cease using the term "increase". What the rites are intended to do, again in my opinion, is to bring about the seasonal replacement, or replenishment, or reappearance, of these resources. A quantitative notion is certainly present in the formulae which often accompany the rites - references which in pidgin are rendered as "plenty" or "big mob", an exhortation to the natural species to reappear in quantity. It might perhaps be said that where some of the natural species can still be caught when the ceremonies are being performed (e.g. kangaroos probably never entirely disappear from an area before the breeding season starts) the use of the term "increase" is valid, since the rites are meant actually to increase the extant supply of

mosquitoes, high winds, illness and sick babies, for which some Australian tribes have the so-called "increase" ceremonies. The essential rationale of the talu might perhaps be said to be a desire for continuity in the social and natural tribal world, the world of customary experience; a desire that those things, including those which can be separated off as "resources", be they comfortable or uncomfortable, beneficial and detrimental, which always have been always should be; a desire, not for "progress" (that is material betterment) and material accretion (that is, increment or "increase") but for the cyclical renewal of the states and quantities which are familiar and customary, and for the cyclical return of the changes which are themselves familiar and customary.

Clearly, in all this, there is a perception that while some things in the material environment are variable, other things remain unchanged. In both these categories are objects of interest, and utility, to the aborigines. Economic use is made of objects in both groups; ninymer is drawn from both; yet ceremonial selection separates the fixed and declining resources from the variable and fluctuating. Selection from this point of view is a form of classification, and ceremonial concentration is a significant kind of Dual classification of

Footnote continued from previous page:

kangaroos, but in the case of fruits, yams, other vegetables which crop seasonally, sea fish which make annual appearances, and so on, the usage is at best doubtful. Certainly, in the context of an economic analysis, the notion of increasing resources is inadvisable because of its theoretical implications.

the things which make up its content. The generic principle of the classification does not necessarily need to be verbalized. The distinctions are conceptually as clear as they need be for all purposes which are technically relevant.¹

In summary, it seems that as objective data native resources may be grouped:

- i. into ml, awo, and ninymer.
- ii. by origin or source.
- iii. by ritual and totemic selection of various kinds.
- iv. by linguistic categories.
- v. into fixed or declining resources.
- vi. into periodically variable resources.

Most, if not all, of these modify native conduct in relation to their resources and for this reason are important in a discussion of native economy. The principles at the base of each separated group are expressed in ways not always congruent, but, I believe, always comparable, and may be regarded by the anthropologist as of the same general order.

1. We could, it appears, push this kind of investigation a good deal further. There are some extremely interesting possibilities for research. These would include (i) the functional groupings of native resources, those which have multiple uses, those for which substitutes are available, those which are used as combinations, and the social reflections of these associations; (ii) the local distribution of resources and their effect upon population density, tribal and inter-tribal relations; (iii) the nature and consequences of local monopolies or partial monopolies.

VII.

A mere inventory of native resources is thus an inert and lifeless catalogue which sheds little light upon the underlying process and practice of native social economy. To take on any dynamic quality they need to be considered in their social setting. What is the nature of this setting?

This can be established by asking and answering a number of questions.

How do these materia economica enter the social life of the aborigines? How and in what conditions do they become useful? What are the natives' attitudes towards them? Do they behave as though the resources were limited? Do they use them economically?

The assumption that resources are part of social life implies, of course, first, knowledge of those resources, their whereabouts and physical properties, and secondly, knowledge of how to make them available and how to use them. There is ample evidence, as will be shown in ^{IV}the next chapter, that the aborigines possess an extensive body of such knowledge. Thus we observe aboriginal resources functionally and dependently related on the one hand to this system of knowledge, and related on the other hand to a technology, which is itself reticulated through social institutions.

The social setting in which we should conceptually "see" resources to understand what they imply, and to study them

effectively, at a minimum must include the study of this system of knowledge and technology; the prevailing social organisation; the habits, standards of living, wants, values, and objectives which are prevailing and directive in the community. None of these is the anthropologist able to assume as given.

The body of aboriginal knowledge which has economic importance is dealt with separately in chapter IV. The system of technology is briefly described at the end of the same chapter. The relevant details of social organisation, and the incorporation within it of these resources, are dealt with in the chapters which immediately follow. The wants, values, standards, and objectives which direct the course and prescribe the idiom of native economy are then outlined.

Two further questions concerned with tribal resources need to be mentioned.

VIII.

These are (i) the social distribution and ownership of resources and (ii) the relative scarcity of resources.

We need at once to make a distinction between economic goods (i.e. resources which have been drawn from the environment into the economy) and environmental resources which are not yet in use.

There are clear differences between the ownership, the rights of use and disposal, possessed by natives over these

two groups of resources.

At the outset it may be made clear that there are no great inequalities of ownership of resources in either sense. Where manifest inequalities do exist they arise principally in relation to goods (including services, which are non-material goods) and not to any comparable extent with natural resources, still awaiting social annexation. The latter include land, water-holes, deposits of stone, ochres, vegetable and flesh foods, and other substances existing under natural conditions. This, not the ownership of goods, is the real sphere of commonalty and communatism.

The distribution of these unannexed resources among the aborigines is largely on the basis of descent; perhaps it would be better to say, of tribal membership. The tribe is not the primary descent group, which is, rather, the small sub-section of the local horde which may be called the totemic clan. Except for those of the above natural objects which are totemically affiliated with these small clans, all such natural objects are owned by members of a tribe (which can be looked on as an aggregation of smaller descent groups speaking the same language) on a basis of equal right.

The powers and privileges of "ownership" are slightly different as between each of the groups of natural resources.

Land, for example, is subject to few limitations. There are areas made tyayait (sacred) by men where women may not go,

1. I have not thought it advisable to try to discuss these in terms of free goods and economic goods, though no doubt consistent distinctions of this kind could be drawn as well for a primitive economy as for a money economy.

hunt, collect food, even see. There are no such areas where men may not go, except one or two small areas known as tyayait (in pidgin "poison country") for reasons which I cannot determine. There are not on the Daly river (within a tribe's territory) any areas where men or women of that tribe may not visit freely because of constraint dependent on affinal relationships. There is constraint upon intimate social contacts with affinals, but not upon visiting their horde or camping country.

Freely conceded rights to the "use" of land may be said to be derived from membership of the tribe as a rather loosely organized descent group or aggregation of descent group. Even in relation to the horde-territories within the tribe I have been unable to establish that there are any rigid restrictions upon the rights of other horde members to visit, hunt, and camp there. The tribal areas on the Daly are small; such tribes as the Yunggor, Madngella, and Ngolok Wanggar have territories as small as about 150 sq.m., with as many as eighteen local groups distinguished within them. The topographic and ecological conditions of this sub-tropical zone thus thrust substantial populations (the Ngolok Wanggar probably numbered at their peak not less than 400 or 500) into close contact, unlike the widely scattered bands of arid central Australia. Although the local groups habitually (formerly) camped together on their own local soil, in the wet season they were

often forced to leave their own territory and associate for prolonged periods with neighbouring groups in which quite possibly many members had close affinal relations.

In addition to this fluidity of intra-horde movement, there was also a certain intra-tribal fluidity. The discussion of land-ownership in the chapter on production brings out the existence of rights conceded to other tribes to pass on and through the territories of neighbours. All these, however, are rights of use. The question of disposal of tribal or horde land does not arise.

There are, perhaps, rather more limitations upon the use of water, natural deposits of minerals, food, and useful substances. Except where any of these are linked totemically, or are tyayait, or are marked with wũlũmũ signs,¹ I have been unable to determine that there are any specific prohibitions on the use of them by other members of the tribe. In practice, however, for most of the year, a local group traditionally clings around its own territories. It is a positive preference for its own lands, not a negative desire not to overrun its neighbours. But there are a sufficient number of conventional reasons for visiting neighbour hordes, and thus at the same time making use of its food resources, to make such visits relatively frequent and so economically important. The needs

¹. pp. for details of tyayait and pp. for wũlũmũ.

of co-operation in great food drives; initiations occurring a number of times a year (there were two within six weeks in the dry season of 1932, even with greatly reduced populations); visits to make warunun and kué and mamurn and nirwat and palwa and warbaitj presents, all lead to frequent commingling of neighbours. The fact that on each of these occasions the visitors need to take with them presents of food or valuable commodities serves as a check on over-frequency of the kind that would, in practice, make it difficult to say which horde "belonged" where. The traditional local balance of population and food sources, the tie to their own land, the highly conventional character of all aboriginal meetings, and the absence of political ambition or economic predatoriness from the aboriginal social character, explain why there are commonly such orderly relations within the tribe over use of these resources. As between tribes, the same factors contribute to calm relations. Where conflicts do arise it is seldom, if ever, over economic abuses.

It is worth while recording, however, that even in the fertile Daly river country, the theft of food for magical purposes sometimes led to conflict. Natives tell of expeditions from neighbour tribes to steal food species from areas where they are plentiful. They are taken secretly to poor food areas and fragments of them scattered there, while magical formulae are uttered, to make those species increase

locally. If such thefts are discovered, there are serious fights.

The general outcome of these conventions is that local resources, deposits or stores of economic objects, are commonly exploited and brought into the tribal economy by those who live locally. The exceptions to this rule are the expeditions to tribal sources of pāpe-clay, (a deposit of which exists higher up the Daly), red ochre, and the more rare foods (such as geese eggs). All members of a tribe have an equal right to make these trips. Such conventions effectively remove the possibility of serious monopolies based on uneven local distribution of resources within a tribe. There is, on the whole, no aspect of aboriginal life in which the equivalence of native knowledge is more marked, or the principal of equivalence of rights so clear, as in the access to the physical stores of tribal resources.

But when the system of production has added direct utility to these goods, and the system of distribution has made them available for use, certain differences do arise in the amount of goods which different individuals control. The emphasis of ownership now changes to disposal.

Women on the whole control fewer goods than men. Clearly, young men, on the whole, control fewer than older men.

The explanations of these conditions lie in (i) the traditional economic and social rôles allotted to men and women, (ii) the fact that economic personality, in the sense of the sum¹ of a person's economic relations with other persons, develops slowly and is not fully developed till men and women are mature and ageing; (iii) personal efficiency.

The chapter on production discusses the different economic rôles of the sexes, and there I reach the general conclusion that though it would be untrue to picture aboriginal women as severely disqualified from all or any of the economic opportunities open to men, they do seem on the whole to control a slightly smaller portion of the total volume of tribal real income. This is, I think, perhaps due to the fact that women, as compared with men, perform the greater number of economic services, and share on a basis of equality in rather fewer ceremonies in which commodities change hands. A general proof of this assertion is deferred to the last chapter, which deals also with the development of economic personality and so takes up the factors referred to in (ii). The third set of factors probably does not need further discussion at this stage.

1. I will not here go into an obscurity which underlies this definition of personality. We cannot rightly, of course, attribute functions and qualities to something which we call "personality" unless that something has separate identity. If it has identity, it is more than the "sum" of its elements. Some comments upon this (perhaps only verbal) difficulty are made in the final chapter.

IX.

The second general problem mentioned at the end of the last section was that of the relative scarcity of native resources.

Economics, not the science, but the set of human activities studied by the science, has been said to be, in essence, our attack upon the problem of scarcity. The basic postulates of economics as a science, the propositions that human resources are always limited, that we have a variety of interests, that we cannot from our limited resources satisfy them as fully as we would like, but that we satisfy as many of them as fully as possible, are said to be verifiable by appeal to the common facts of life experience. Nothing in our experience, it is said, is less open to question than that in relation to our objectives our capacities (i.e. our resources) are limited. To live rationally (i.e. intelligently) we are, therefore, forced to economize. True (or ideal) economy with our limited resources is attained, (it is held for instance by marginalists) when we apply such resources to or allocate them between our interests in just those ways which will maximize the satisfactions we derive from gratified interests. In other words, the economic ideal is reached when the (expected) marginal satisfactions from the different interests are equalized, when a slightly different allocation of our resources would produce a decrease in total satisfaction.

Such ideal conduct would, on this theory, be conduct in full conformity with the economic principle. This principle may be summed up as conduct intended to secure the maximum return for the least outlay. The essence of human economy has been described as the quest of the least-cost combination of natural and cultural agents, conduct designed to achieve the greatest productivity of human effort through a rational i.e. economic choice of ways and means.

Without necessarily conceding or assuming this to be true of Australian native life, the anthropologist may well make the attempt to define the nature and the degree of scarcity in primitive social life. He can study the social response to that situation of scarcity, study the full implications of the ways in which primitive man "in the ordinary business of life" chooses to make use of his limited resources.

One of these implications, of course, is that of imperfect economizing, which leads to a gap between actual and ideal economy; for it is, apparently, no less true of primitives than it has been held to be of modern societies, that members of societies do, with various amounts of intelligence, knowledge and skill, practice rational economy in the acquisition and use of available, scarce means to satisfy their wants; and in various degrees approach the limit of ideal perfection, by tending to make the economic choices which, in their circumstances, would maximise their incomes and their total amount of

realized want-satisfaction.¹

It would be an important contribution if the anthropologist would set out as clearly as possible the exact conditions of relative scarcities with which a primitive people have to cope, and which lie at the root of its actual solution of the economic problem. He is, and should be, pre-occupied with the actual and the real, and only secondarily with the ideal. The demands of programme, logical priority, and sound method, all suggest such an order of approach. Such relative scarcities are, in any case, part of the milieu in which the process of tribal economy goes on, part of the social context which needs to be fully described if we are to understand the difference between what actually is done by a primitive people in the way of economy, and the economy which he might be prepared to assert they could (ideally) achieve.

"Scarcity" is often used as a blanket term, screening as much as it reveals. Its true and particular meaning in the case of aboriginal society can be established only by inquiries which to a large extent are normally outside the competence of the social anthropologist. The services of the ecologist and the economic geographer are needed for full adequacy at one end of these inquiries. For scarcity of

1. O.H. Taylor in "Explorations in Economics" p.380.

materia economica is not only a function of many natural agents, including soil, climate, temperature, humidity, topography, rainfall, and world region, but it is also determined by a highly variable relation between "non-natural" factors which themselves are inconstant. Contiguity, accessibility, chemical purity, volume of means in relation to size of the human population dependent on them, are important determinants of the nature of the general scarcity. The level of technical efficiency, the state of knowledge, movements of population, changes in habits and tastes, also act reflexively upon and modify the nature of the scarcity which would be established in the absence of those influences. We can, therefore, treat scarcity only as a conceptual constant in the analysis and elucidation of primitive economy; we cannot treat it as a known or fixed quantity. But we are bound to explore, as well as we are able, its "power" at any point of time and over the period of the inquiries.

Clearly enough, the varying contents and quantities of the scarcity-situation have their effect upon the final mode of economy which any primitive people practises, and so need to be taken into account in a descriptive analysis of that process of economy. Nor can they be safely disregarded if we make any attempt to explain the variation or specialization of that culture.

The means are already available to the anthropologist to make a preliminary attack on this problem. We could, for instance, follow the economists and classify resources according to their relative scarcity, and according to the degree to which their scarcity can be controlled by human agencies.

There are (i) those resources which are so abundant that there is no necessity for economy with them.

Then there are (ii) those which will probably become scarce in the remote future but are now so abundant that they have no market value in the present.

There are (iii) those resources which have an actual degree of present scarcity. Some are not exhaustible through normal use; some are necessarily exhausted through use and are non-restorable after exhaustion; some are exhaustible by use but can be restored; some are exhaustible in a given locality but are restorable through the employment of other resources of a different kind, or of similar resources in different locations.

It seems possible that we could classify Australian aboriginal resources in this way and, moreover, find some significant correlations in native attitudes towards resources so classified. I have already shown that we see no obvious economy with food, though there is a certain kind of sumptuary control of the use of food, but this is

derivatively, rather than directly, economic use of food. Yet the magic of tal and of wūmyi reveal a concept of the power of human control over at least some resources, though the evidence of the working of this power is in fact a false identification of caused^{al} sequences. At all events the general attitude towards food is different from the attitude, and the social conduct based upon it, towards ninymer. If we seek evidence of intelligent and deliberate economizing of resources we find it more clearly expressed in the latter than in the former.

X.

The tribes among whom the researches outlined in this essay were made are undergoing substantial changes as the outcome of contact with whites and other aliens. An understanding of these changes is to some extent dependent upon an understanding of the influences to which the tribes have been exposed. The picture of tribal economy presented in the following chapters was built up in the midst of inquiries directed as much to those alien influences as to the traditional and the contemporary forms of native life. A summary account of the nature of those influences is given in the two next chapters, before taking up the general description of the ways in which the tribes husband their resources.

Chapter II.

The home of the tribes whose economic life is to be described is within the pioneer fringe of North Australia. They live near a frontier settlement which dates from the mid-seventies of last century when at great cost of body and spirit the inland of Australia was being opened up by pastoralists and miners.

Today the settlement is a scattered cluster of huts and farms, poorly fenced, poorly built, set down without apparent design in clearings in the jungle and savannah forest on a narrow strip along both sides of the middle reaches of the Daly river. The site which it occupies is within a few miles of the site chosen by the first settler who came more than half a century ago, when it was a wilderness still peopled by hostile tribes.

The isolation of the settlement is extreme, perhaps not in the measurements of North Australia where distance has come to matter little, and where life has flung itself expansively over an immense area, but extreme in the measurements of urban Australia. It is the only settlement for hundreds of miles on this flank of the pioneer fringe. Darwin, about 100 miles overland due north, is

200 sea-miles away, and 140 miles overland by an unmade bush track. To the south the nearest settlement is the Bradshaw cattle station on the Victoria river, 200 miles away. Brock's Creek and Adelaide river, two ~~sidings~~ on the Darwin-Birdum railway, are respectively 80 and 70 miles to the north-east. Traffic on this line is sparse (there is but one train a week each way) and the roads are unfrequented. The isolation is not, however, so much that of distance as that of empty country where no one's business takes them.

The settlement is unnamed. It was to have been the site of the capital of North Australia; it was also to have been the site of the township of Maranunga. Neither of these plans was carried through. It is now spoken of simply as "the Daly river". The population in 1935 was twelve whites and two Chinese.

All are growing peanuts for shipment to the markets in eastern and southern Australia. There are no church, no store, no made roads, no bridges over the numerous creeks, which are often in flood. The broad Daly river has to be crossed by wading, by swimming on horseback, or in rickety native dug-out canoes. There is no local government organisation, and no corporate settlement life. Below the settlement the sixty miles of river are unsettled, and the entire coastal area where the Daly debouches into the Timor Sea is unoccupied. Perhaps once a month, or once every six weeks, the coastal motor vessel Maroubra makes a trip from Darwin to the Victoria River Depot, and on its return voyage calls at the Daly with mails and cargo, and takes the peanuts away.

From October to April in a normal summer the monsoon rain swamps the countryside, isolates the small Daly community, except for a rare visit by the coastal boat, and an uncertain pack-horse communication with the railway. Between those months the settlement lives a self-centred existence rarely broken by contacts with "outside". Food has to be stored in the summer to last until the dry season opens the roads, and lowers the flooded river sufficiently for

it to be safe for traffic from the sea. By February or March a food pinch often sets in. Damp-rot, grubs, weevils, and cockroaches foul and sour many of the settlers' rations. Bags of flour and rice have to be opened to the sun and dried and sieved. Then, when the roads are opened by the drying effect of the outflowing south-east continental wind, the characteristic frontier life follows until the inflowing monsoon brings the rain in October or November.

Except for the link by river and sea the only roads away from the settlement are the bush tracks which run north-east through the ridges to Brock's Creek and the Adelaide river. For half the year, during the summer monsoon, they are untraffickable under swamps and bogs.

The ridges through which the roads run spread in low and rugged undulations north and east. The highest is barely five hundred feet, but they are so twisted and contorted that even blacks do not venture into many of their fastnesses. They are based on a great block of ancient sediments which have passed through convulsions, turning them into gnarled schists, gneiss, and sharp slate, tilting skyward across the axis of the lateral thrusts which upreared them. The waters of the wet season have

cut deep gorges, down which the rocks have tumbled to clutter the hollows. Coarse grass, and a stunted tropical forest timber cover the plains and line the sides of the gorges. There are a few traces of great faulting movements in the already troubled hills. Some miles north of the river the ranges break on the flats as a wave passes over a sand bar and slides into still water. The crests sink, the base broadens, and give rise to low ripples. The flats between these and the river are the site of the settlement.

II.

The narrow main track forks twice, once where it branches off to Brock's Creek, and again at the Copper Mine where it branches in three directions - one track to The Crossing, one to a cluster of five farms which form the middle of the settlement, and one in the direction of the abandoned police station five miles below.

There are four farms near The Crossing, a sixth midway between the ford and the five lower farms, and the eleventh is half a day's canoe trip down river to Brown's Creek. Pan Quee, two miles above the ford, and Jim Wilkinson, about twenty miles down stream, are the outposts of the settlement. Narrow native "pads" wind along the river banks between these points, making beaten tracks

to every farm. They follow the old native roads of pre-white days, and go through the jungles and swamps which make long detours necessary for the wheeled farm vehicles. Feet and wheels have cut the soft ground around many of the farms into powder, which rises chokingly in the cutting wind of the dry season, and drives through the doors and walls.

The Daly at this point meanders across alluvial plains too wide for the eye to compass. Like the hills, the plains are always touched by a bluish haze, in which they seem to float. The colours are flat and sombre to the verge of harshness. There are a few patches of brilliant green where water is lying, and here and there unexpected beauty. But in broad perspective the country is gaunt, with miles of gutta percha swamps and casuarinas; with bogs blanketed by jungles; with scalded low lying areas where nothing grows in the soured soils; and dry red gravelly ridges on which the pandanus palms give delusive promise of water. Here and there are sparse eucalypt forests of ironwood, bloodwood, box, woolly butt, black plum, cypress pine, and the cheesy kapok from which the dug out canoes are built. Thickets of jungle and pungent horehound embroider the channels of many waterways. Forests of ti-tree

"paper bark" make smudges on the skyline, towards the "salt-water", the Timor Sea. The colours, heat-haze, and wide sky line give the coast a look of brooding stillness. The bush itself is hushed, and only sharp eyes see the life moving in it. In the dry season, between noon and late afternoon, a continuous troop of willy-willies raises the dust. The wind-spirals enliven a landscape which has at most other times only a hungry quietude.

III.

I made my first acquaintance with the Daly river at the beginning of the season known to the aborigines as Burning Grass Time, which opens at about the time when the prevailing wind veers to the south-east and turns so cold that the fires are kept burning all night in the blackfellows' camps. The north-west monsoon was over, and the dry brilliant winter about to start. The change of season was liberating a new phase of aboriginal activity, which I saw taking place around me in the first few weeks. Burning Grass Time began, and for weeks the grasslands were ringed with smoke and flame. Columns of smoke rose in a hundred points of the compass as though an army were at work plundering the countryside. I stood one day on the cap of a hillock and saw the arcs of fire sweeping into the tall cane-grass, so tall that

it would hide a man on horseback. Hawks were wheeling in and out of the uprising smoke columns and were diving in front of the fire on to scurrying small game. Where a gully opened off the flats the hunters fired the matted grass to drive the game between the walls. Other spear-men waited at the far end while others whooped and stamped at strategic points. The confused and hesitating marsupials, dazed by the heat and smoke and general din, fell easily to the yellow bamboo spears, which were flung so swiftly that the animals seemed to be transfixed by shafts of light.

Beyond the roar and crackle of the fire were the empty ranges of the country which once belonged to the Kamor tribe. This and other Daly tribes have been extinct for generations. A few words of the dialects they spoke are remembered by some of the old men of neighbouring tribes, and a few personal memories, but they too will die with the men who hold them.

In contrast with these wide stretches of habitable country, rich in game and abundantly watered, but completely emptied of its black aboriginal population, are, on the other hand, areas around the white settlement where to all outward appearance the native

life seems still to be full of vigorous activity. But the outward appearance of the aboriginal life is deceptive. A few days' acquaintance will bring to one natives with stories of tribal fears and jealousies; stories of aggressive newcomers to the river like the Berinken and Moil, who are said to have left their own territories and invaded those of the river tribes; and tales (from the blacks who traditionally belong to the Daly river) of sorceries and dangers which are to be encountered out towards the plan of the Moil and Kimul, the Fitzmaurice river. In my first few weeks the name "Berinken" came to take on for me an unpleasant and disturbing ring as I absorbed some of the fears of my informants and took over some of their bias.

In Port Darwin I had been told that I was going to a river where the native tribes were uncontaminated by alien influence. I had been led to believe that I would find aboriginal life almost unchanged. I was given the impression that the river would prove to be a densely populated tribal district, opening on to still more densely populated country out towards the Fitzmaurice river, in which were supposedly a great many uncivilized tribes not yet in contact with civilization.

The situation which revealed itself proved to be very different. Some of the tribes, the Yunggor, Kamor, Meran and perhaps another whose name is uncertain - who inhabited the country near the river, are extinct. Possibly there were also other small tribes which have now vanished. The remnants of perhaps a dozen other local tribes, the Mulluk Mulluk, Madngella, Ponga Ponga, Tjerait, Wageman, Nangiomeri, Marimanindji, Merithiel, Maranunggo, Maritjamiri, and others, live in a number of camps on the strip of river near the settlement. Bands of myall (uncivilized) tribes from towards the Fitzmaurice, such as the Maringar, Mariwuda, and Maridan, visit and camp in the jungles on the south-west bank. It is this heterogeneous mass which if taken in the lump gives the impression of a "dense" river population. That impression is an illusion. The indigenous river tribes have gone a long way downhill. Their numbers seem to be slowly sinking, but this is obscured by a seepage of bush natives into the river, which keeps the local population illusively high. If the natives are taken tribe by tribe the story is all too clear. A few miles from the river are the unvisited territories of tribes which refuse now to leave the river, even to visit land which is almost

glutted with natural foods, although the pressure on the food resources of the settled strip is at times heavy. With the settlement as a centre, a circle 50 miles in diameter drawn around it would not touch any tribal territory which is actually inhabited and lived on by tribes, with the exception of those natives in and closely around the settlement. The tribes from the Fitzmaurice and Moil drift through this empty area on their way to the settlement. It remains deserted by aborigines and unoccupied by whites, plain evidence of the degeneration of many tribes, and an indication of what may well happen to those who still remain. Far from being densely populated with uncivilized tribes, the country between the Daly and the Fitzmaurice rivers is now virtually empty. Except, perhaps, for one or two hundred members of the Moil tribe (the Maringar) all the natives of this area are either at the Daly settlement or have drifted over to the Port Keats mission station, which was opened in 1935.

In 1932, the occasion of my first visit, there were eleven farms on the river, employing eleven white men and two Chinese; in 1935 three of these white men and the two Chinese had failed (three farms were involved) but were still living in the district. There had been a partial reshuffle of the holdings; a farm abandoned

some years before had been put again under cultivation, and was worked by one man with a white overseer; the other farmers of 1932 were still in occupation, and with the exception of one small paddock, none of the holdings cultivated in 1932 was idle; two of the "failed" farms passed to other Chinese, and the third farm (leased previously by the white man who failed in 1934) was taken over by a young man who in 1932 had been working with his father on another allotment.

Map II. shows the relative locations of the farms, the approximate distances between them, the most important tribal encampments, the present disposition of the tribes, and the traditional territories of the indigenous river tribes.

The total area under crop in the season of 1934-1935 was about 300 to 350 acres. The largest farm had about 120 acres under cultivation; the others ranged between 20 and 35 acres, 20 acres being about the minimum from which at normal prices a return could be expected sufficiently beyond the subsistence level to make the effort worth while. The two smallest farms were owned by Chinese.

All the farms were being worked on a low level of efficiency. The fences were poor, and there was some damage to seeds and young plants by pests. Though ample water was available from the river close at hand, there was no irrigation because of the costs involved. Only three

tractors were in use between the 11 farms, and in practise five, and on occasions, more of the farms, were without mechanized farm implements. They were being ploughed, planted, scarified, weeded, and harvested with the simpler horse-drawn farm implements. None of the farms was adequately mechanized. All relied a great deal upon hand-labour for many of the tasks incidental to crop husbandry. Seed was prepared by hand; in some cases even planted by hand or with crude home-made machines; the mass-attack of weeds and grass, which threatened throughout the maturing period to choke and overcome the crop, had to be kept down by hand-weeding and hand-hoeing; there was extensive hand-labour in use at all stages of harvesting. The reasons in all cases were under-capitalization, the cumulative effect of past losses, deterioration of equipment and a certain degree of technical inexperience. The soil was showing signs of exhaustion and the seed of deterioration, owing in some cases to the custom of selling the best nuts in order to get better general prices and of using the lower grades of nuts as seed. No fertilizers were in use, for none could be afforded. There was no systematic resting or fallowing of land, and no crop-rotation. All the farmers were under the constant and accumulating duress of under-capitalization,

past losses, deteriorating equipment, poor and largely inefficient native labour, and also their own apparent technical inexperience.

IV.

There can be no question of the importance of the aboriginal role in the economy of the white farmers. Peanut prices since 1928 have given the farmers a return so small that, even with production costs at a point which seems irreducible, it has forced several indebted farmers to give up their holdings, and has barely enabled the others to hold on in the hope of higher returns. The availability of native labour, for which no payment was made over and above the rations necessary for sustenance, with such small gifts as the farmers were able to afford at the end of the season, was the factor which made holding on possible. Nor, on the other hand, can there be any question of the importance of the farmers in the native economy as it is now constituted.

The description to be given later of relations between farmers and natives will make it clear that for a period of every year, ranging from five to seven months, perhaps 70 per cent of the aborigines now on the Daly river are closely associated with the farms, directly as house-boys, house-gins, labourers, shooting-boys, or in other capacities, or indirectly as partially or wholly supported dependents of these natives. During the remainder of the year many

of these farm-workers pay visits to their employers for small gifts or retainers of food, tobacco, and tea and sugar. This type of association has, for over ten years in the case of the present corps of farmers, become integral in the native economy as native labour has in the white. A detailed justification of this assertion will be given later; whether it is true is, obviously, a crucial issue from several points of view. There is a good deal of evidence to suggest, for instance, that because of the type of relationship which has been allowed to persist for so long, the aborigines would be nearly as seriously affected as the farmers if the provisions of the native ordinances as to payment, housing, registration of labourers, and etc. were strictly enforced. Such action would, it is fairly clear, precipitate the bankruptcy of some of the farmers; this fact is well appreciated administratively, so that strict enforcement is not likely to be insisted upon; but it is less well appreciated what the effects of the relationship have been upon the native societies, and what would be the probable consequences if this relationship were substantially altered.

The natives themselves have, apparently, no conception of their important economic role. There is never any

concerted movement among them to demand better food, higher wages or more satisfactory working conditions. There has been for some years a latent discontent among them upon each of these matters; there have been individual refusals to work for some of the farmers; in one case the resentful labourers on a farm deserted in a body; in other cases quarrels between farmers and individuals have led to the defection of groups of natives or families which felt themselves to be aggrieved; and friction of the master-servant variety seems to be a more or less continual accompaniment to the farm associations. But there have been no inter-tribal organizations of natives against farmers; it is still possible for the farmers to turn the tribal loyalties of smaller groups against other small tribal groups; there have been occasions in the last few years when individual natives of strong and assertive personality have, apparently, tried to influence against an individual farmer more natives than were actually employed, but I have not been able to establish that these led to any serious interference with the working of the farms. These incidents, resentments, and antagonisms have remained incidental to the working of the farm community. Native

economic co-operation is unenthusiastic, but it offers itself for employment. If it were not that it seeks employment rather than is induced to offer itself (and thus be able to discriminate between employers according to the material advantage promised), the farmers would not be able to count, as they can, upon a fairly constant labour supply. There is on the part of the natives no precise calculation of where, between the handful of employers, their greatest material advantages are to be found, and no consequent periodic movement of labour from point to point of greatest advantage. On the other hand there is among the employers an implicit agreement upon levels of sustenance and payment. These facts, coupled with the inertia of the natives, the existence of associations of a non-economic character, and the existence of forces such as inter-tribal fear, jealousy, hostility, and the desire to work with or close to old white associates, reduces the mobility of labour to a minimum. The combined result is that the aboriginal labour corps on which the farmers draw seasonally is not a unified, organized body capable of demanding the maximum return for its services.

V.

The first intrusions of whites into North Australia as a whole, certainly the intrusion into the Daly river

country, were largely economic phenomena. These took place between the 60's and 80's of the nineteenth century, following the secondary pressure on land accompanying the pastoral and farming settling-down which took place after the gold-boom had passed. The emphasis of European domination of North Australia today remains economic. The aborigines are not a "political" problem; they are not articulate politically; they are not warlike, or trouble-makers; the natives are not economic competitors - their numbers are few (perhaps 20,000 in an area of 500,000 sq. m.); the political and administrative staff needed to control or supervise them are to be counted in tens rather than hundreds; and the continued presence of a great part of the small white population at a scarcely changing level is due not to political factors so much as to sporadic attempts to exploit local resources of minerals, metals, pearls, trepang, and trochus; to a prolonged attempt to conserve certain investments fixed and to a great extent "frozen" in cattle stations, farms, and mines; and to an attempt to recoup the heavy capital losses of the last two decades.

The period of exploratory tests of the primary resources of North Australia is now well over; but

not the period of speculative investment, though the limits of economically worth-while investment at present price levels and conditions of markets should have long been clear; for the most part, what is sought now (1935) above all else pending a local boom on post-war levels, is to prevent, during the very prolonged period of local depression, too great a depreciation of the fixed assets of investors.

The years of almost unrelieved depression, and the absence of attractive local opportunities for investment and for industrial development of a primary or secondary type, are the main reasons why the white population has over a long period shown a tendency to remain stationary, or to decline.

The greatest decline has taken place in the wage-earning population, whose strong trade-union organization has usually demanded wages in excess of those employers were willing or able to pay.

For some years it has been no longer a matter of keeping costs low to make profits high, but to keep the continuing annual deficits on the lowest possible level. Because of the absence of satisfactory white labour ready and willing to work in the unattractive back country for the wages offered, the tribes of aborigines have in many areas for years

past formed an unorganized substitute labour corps; though inefficient it has been relatively cheap, usually willing to work without wages, or for "payment in kind" which has still been cheaper than the white labour necessary to replace them. Local employers have also been able to employ natives with a minimum of restraint, which has if anything increased the tendency to make the greatest possible economic use of aborigines.

The economic services of blacks have accordingly, for the fifteen years since the collapse of the war boom, been freely utilized by employers, both white and chinese. Native labour has thus been integral with the white economy of North Australia. Without it many individual pastoralists and farmers could not have survived. The relation between natives and the local white economy in other periods of the white occupation of North Australia is dealt with briefly in another chapter; there, too, black labour has been freely utilized; at the moment I am only sketching in the wider economic background of the period to which most of the material here presented is relevant - from 1920 onwards.

During this period the contacts to which the Daly river and contiguous tribes were subjected have been almost entirely economic in context, if not

wholly economic in type. Over the whole period of white occupancy of the Daly river country, that is, since 1883, there has in fact, been continual pressure upon the tribes by white and Chinese economic interests. Even the mission activities which were carried on for thirteen or fourteen years after 1886 were, as will be shown, in part of an economic character. Over the period as a whole the variation of alien economic fortunes determined the intensity of alien contacts with the river tribes. The situation which had developed on the Daly river by 1935 was that a large part of the annual peanut crop, the major export industry of the Northern Territory, was surviving only with the assistance of unpaid and badly-fed native labour; the industry, under-capitalized, poorly mechanized, and with a low level of efficiency, was being carried on in the hope of eventually making substantial profits, a hope which nothing in the history of North Australian agriculture seemed to justify; the standard of living of a number of tribes for the greater part of the year was closely bound up with the economic condition of the peanut industry; the economic structure of local tribal life and its seasonal activities were being to a great extent determined by, and to some extent were decided by the

natives themselves in relation to the dominant white economy. At the same time there was clearly an aboriginal economy with some degree of traditional autonomy. It is this economic life which I propose to describe in this book.

Before doing so I shall give a summary account of the history of alien contacts with the local aborigines.

CHAPTER 111.

HISTORY.

Chapter III History.

Those documentary records of settlement on the Daly river which have so far been available to me are poor. As far as can be established with any certainty the first white men to set eyes on the middle reaches of the river, the area in which settlement ever since has been confined, were the explorers McKinlay and Edmunds, who sailed peaceably up its winding reaches for 36 miles in 1867. McKinlay was evidently a man of daring and superb bushcraft, and because of his experience with natives was able to avoid a clash with the Daly blacks who watched his progress. He had twice crossed Australia some years before when it was trackless and unknown; once to find traces of the lost Burke and Wills expedition and the grave of Gray, and once in search of a site for the capital of the new colony which South Australia planned to establish in the North. On an expedition two years before, McKinlay had been stranded by the monsoon and had struggled to safety down the East Alligator coast on a raft made from the skins of the horses he had slaughtered when he reached starvation point.

McKinlay was the first of many visionaries who saw in the Daly river the northern gateway to the

continent. He was evidently deeply impressed by his quick visit and cursory inspection, for he turned back near the low flats of the Ponga Ponga tribe and recommended the Daly river as a suitable site for the capital of North Australia. The South Australian Government from two thousand miles away rejected his advice, and chose for the site of the capital, then called Palmerston, (later Port Darwin), a sheltered bay opening further north on to a sour, rocky, under-nourished hinterland which has ever since retarded its development.

The Daly river was then left unvisited except by a few overlanders, of whose native contacts there are no records, until ten years later, when McMinn, a surveyor, took a party to make an extensive survey and exploration of the reputedly attractive land near the river. They came into conflict with the blacks, and used rifles on them. Contemporary newspaper records blame the natives for this first bloodshed. So much was publicly written at this period of the fierceness and hostility of the Daly tribes that affrays were apparently more common than the few extant documents show.

II.

Even at this early period settlers were turning their eyes towards the river, of which glowing

descriptions had been given by a Mr. Owston, who settled about 1880 to grow sugar cane on a Government grant of 20,000 acres of "fine country" 65 miles up the river. The broad riverside flats, silted over by the floods of the wet season, were at this stage compared by enthusiasts to the fields of Canaan and Elysium. There seem to have been difficulties with the aborigines almost at once. Thefts of the new kind of "sugar-bag" began by the sugar-hungry blacks. There were more shootings and spearings, and in 1882 a writer records with satisfaction that "the blacks had been taught a lesson they had not forgotten". Somewhere about this time the sugar crop failed miserably, and the planters left the river.

When the rains were about to begin in November of 1882, five white prospectors penetrated the tumbled ranges to the north-east and rode down to the river. They came upon a rich lode of copper ores in foothills a few miles from the abandoned plantation, and almost within sight of the river. A mineral and metal boom was in progress in Australia. The prospectors settled down to work the valuable copper and seem to have had no trouble with the blacks until the end of the dry season of 1883

(sometimes the year is said to be 1884), when they were suddenly set upon with stones, spears, and clubs. Three of the miners were killed. The fourth, Noltenius, crawled through the hills to die of his wounds near the picturesque billabong which now bears his name, and where he was buried. The fifth, Henry Roberts, although badly wounded, beat off the blacks, escaped into the bush, and made his way to a cattle station which had been opened recently midway between the Daly and Brock's Creek.

This savage episode was followed by reprisals even more savage. The truth of what occurred is difficult to establish. The secret was well kept for more than twenty years, until Roberts and other men told Dr. Herbert Basedow that wrathful fellow miners and others went "in several parties and severely punished the natives, very few of whom escaped, by seeking shelter in the waters of the billabongs."

The Northern Territory Times of the day referred to the outrage, and pointed out:

"The right class of men" were in pursuit of the aborigines, but little would be heard of the matter, as in such cases "it was far more sensible to avoid complications by the exercise of a judicious reticence."

Very little was in fact heard. But the details

could not be wholly hidden. Knut Dahl, a German naturalist, who visited the Northern Territory towards the end of the century has recorded from evidence gathered locally that

"the sequel, which in the Australian bush has always followed such murders, occurred in due course. A police force spent some time on the Daly, and was said to have bribed natives to assist in arresting some of their brethren who were supposed to have had a hand in the murders, and justice was meted out as well as circumstances would permit Another gathering of white men, friends and fellows of the victims, also embarked on a campaign of vengeance against the Wol Wanga tribe, which had been responsible for the deed. The reports on this campaign vary, but participants have told me that after a long search they finally found a great portion of the tribe gathered at the abandoned mine. They surrounded them, drove them into a lagoon, and shot them all, men, women and children. The truth of this report was commonly endorsed and believed; at all events, it is true that the Wol Wanga tribe, which was once the most powerful tribe on the Daly, became very weak after the events following the murder."

In 1890 Police Inspector Paul Foelsche, writing about the tribes which even then were clearly vanishing, said that:

"The tribe withering away fastest is the Woolwonga (Wolwanga). My private opinion is that a good many have been put out of the way by bullets."

Ten years later the Government Resident of the Northern Territory, Mr. C. J. Dashwood, said in a general comment:

"It is notorious that the blackfellows were shot down like crows, and that no notice was taken."

There were, it is true, official and private denials that such reprisals occurred at the Copper Mine. There were other explanations that if reprisals occurred they were more merciful, or that if they were merciless, they were justified.

To the Government Resident of the day the Copper Mine murders expressed firstly the aborigines'

"irresistible love of plunder", and "the perception which is dawning on the native mind that their hunting grounds are going to be taken from them, and their old free nomadic life rendered impossible." Yet, he said, it was "pleasant to be able to state that deep and strong as were the feelings of sorrow which were expressed (at the murders) the community never

"lost it's head". It was unanimously felt that all that could be done must be done; and when what could be done was being done, there was no clamour for wholesale slaughter and reprisals. On this point it was very satisfactory to be able to quote the words of the Duke of Manchester, who was himself within twenty miles of the scene of the outrage on the day after it occurred. Speaking at a dinner at the residency before he left, His Grace, after he had returned thanks for the toast of his own health, rose again and said: 'He had made one omission when responding, for he had forgotten to refer to the melancholy events which had taken place during the past few weeks. He thought that, if it was possible, his words should go out to the world, but at any rate England should hear how her sons in this distant portion of Her Majesty's dominions received calmly - but at the same time with deep feeling - the news of the death of well known men, who had perished while endeavouring to establish a new industry. No rage of revenge was shown, but simply the desire to teach the natives that they cannot perpetrate outrages of this kind on the whites with impunity."

The "lessons" which were taught at this period seem to have been remembered. There have been no more

mass attacks on whites on the Daly river. The back of organized resistance was evidently broken at this early period. Occasionally a settler or prospector was and is murdered, the last two in 1931 and 1932, but native hostility is now spiritless. There is a great deal of native criticism of whites, their reputed meanness and bad-faith; there is a good deal of mockery of their personal foibles; they are mimicked behind their backs; indecencies are spoken to them in an innocently conversational tone; a native may sometimes be seen gesturing with a spear, as though in practice, but the remarks which are passed at the same time suggest that there is strong feeling. The long association with whites, and with at least the operation of white law, seems to have left the resentment without a real edge.

III.

The murders of 1883 gave the river some notoriety and led indirectly to an intensification of interest in it as a potential area of settlement. The copper mining was temporarily at an end, but Government surveys were ordered of many stretches of the middle reaches of the river and the lands surrounding it. Other prospecting parties found a way through the ridges and prospected the hills more

intensively. They took back into Palmerston accounts of an apparent metalliferous belt running north and south, and of rich plains and pockets of alluvial soil which seemed to be ideal for farming settlement. Many of these were descriptions of conditions as they were in the dry early winter, when the country had a deceptively fertile appearance. Signs of tin, wolfram, and gold were found in lines of country which appeared to link up with the belts recently tapped at Howley and Brock's Creek and Yam Creek, where men sinking holes for the posts on the overland telegraph line had struck gold in 1871. These discoveries at once suggested the possibility of rich mineral lodes in this as yet unexplored region.

The Northern Territory of 1884 held a restless population of pioneers who were in a mood to follow every gleam. The gold rush which took place after the "strikes" of 1871, subsiding as quickly as it began, left stranded in the tropics many of the miners and hangers-on it had brought with hopes of a new Klondike, from all over Australia. Among them were the 200 Chinese indentured in 1874, and the hundreds of others who had followed them. Within a few years there were thousands of Chinese in the north, nearly all of them coolies who were afterwards described

as "cut-throat pirates". The Daly river at once began to be visited by these aliens. If the whites were proving destructive and acquisitive, the coolies were already a blight. They outnumbered the uneasy whites, and had built a squalid shanty town in Palmerston which made even the winds odorous and soon became so bad that it was shifted to a quarter from which the wind did not blow. On the mining fields they "picked the eyes" from every gold strike and left the poorer lodes in a condition which, at current gold prices, made the working of them by whites unprofitable. Their contacts with the aborigines were ruinous and among many tribes they accelerated the mischief which the whites had begun.

The isolation of the Daly river could not completely shelter it. By 1886 the road to the Daly river, and to the many tribes which inhabited it, was open and under regular traffic. A new mining boom began at this stage. A railway line was built, principally by coolie labour, from Palmerston to the Pine Creek ranges, where gold had been struck. The line went straight through the heart of the territories of such tribes as the Larrakia, Warrai, Wolwanga, Wulwullam, and Djauan, but blacks from the untouched bush on both flanks came in to see the construction. The railway "opened up" new country and a new industry.

At the same time it completely disrupted some tribes, and unsettled those which were contiguous, attracting them into closer contact with new foods, new and valuable manufactured articles, and new ways of life, as well as grog, opium, and venereal and other diseases. The tales handed down leave no doubt that the tribes of 1886 were deeply stirred and excited by these events. There was no inter-tribal loyalty to spread resentment at the Wolwanga massacre and so to keep the tribes aloof. Each tribe was ready to turn borrowed guns on many of its neighbours, and take pleasure in the shooting. When Whites or Chinese were attacked it was because of individual grievances, or the grievances of a relatively small group of kindfolk. The troubles of other tribes were regarded with an indifference which is still characteristic today. The one attitude which seems to have been common to all tribes which were in touch with the aliens, once the first hostility had passed, was a blend of excitement, cupidity, and unrest.

The Daly river was thus already heavily influenced when the Jesuit missionaries came in 1896. The copper mines were then in full swing once again, and in that year 2000 tons of ore left the river by sea and overland. At the Wheal Dants mine alone, there

were 24 Chinese and 9 whites at work before the missionaries arrived. Soon, however, a slump hit the copper market and most of the miners, except for a few of the Chinese, drifted away as the mission was establishing itself. The tribes which had moved towards the mines now made the mission the focus of their already disturbed life.

IV.

The Jesuits were retreating from failure to make new efforts in a field which proved to be even harder. Their mission at Rapid Creek, near Palmerston, had been founded in 1882, but was seen to be failing. They were granted 100 square miles of likely land about 70 miles up the Daly river, and commenced a slow transfer of priests, lay-brothers, and equipment from the Rapid Creek settlement. By 1888 the full staff of twelve men were transferred to the Daly river. The site of the new mission was a high flood bank at Wunia, The Place of Rocks, on the south-western side of the river, a few miles above the Copper Mine.

The records they have left tell the story of an immense labour. Their policy was:

"To persuade these savages to give up their roving life teach them to cultivate the soil,

and make them understand their work in this way brings them greater happiness, makes them more carefree than their old life." When all these links had been cut the missionaries hoped that "the new tribes of settled agriculturists may be more susceptible to our religious propaganda."

The missionaries explored as far as the foothills to the south of the river, but did not go beyond Dilg. The tableland was hard to scale, only the black tribes knew the paths which cut up through the gullies on to the higher levels, and the tribes were fierce and uninterested in a new religion. With so much work to do at Wunia the missionaries saw no point in braving yet what lay south of Dilg. So they stayed north of the hills in a district which gave them promise of great reward. There was some timber, grass and water in plenty, and thousands of acres of flat land within reach, as a material setting for the conversions later to be attempted.

The visionary accounts of the Daly's "Elysian fields" enabled them to begin their work with confidence. With the help of the blacks they cleared thirty acres of scrub and jungle, cut posts and planks from poorish trees for houses and fences, parcelled out the land among selected aboriginal families, helped them to sow

crops of tobacco, rice, maize, and told the tribesmen that they were to live on the yield of their plots.

Father McKillop, the leader of the mission, who is still remembered as a rugged and fearless man, set to work to learn the Ngolok-Wanggar language. The countryside was thoroughly explored. A school was organized and the records show that a small village with a core of semi-permanent native residents slowly formed around the mission. Crops were experimented with, and a wide range of tropical fruits, cereals, and vegetables, for a time grew splendidly. Rice and tobacco seemed to give most promise. The blacks were taught prayers and hymns, and they were told simple Biblical stories. They were taught to regulate their daily lives by the bells and whistles for matins, meals, and vespers, just as the missionaries' own spiritual and secular disciplines were regulated. The single girls were segregated and housed separately so that there would be no sexual misconduct. Marks were given and taken away for good and bad conduct. There was a close watch on conformity to the rules of mission conduct. The unmarried young men and women were urged to keep a Christian celibacy, and tribal rituals which seemed indecent or un-Christian were frowned on or banned. Strips of cloth were distributed

so that the naked aborigines could cover their genitals. It was not long before native women, wearing skirts, but with chests uncovered, began to cup their breasts with their hands if they chanced to meet whites. If the aborigines were completely naked, as both men and women had always been before the whites came, they crossed arms over their bodies, or crouched.

The outward pattern of the life of those natives who made the mission their home, or stayed there for any length of time, was remoulded as rapidly as possible to forms which the missionaries regarded as appropriate, and a resolute attempt was made at the same time to indoctrinate them with a minimum set of Christian beliefs.

The missionaries explicitly stated that they hoped for no quick success, but were working for an end, the attainment of which was deliberately put many years ahead.

V.

Some of the blacks were tractable, but persistent attempts are said to have been made to spear the missionaries. The reasons for the attempts are not recorded. The mission houses were wired in, and in the early days no native was allowed to enter without permission. Hundreds of the less civilized tribesmen,

drifting in from all sides, moved about in the surrounding country. Separate tribal camps were observed, but most of them were in Meran and Ngolok-Wanggar territory, which led to some friction, for such tribes as the Ngolok-Wanggar, Madngella, Kamor, Yungor and Meran felt they had a special claim on the mission as a source of food, tobacco, clothes, and manufactured articles. The addiction of the aborigines to tobacco, a taste which was spread by the sugar planters and miners, was an important reason why many aborigines, men and women alike, stayed around the mission, where they could obtain wian and also other desirable objects from more fortunate relatives and trading partners.

Native life on the narrow strip of river surrounding Wunia seems to have taken on a new intensity at this period. It had not before carried so heavy a population and native accounts seem to suggest that there was a good deal of trouble between the tribes, possibly owing to the pressure on food supplies. At night the bush was ringed with hundreds of camp fires, from which the sounds of endless singing, stamping feet, and the throbbing of the drone-pipe led the missionaries to make notes in their journals about the heavy task it would be to stamp out this paganism. There was incessant fighting, and

frequently at night when disputes arose the fires were setted to darken the camps so that there would be no light for spear throwing.

At first the missionaries had little difficulty in getting blacks to do the work on their own garden allotments for payment in tobacco and flour.

"But as soon as they had to subsist on the yield of the soil, or when they had been for some time in steady work, a passion for their old free forest life drove them off into the wilderness. Off and on they would return"

The old men, the custodians of tribal authority and knowledge, seem to have been irreconcilable. They saw their own influence weakening and continually worked against the missionaries, who noticing that "natives away from their own country are far more tractable than when under the traditional influence of their tribe, attempted to meet the opposition of the old men in this way. One of the "small Daly river tribes" (probably the Meran or Yunggor, both of which are now extinct) was "prevailed on to send their young men to Rapid Creek as we had hardly any hope of doing anything with the blacks of this (i.e. Rapid Creek) district." The plan was to make Rapid Creek a training ground for the young Daly proselytes. The young men who went at first, it is

said "gave every satisfaction". They seemed to the missionaries to be happy and contented and "well understand the benefits that would come to the native tribes with civilization and Christianity." How many young men were sent, how long they stayed, what their fate was, records do not say.

The vision of Elysian fields showed itself within a few years to be a mirage. Father McKillop wrote in 1891:

"The mission has been as successful as the nature of the ground permitted and as Christianising of the blacks presupposes civilizing them, this poorness of soil is a very great trouble. Our only hope is in artificial cultivation. It is a hard test for wild men, but we have no alternative."

Pests, drought, food, crop disease, uncertainty of rainfall, thieving by natives, added to their worries. White ants ate the roots of crops which were just about to yield. Plants sickened and withered without apparent cause. Seeds planted when the seasonal rains were due died from the monsoon's eccentricities, or germinated too late to survive into the droughty winters, or were eaten by hordes of cockatoos. When the rains were late the land was often baked too hard to plough, or exhausted itself quickly for fallowing and new clearing to keep pace. The impatient blacks dug up the half-ripe crops and ate them. They often disappeared

without warning to go to tribal ceremonies, and left the gardens to look after themselves. The missionaries did as best they could but the station had grown too big for them to manage unaided.

Their dissatisfaction with the first choice of site grew with each disappointment. They were encouraged by native reports to go away from the river, and they moved in 1890 to a new block of land near Magat, which they called the Serpentine Lake, about 18 miles west of the river, in the shadow of Majar, Hermit Hill. Here they were in sight of the hills of Dilg, and they hoped "to reach virgin regions and entirely unspoiled natives". This they were able to do, but the old tribes drifted out after them, and the lovely Serpentine Lake, a deep, still, sheltered pool, became a new focus for the drifting tribes. From being the centre of life for the small Madngella tribe the Hermit Hill district became the host-country for hostile as well as friendly neighbours, just as Wunia had been four years before.

The missionaries were here fairly on the plains which had seemed of such great promise to those who first saw them. They cut an irrigation canal from Magat, and (profiting by their experiences at Wunia), impounded water for the crops in the dry season. By 1891 five acres had been cultivated.

"Beside this common field, three families (one entirely Christian) cultivate another acre privately, and we have every reason to believe their good example will be followed by others. In spite of all written to the contrary we have found that the blacks can be induced to cultivate for themselves. Was the land good, we should have hardly a difficulty, but it is poor, and this disheartens men who naturally look for quick returns. We have no good land on the Daly river reserve."

Magat is still plagued by almost unbelievable hordes of mosquitoes which make it barely habitable, even for blacks, in the wetter months. These, the leached soil, the recurrent failure of the crops, and the growing hostility of the blacks, had by 1892 defeated the mission's second attempt at settlement. They let the Magat station linger on while they prepared a third site, on a black alluvial flat eight or nine miles down-river from Wunia, on the north-eastern bank. This in itself was a recognition of defeat. The wilder tribes had been left to themselves, and the missionaries had returned to the already broken-up Ngolok-Wanggar, whose name had by now been mutilated to Mulluk Mulluk. They had chosen the site of what was to be their final failure.

Here at Dinggeriet the Jesuits tried to profit by the lessons they had learned. They built their most substantial settlement, for a last resolute attempt. They constructed a stone chapel and a large house with cells for each missionary. They cleared and fenced

34 acres of apparently good soil. The mission soon had a dam, carpenter's and blacksmith's shops, a river lighter, and huts for the blacks. A herd of 1500 goats, with many horses and cattle, were pastured. A press was set up on which hymns and Bible stories were printed in the Mulluk Mulluk language, in which McKillop was now fluent. Thirteen of the 34 acres were cultivated, and those crops were sown which experience had shown to be most suitable. The first harvest (1893) was almost a complete failure.

There were now about 70 natives living more or less permanently in the mission village, which had apparently been persisted with on the original lines. About 30 children were attending the school, which had been kept going regularly. The older men and women had been given up to their paganism. Mission policy was now shaping itself as a wedge between the children and the older generation, which still however appears to have tried in some ways to reclaim them for the old ways of tribal life, yet reluctantly let them stay at the mission so that they could get the tobacco, sugar, tea and white foods for which all blacks now had a settled appetite. The Jesuits strove with the children as their one hope of success. They were given the elements of a European primary education,

taught European farm technology, and instructed in the Roman moral and religious doctrines. Surreptitiously, the old men and women of the tribes tried to guide them also in the traditional native paths, but the struggle was unequal. The parents' power had been weakened by the splitting of authority, and there were severe penalties on the mission settlement for lapses into the old aboriginal ways. It seems to have been at this time that the elders began to withhold from the growing Ngolok Wanggar and Madngella children much of the secret lore and sacred rites in which formerly they would have been instructed at their initiation. The missionaries' policy of suppressing many of the old folkways, their enforced changes by methods which seem at times to have been none too scrupulous, and the indoctrination of the children with alien idioms of belief and habit, separated the native generations widely apart.

VI.

The attempt to reshape native ways was seen in its crudest outlines by Dahl, who records his visit to the mission at Dinggeriet in 1894, when the missionaries had arranged a welcome for the Father Superior after his absence in Palmerston.

"Upon approaching the station we heard a great uproar. Father McKillop was arriving and the hubbub was a greeting of welcome. At night a most wild and fantastic scene was enacted. Under the instructions of one of the missionaries all the blacks of the station with their women and children were assembled outside the fence. Long dry bamboos were lighted as torches and were carried round the yard by two files of men. Finally they closed up, and the missionary made a speech of welcome to Father McKillop in the Mulluk Mulluk lingo. At the end of the speech the missionary cried 'Jytera'. And from hundreds of throats came a short, slowly rising 'Jyh' in answer. A native then stepped forward and delivered a stuttering and obviously secondhand speech. Next came a song in the vernacular to the tune of 'God Save the Queen', and finally a lusty cheer. The ceremony had of course not been arranged on the initiative of the blacks, and, without detracting from the merits of my reverend hosts, I may be permitted to remark that I have never witnessed a more spontaneous and perfect parody on civilization as well as on barbarism."

VII.

The realisation of the probability of failure now creeps into the mission records. In 1895 it was reported that:

"Things go fairly well but for want of funds we are unable to turn to proper advantage the really good disposition of our blacks."

In this year the number of families in the village dropped to five.

"This is not to be wondered at since the settlers have to submit to regulations very hard to black nature."

It is made clear enough that mission life was hedged in by many restrictions on conduct which seemed

to the Jesuits to be undesirable. The natives were encouraged to give up as many as possible of their "savage ways", and those who accepted the bounty of the mission had to submit to discipline. The ebbing fortunes of the wider mission activities turned the Jesuits' thoughts and work more than ever to the children's school, but it too failed slowly.

In 1896 there was a disastrous plague of rats. Heavy monsoonal storms brought the river over its flood-banks, ruining many crops. Birds were a serious pest. There was an irritating sequence of thefts. The villagers had increased to twelve families, but it was:

"on the cards that one or two would have to be dismissed on the grounds of inconstancy".

In 1897 and 1898 the sands ran quickly out. The young men were drifting back to the old tribal life, finding they were being shut out of the tribal mysteries, and left without a knowledge of the things without which they could not come to full manhood in native eyes. Father McKillop had to leave the Daly and North Australia for ever, broken in health and with him the main driving force behind the mission went also. The great heat of 1897 ruined most of the

crops. Many cattle died from an unknown disease. There was a sudden heavy mortality among the mission blacks and the surrounding tribes. Nearly 40 died within the year. The behaviour of blacks began to be less satisfactory. There was much pilfering. Cattle were killed. After 1899 the reports ceased abruptly. Evidently the station was abandoned about this time.

VIII.

Throughout the mission occupancy of the river the mining settlement had lingered on in a desultory way and had added its destructive influence. In 1892 twelve Europeans and Chinese are recorded as "gardening" near the river. By 1894 only one remained, to live precariously among the tribes. Ever since Owston's coolies had come to the river in 1879 there had been ill-feeling between the Chinese and the natives. Much blood seems to have been spilt between the coolies and the tribesmen, in the mid-80's.

Dahl writes:

"When the Chinamen were numerous enough they took very drastic steps to put down the stealing of vegetables practised by the natives of the neighbourhood. They used to fire at them and capture

their women, and about a year before (1892 or 1893) - so I was told, they shot a native, cut him up, and threw him to the pigs of course the Chinamen were coolies of the lowest class ... (whose) acts of violence towards the natives were probably dictated by mere cruelty and hatred of the blacks, who for their part utterly despised the Chinamen, and think they can do as they like towards him. Shortly after this act of violence one of the Chinamen took his gun, went over to the native camp, and without any preamble shot one of the blacks against whom he had a grudge. The other blacks then prevented the Chinaman from burning the corpse, threatening to spear anyone trying to approach, and keeping watch until the police, after considerable delay, could arrive on the spot. The Chinamen threatening to shoot anyone who should venture to go to Palmerston as a witness, only two natives could be persuaded to go with the police. The coolie in question was accused of murder, but as a judge had then to be fetched from Adelaide at great expense, it was deemed expedient to charge him with manslaughter, a crime which could be dealt with by the Palmerston authorities. He was, however, acquitted. This was the version of the case given me, but I cannot guarantee its truth. One thing at all events is true. Shortly afterwards the blacks butchered another Chinaman just outside the gardens."

The missionaries had scarcely taken their leave when a new influx of aliens began. More Chinese came in 1899 to work the Copper Mines on tribute. This seems to have perpetuated the savage and cynical relationship of blacks and Chinese. The coolies worked the copper in a poor way until 1903, when Northern Territory mining underwent one of its periodic revivals. Interest in the copper on the Daly rose again in sympathy. A Government smelter was built

at the workings in 1904 and 34 whites came to live on the river. Once again the tribes went towards the copper hills. Many of the more venturesome individuals had made their way into the railway settlements, for the mission's failure had left them with a strong disinclination to go back to the sparse bush life. The road through the ranges was now a well-trodden highway for the proselytised and discontented mission blacks. The Warrai tribe were practically extinct, and could not bar their way as they did twenty years before.

The smelter was declared to be a costly failure in 1905. Two years later it was closed down when 48 men were at work. A police trooper who had been stationed on the river during the mining days stayed on until 1909, and was then removed, presumably because settlement was non-existent and the blacks were no longer troublesome. For three years the river was left almost untenanted by whites.

IX.

Then, in visionary mood, the Commonwealth Government in 1911 took over the administration of

the Northern Territory from South Australia. It had a plan to develop pasturing, mining, and small-scale farming, and the Daly river was one of the first places chosen. The failure of the Jesuits had been forgotten. The alluvial flats still seemed to be Elysian fields. The documented warnings of soil chemists and the recorded lessons of Daly river history were overlooked or disregarded. An area of 2560 acres of riverside land was set aside as a demonstration farm. Free land and generous help were offered to small farmers who would pioneer the river. The Daly was described as ideally suited for tropical agriculture. Hundreds of men, some with families, came from over all Australia to inspect the surveyed blocks. Some of the more experienced and the less enthusiastic made cursory inspections and refused the land allotted them. But by 1912 there were eighteen "blockers", (as they were called), who had hopefully taken up land. The site of the township of Maranunga, as it was to have been called, was surveyed. A school was built, a store stocked, land was cleared, and tropical crops were sown.

The settlement made little progress, but by about 1915 there may have been up to 80 white men,

women, and children, and a score of Chinese, on the river. Then the experiment began to tail miserably away, and by 1920 only five or six men hung on, and they were turning from agriculture to goat and pig keeping.

The same complex of factors which ruined the mission wrecked the Government settlement - poor soil, unreliable seasons, droughty winters following uncertain summer rains, enormous costs of transport, isolation, pests, neurasthenia, lack of money, and unsatisfactory farm labour. The settlers, though given free land and financial help, were soon saddled with debt, and most of them gave up the struggle.

After 1920 the tide of settlement ebbed and did not return. A handful of blockers stayed on farms which were scattered miles apart. The police station was allowed to remain. Some of the buildings were pulled down, and grass and jungle crept over the rest. A few more settlers came between 1926 and 1929 when peanut farming on the sandier parts of the river banks seemed to give promise of profitable yield, so that in 1935 there were 10 farms under precarious occupation, on which

plucky men were battling for a living. Their homes are lean-to shanties of sheet iron and bush sticks, with earth floors and walls holed by every wind. They can afford only the poorest and most unsuitable food. After a series of bad crops punctuated by success which was never more than moderate, even when conditions were unnaturally favourable, the bad season of 1932 almost forced them off the river. Most were able to stay only with gifts of food from the administration. It is probably only a matter of time before they too are completely defeated.

The truth which 40 years of settlement has established, but which is still disregarded, is that the Daly river country is too poor, too remote, and too costly, to make competitive farming profitable under conditions of the moment.

PART II.

- IV. KNOWLEDGE.
 - V. PRODUCTION.
 - VI. DISTRIBUTION.
 - VII. EXCHANGE.
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PART II.

CHAPTER IV.

(KNOWLEDGE).

PART II.

Chapter IV. - Knowledge.

Several problems concerned with aboriginal knowledge were broached in the opening chapter. Resources and technology both assume a body of knowledge associated with them. But which other departments of aboriginal knowledge are relevant to a study of their economic behaviour? Which aspects of their knowledge are for them relevant to their own individual economic behaviour? How and under what conditions is this "economic" knowledge acquired and communicated?

^D So changes in their knowledge lead to changes in their economic action? ^D So economic decisions and expectances based on knowledge prove to be correct? What relation is there between what may be called objective social facts (as the anthropologist should be able to observe them) and those facts as they are known to the aborigines?

II.

A series of fairly simple descriptive statements upon native knowledge may readily be made.

A word may first be said upon the importance of this question of knowledge in economic and in cultural

theory. It has often been pointed out how economic theory silently assumes states and conditions of knowledge, but it may perhaps be doubted whether the crucial nature of this element in the assumptions is always appreciated. The problems of knowledge raised on empirical levels by the notions of rational economic action, and on levels of pure theory by the notion of equilibrium states, (the state of knowledge which would permit equilibrium to exist, and the operation of changes in knowledge which would induce disequilibrium) are of a very complicated order in themselves. The one is a datum of static theory which needs rigorous definition, the other a problem of dynamics upon which economists have perhaps not yet offered us sufficient information. It connotes a problem which, in von Hayek's phrase, economists "pretend to solve", the problem "how the spontaneous interaction of a number of people, each possessing only bits of knowledge, brings about a state of affairs in which prices correspond to costs etc., and which could be brought about by deliberate direction only by somebody who possessed the combined knowledge of all those individuals". (x).

(x). F. A. von Hayek. "Economics and Knowledge", *Economica*, Feb. 1937, p.49.

The problem of the economic function of primitive knowledge presents a case for the closest study. The social distribution of knowledge is seen to be economically highly relevant. Knowledge of the physical and social whereabouts of resources, and the technical methods of rendering them accessible and useful; knowledge of a certain order of social facts - the operative claims to resources, the social limits to be observed in economic action; knowledge which enables foresight to be exercised in the expectancy that events will take a predictable course and that people will behave in a predictable way - such problems immediately arise for attention as soon as we no longer place "the state of knowledge" among the given conditions assumed without examination.

We must, however, place the problem of knowledge against a wider background before examining its economic implications. The first question to be asked is: "What do the aborigines know?"

III.

The tribes sheltering in the trees did not seem to the early settlers to be men of knowledge. Nor are they now commonly judged to be. They were, in fact, often described in the journals of the period as

"animals", "ignorant savages", "children who must be treated like children", and as "heathen". In the grosser forms of their outward life, as it must have appeared (and still appears) to the white men opening up the land, there was little to suggest that the tribal store of knowledge was (as it still is) both wide and deep. When judged by the simple material level of their life, inevitably a low estimate of their intelligence and knowledge is formed, but the test of technical and material achievement is crude and shallow unless it is measured by the possibilities and the materials the environment has provided, and by the level of needs which have been felt by the aborigines as driving imperatives.

The Daly tribes' environment has set most definite limits to what their social achievements could have been. It has offered them only the narrowest alternatives. It is an area of great unreliability of rainfall, often drought-stricken, and covered with a sparse and rank vegetation. It is climatically humid and enervating, It is on the whole, poorly endowed with raw materials, its sharply contrasted seasonal phases limit social mobility, and reduce wider social contacts to a minimum. Agriculture would be difficult, perhaps impossible, even had there been wild vegetable crops capable of

cultivation. There were no wild animals suitable for domestication, either for traction, or as food and milk herds. So far it has resisted all the attempts which have been made by whites to force a substantial settlement upon it, even with the aid of modern technological science and heavy (at times reckless) capital investment; yet it has been pressed to its limits by the aborigines, with the simplest technology and no other capital than their energies and intelligence. Like all civilizations the tribes have practised a parasitism on their environment; in doing so, and in building up a way of life which has fitted them into geographic surroundings like a hand into a glove, the Daly tribes, like the aborigines throughout the continent, have become experts in natural lore, equipped with a masterly rule-of-thumb technique in the tasks of nomadic husbandry. The horizon of possibilities which have been open to them is doubtless wider than the one which, by selecting certain ways of life, they have set about themselves. Yet within even this selected field they have been confronted with limitations. They often fail to find game; they spoil tools and spears in the making; they find the aspects of nature in which they are most deeply versed, at times beyond their manipulation.

Their system of knowledge is shot through with fallibilities. They know, and speak of, these limits of knowledge. Yet of positive knowledge they do possess a vast store.

An inventory of their rule-of-thumb knowledge,⁽¹⁾ their knacks of husbandry, the empirical facts of nature taught to children and daily used with confidence, make an impressive list. All the phenomena of nature important to their lives seem well tabulated. They know with the familiarity and certainty of the journeyman the properties of most of the trees, shrubs, and plants growing on their territories - which are good firewood, which are best for axe and spear shafts, which for spears and spearthrowers, which for canoes. They warn whites that bloodwood leaves fallen in water may make it dangerous to drink; they know that the kapok is light enough for canoes, but too soft for shields; that bamboo needs to be bone-dry before being worked; that some yams

(1). It might hardly seem necessary to exhibit evidence of the basic human attributes of the blacks, yet apparently it is. A highly-educated white engineer asked me whether the Daly river aborigines "laughed, just like we whites do", or whether they might have learned how to laugh by "imitating whites". Another white man, a bushman with years of experience among the aborigines, and who himself had a smattering of a native dialect, said that the aboriginal language had no "grammar" of any sort, and that the blacks frequently had no idea what the others were saying because they "changed the language" and "made up words" as they went along.

outwardly indistinguishable from others are dangerous to eat without soaking to leach out the caustic properties; that the sap of one tree will blind human beings, and that the sap of another will stupefy fish; that pandanus leaves give the best fibre for working up into thread for baskets; that the bark of certain deciduous acacias is strong enough to use as a tree-climbing belt; that the chewed leaves of one plant will ease dysentery, and so on. The physical characteristics and habits of animals, birds, reptiles and fish, their markings and haunts and tracks and special vulnerabilities are particularly well known, yet natives make mistakes about them; several fairly complex chemical processes are understood, or at least can be applied, such as the use of the pitjuri plant in combination with an ash which contains 50 per cent of calcium sulphate, the alkali in which liberates the alkaloid pitjuline. They know the use of heat to soften or harden or contract substances, or to relieve pain or to purify; the principles of cleavage and fracture in many varieties of stone are understood, and the technique of knapping, flaking, retouching, and polishing flints is taught as well as used; such mechanical principles as the use of the lever and the

roller are frequently applied; a theoretical and practical knowledge of the trajectories of differently shaped missiles thrown on straight and on curving lines seem to be the equipment of every hunter; and an acute judgment of speeds and distances within contexts which are familiar to them is constantly used in every-day life.

They are aware of the phases and cycles of the moon and often regulate their social life by them. They know, too, something of the planetary movements, the sequence and duration of the seasons, the association of lunar phases and sea and river tides, the seasonal winds and the variation in their directions. All these, and more, are familiar from empirical observation and from empirical tradition. Context for context the aborigine is probably as well equipped with rule-of-thumb knowledge of this order as the peasant or workman of a western European country. It is the stock-in-trade of the aborigine's daily life, the instrument by which he maintains himself in a harsh environment. Within this body of knowledge the aborigine reasons in an eminently logical way; if he does not reason in logical steps he at least reaches what we would regard as logically valid conclusions; and the daily passages of his life submit

to rigorous tests the general principles which he applies. He knows, e.g. that a wounded kangaroo turning in its tracks will probably shower drops of blood in a certain way on the side from which it turns. From the distortions of the drops he can infer the way the animal has gone even if no other tracks are visible, the speed with which it is moving, and by the length and depth of its prints whether it is fresh or tired. He can predict from the megascopic characters of certain rocks which way they will cleave or fracture, and will throw them away without wasting time on the attempt. There are probably thousands of such items of rule-of-thumb knowledge, known to the tribes and used daily, not as isolated snippets culled erratically from a savage tradition of which only some is remembered and some forgotten; but as constant constituents of an ordered system of knowledge. Many of these items of knowledge, for example, have an adherent myth which discloses how they were discovered or the conditions under which they were first used; many do not. The myths of some Daly river tribes (like the Ngolok Wanggar) are now lost, in others, like the Nangiomeri, part can still be recovered; it is thus impossible to establish what systematic linkages of husbandry and myth there were

in the unaltered tribal tradition, what tricks of craft and discoveries of nature were caught up in the corpus of myth. It seems probable that just as the genius of aboriginal knowledge was in some ways almost arbitrarily selective, ignoring as much as it embraced, so too were the tribal myths, with the result that they do not offer a consistent record of native discovery or invention.

There is a substantial core of everyday knowledge about the movements of the heavenly bodies; some of their effects upon the animal and human world; the periodicity and direction and duration of winds, rains, and storms; the sequence and duration of the seasons, and the correlated changes in the local flora and fauna. Such knowledge is integrated with and to the natives possibly inseparable from a series of beliefs or myths of a non-factual type concerning many of these phenomena. Similarly is there an ordered though limited, and from the viewpoint of a logician, perhaps an unsystematic, body of rule-of-thumb knowledge concerned with many other meteorological phenomena, with the local topography, with physical and chemical phenomena, and with biological phenomena. The attempt will not be made here to set out the whole or part of the content of native knowledge in any of

these spheres. I do not possess the data to make an adequate attempt; but one or two phases will be dealt with in other parts of this book. In all aspects, however, the general problem is encountered of separating what may be termed knowledge from what must be distinguished as belief. In later sections the aborigines' belief concerning human and animal life, its generation, and its relation to death, will be discussed when the problem of totemism is dealt with; then also will emerge many beliefs concerning natural phenomena and species; for the rest, since limits of space make some selection necessary, I shall deal now with one or two aspects only.

The tribes possess particularly a great deal of information about the familiar topographical world around them. They know their own location relatively to contiguous tribes, and to others more distant. The compass directions in which the territories of other tribes lie, the distances to be travelled before reaching them (measured by "camps" or "sleeps", that is, the number of days' walk they are away) and at least some broad facts about the languages spoken, seem to be known to every individual. Frequently, too, the natives of one tribe can give some account of the

main topographical features of the landscape for a considerable distance around. For the inland tribes, the direction of the "salt water" (the ocean), and for others the great ranges, swamps, deserts, or rivers some distance afield are common knowledge. Thus, all the indigenous Daly river tribes know of the great plain of the Moill which runs south and west of the river, though most of them have never ventured out to see it. They know, too, the direction in which the Fitzmaurice river flows, (a trade route runs to this area), the names of the tribes which inhabit it, and the distance and main types of country to be traversed in between. The most striking social characteristics of distant tribes are also the subjects of common gossip. The broad-based spear throwers of the central Australian tribes (these weapons are not traded to the Daly river), the cult ceremonies of the Victoria river tribes, the giant bullroarers used by the Djamindjung and other southern tribes, are spoken of in this way. Aboriginal "interest" is thus not limited to the narrow social landscape immediately around the tribe. Distant things are interesting things, and though distance may not lend enchantment,

it does give both interest and a certain mystery, not unmixed with fear. Distant sorcerers are usually the worst sorcerers, and one frequently hears natives attributing immoral practices to tribes they have never seen at close quarters.

It is, however, in relation to their own immediate physical environment that the aborigines possess the greatest bulk of information. They can draw with sticks on the ground from memory maps of the main topographical features of their tribal landscape, trace the course of rivers and creeks, mark the permanent and occasional waterholes, and often indicate many known sources of food and raw materials. All natives do not know such things equally well. I have seen aborigines momentarily "bushed" or "switched" (that is, lost or with a confused sense of direction) in parts of their own territories with which for one reason or another they are somewhat unfamiliar. The areas which an aborigine usually knows best are the territories of his own local sub-division of the tribe, the country around his totem-site, his mother's local group's territory, and the "road" he followed at initiation. Individuals have particular familiarities with parts of their tribal territory for other reasons -

places where they may have seen ghosts, or devils, of child-spirits, or where their women may have conceived (in native ideas, where the quickening was first felt).

The system of numeration is simple. They count "one", "two", "three" and then use a general indeterminate term for any number greater than three - ngindzi, tfitfikuni, nimbini, and ngalvo. In pidgin, ngalvo is rendered "big mob", that is (perhaps) "many". Some natives can apparently without great intellectual difficulty, express higher numbers verbally by the duplication and junction of these simple terms. Four becomes tfitfikuni tfitfitkuni (or tfitfuk' tfitfuk'); five is tfitfikuni tfitfikuni ngindzi. Five is sometimes indicated by the phrase "one hand" i.e. five fingers. But I suspect that white influences have been at work in those natives with this facility for the higher numbers. Certainly there are sophisticated individual Ngolok Wanggar men who can count with ease up to 100, but they themselves attribute this skill, which is not shared by the commonalty of natives, to their mission teachers. All those men, who can count well appear to be of an age which would make their childhood probably coincide with the late years of the mission occupancy. But the mere verbal system of numeration is a poor test of native mathematical knowledge. Their type of life, traditional

or in its now altered form, seems to make the more complicated verbalisms of mathematics superfluous. What situations in their life, into which problems of number enter, would be the more manipulateable for the possession of a more complicated verbal system of numbers? There is none which is at all obvious. Yet they do cope with higher and more complicated numbers, though not verbally. Natives have marked for me with sticks on the ground the number of "camps" or "sleeps", that is, the number of days' journey, between known points; such numbers may total up to 30, yet they carefully check them over one by one so as to make no mistakes; they speak of and reckon with the eight sub-sections with precisions and confidence; they can repeat long set lists of names or terms in ways which show that not only a feat of memory is involved - there is an implicit count, though there is no verbal expression for the numbers involved. Many more such illustrations could be given. I take their meaning to be that while, perhaps for an historic reason, the aborigines have not developed their verbalized mathematics as far as, say, the Polynesians, this does not mean that they lack an intellectual capacity for more complicated mathematical thinking. The reasons

must be sought in more substantial soil. Some set of social circumstances is more likely to be responsible. Their scale of life is small; there are no situations constantly recurring in which large constellations or accumulations of people, things, or objects are involved and which for smooth working or for social certainty or for some form of elucidation or adjudication need the application of a more complicated theory of numbers; in other words there is no pressing social impulse to count and calculate. Yet they can be trained to do so. Melbyerk, without hesitation, and in good English, or with slightly more difficulty in his own Ngolok-Wanggar language, can count to over 100. He never does, except when asked to by whites. In his own aboriginal life there seems even now to be no particular reason why he should. Nor is his language adapted to such calculations. It is quicker for him to think mathematically in English. The verbal symbols of numbers are absent; but there are other ways of reckoning with numbers than by their expression through a verbal symbol. It is not denied that a certain loss is involved, that the aborigines are debarred from certain theoretical possibilities which the higher symbolisms of number would confer upon them; but does their simple, slow-moving life lose much thereby? Apparently it does not.

The social awareness of complicated numbers which I have been describing, their system of social response to such numbers, do all that they require of them.

A comparable imprecision is seen in the aboriginal count as contrasted with their social knowledge of the passage of time. "Yesterday", "today", "tomorrow" are clearly indicated, each by its own term. But beyond "yesterday" and "tomorrow" precision of reference is more hard to establish. The "day after tomorrow" may perhaps be put - "tomorrow, then another tomorrow". Six or seven days either way involves one in almost insuperable difficulties unless one drops into pidgin, and uses the European terms for days of the week, which are, however, known to a great many natives; they have, in fact, been under positive encouragement to learn them. Rations have been distributed for years to the aged and infirm aborigines regularly once a week, or fortnightly, usually on Saturday or Sunday. The farm working week starts on Monday and ends on Saturday - at midday. Here it seems that a changing social context has made a kind of time-precision necessary where before it probably was not, for a good part of the daily life of many of the aborigines has been remodelled, as pointed out overleaf, to a mode in which it is economically important to keep track of the days of the week.

This does not, however, apply to the larger time units of the Europeans - months, quarters, and years. The succession of the months has no particularly important social correlates; it is more the succession of the seasons, or of the seasonal phases of the farm crops, which are important in this way. The actual months of crop planting, weeding, and harvesting vary fairly widely, since they are to some extent dependent upon the advent of rain, and the entire coastal zone of North Australia is one of great rainfall unreliability. The annual cycle of wet season to wet season is most commonly reckoned by the aborigines in terms of their own seasonal phases, with occasionally (but only occasionally) explicit reference to the phase of the farm year which is involved. The broader variations of their life were and still are seasonal variations; the dry season (April-October) is the season of greatest mobility, most of the social ceremonial is arranged to take place then, food sources (and thus the social activities directed towards obtaining it) themselves vary with these seasons. The overlaying of a series of agricultural phases on this underlying seasonal pattern leads at times to clashes of interest and intention between some natives and their employers, as when initiations are planned and the times arranged conflict with essential farm tasks. A number of these

is a phrase used commonly - literally "You tomorrow come (when) there the sun (is)". As the kan is uttered ("there!") a finger is pointed at the sky.

My own knowledge of astronomy is infinitesimal; nor did I have any way of identifying the various stars which were pointed out to me by natives, yet I have no hesitation in saying that many natives are familiar with the broad planetary movements; are familiar with many star positions at dusk and dawn, and with their movements in the night hours; but they seem to refer their night social arrangements rather to fairly arbitrary named periods such as sunset, twilight, the middle hours of the night, dawn, and sunrise, than to star or moon positions. Such arrangements seem to enable them to organize their social life with sufficient certainty. I noted a great fluidity, and a great degree of flexibility and uncomplaining accommodation in social affairs dependent upon time arrangements; in the days before initiation ceremonies were due to commence, when the arrangements were being heralded, there was always uncertainty, but no particular anxiety, as to when the men of mamakaloan would come. For days at a time when, a new moon having come, I was on edge, having been told that a boy would be initiated at the new moon, with rumour after rumour going through the camp that

mamakaloan were coming, and then being disproved; I became convinced by the repetition of such incidents that the fixing of hour and day for events many days ahead was simply not characteristic of the aborigines. I found certainty crystallizing at short notice out of uncertainty, over which no one showed deep concern; the day before mamakaloan arrived, at some state of the early moon, the gossip and rumours multiplied, then, usually late one afternoon, the camp would hear a long-drawn hail from a distance, and a confusion of wailing and shouting would follow. Thus mamakaloan, long expected and awaited, arrived! On several major occasions of this sort I could never establish with the degree of certainty I hoped for when exactly the events would take place; they always took place, without hurry, without precise planning of fixed times; and there was no suggestion of unsuitability or inadequacy in such time-arrangements.

The problems of social communication without the aid of writing become of prime importance at such times as these. In no other sphere is there so much misconception by whites as to the limits and the nature of aboriginal knowledge. Powers almost magical are frequently attributed to the aborigine; powers if not magical, are of an order which no other phase of aboriginal

life can show a counterpart; and powers in many cases greater, it may be said, than the abilities of the whites who recognize them. The evidence upon which these attributions are made is a confused interpretation of the natives' use of smoke signals, the so-called "message sticks", and the apparently surprising fore-knowledge some aborigines have shown of certain events which later occur. The most common capacities attributed to them are telepathic powers, a complex and secret code of smoke signals, the possession of a mystic "bush telegraph", and a written language, unknown to whites, inscribed on the message sticks. The events because of which these rumours spread are nearly always events in which whites are partly concerned, or in which whites have an interest, but concerning which the whites are really not fully informed. Very occasionally, it is true, they are events in which only natives are concerned, but accounts of which reach and are retailed by whites. The type of event is usually one in which, for example, some action is taken, or decision reached, in a native camp, based on the prediction of the arrival of other natives or whites from a distance, when no message seems to have been received; or when smoke signals seen from a distance are "read" by natives as meaning that white men or other natives are coming; or when a carved message stick,

incised with (to whites) mysterious lines, is "read" as a request or demand for certain articles like tobacco, or announcing a fight at a later date, or giving warning of the approach of an initiation. Now, to the anthropologist in intimate contact with aboriginal camp life, there is no aura of mystery to any of these incidents, nor does it seem to him necessary, in order to explain them, to attribute the powers of telepathy, complex smoke codes, or a written language which no other aspect of native life suggests they possess. A more reasonable explanation of what may appear a mystery to other whites seems to the anthropologist to lie in the peculiarly aboriginal social conditions under which such forms of communication take place. At any point of time the anthropologist is aware that in the camp are men whose debts, whose ritual intentions and prospects, whose claims on others' material possessions, whose social habits, whose initiation status, and so on, are all well known, not only to their intimate camp associates, but to men and women in other camps in the countryside. He is aware too that the occasions on which action is likely about any of these are comparatively few, and what occasions are possible are quite well known; moreover, what kinds of actions are likely are fairly readily predictable because they can only be of a few traditional

types; and also when anything is likely to be done is much under discussion; and if his ears are open he hears these facts and possibilities continually hinted at and referred to, often almost daily, in camp gossip. Why should these things be known? The answer is that the camps are intimately and closely linked. In each are men and women deeply concerned, and with a right to know, what is going on in other camps. They have things to gain by knowing, and to lose by not knowing. What fights are brewing, what causae belli have been given, the adulteries, intrigues, slanders, trading defections, suspected sorceries, camp brawls over food, ritual tasks unfulfilled, are equally well known, from camp to camp; what social vists are pending, what boys are ripe for initiation, which workers are soon to be paid off, which men possess valuables likely to interest their partners - all these things are camp currency. In social groups of so small a scale and of such intimacy, events and decisions do not suddenly spring to life out of nothing. The camps are, as it were, filled with slow-burning social fuses which have usually lain a long time, but which now and then, because of some precipitant quarrel, or for some reason of special urgency, are touched off before their time; but in very few cases do events "occur" without reference to and in sequence with a long chain of publicly known precursors on which a fairly clear prediction might have

been made. The camps are so small that few secrets are kept, few debts unheard of, few intrigues unnoticed, few relations not gossiped about, and few social events not hinted at. The suddenly rising smoke signals, the message sticks, appearing without apparent warning from neighbouring camps and tribes, the tasselled spears flung into the middle of the camp at dusk^k when no one is looking, usually do little more than announce the time at which expected events are to take place. The fluidity of time arrangement which I have referred to above is in this way given what social precision it needs. But often, as mentioned above, the uncertainty about the arrangements continues until the very last. The ceremonies, or the decisions, or the predictions, take place with what may seem to whites an unheralded suddenness, but I suggest this is far from the truth, except perhaps in a few instances only, and even in these there seems no need to postulate mystic forces at work. But confronted with camp uproar, or feverishly arising excitement, following apparently inexplicable certainty about people's arrival, or events which are to come, or so on, (for which no superficial explanation is apparent) the leap to conclude that blacks have extraordinary powers is easy to make. But there is a complete absence of anything thoroughly to justify it, and much to make it

appear ridiculous. My belief is, to extend the metaphor used above, that without being aware of the social fuses burning, whites who give this kind of mystic explanation see only the "explosion" and then misinterpret it, and do not first exhaust the more reasonable explanations which are possible before making the leap to mysticism. On no occasion have I been told of an incident so interpreted in which one could rule out all possibility, not of collusion, but of reasonable presumption or prediction based upon such known relations and probabilities of the type I suggest above. Nor have I been told of, or seen, smoke-signal methods by which any but the simplest messages can be sent, or which while in themselves without specific meaning point so clearly to one or other of a few probabilities that the selection of the relevant one is not difficult; or of message sticks which had any more than a conventional meaning, or perhaps a simple association of several conventional meanings, each denoted by an agreed or more widely conventional mark which could in no way be called "writing", in each case the "meaning" being fairly readily predictable from a knowledge of the precedent social conditions referred to above. The mystery of these native modes of social communication vanishes the closer one approaches them; the more one knows of the intimate network enmeshing the

people between whom the messages move, the less the need for the kind of swift, melodramatic communication the white "mystery" explanations involve. Perhaps, however, the most complete refutation of these theories of native knowledge and power may be seen in other phases of aboriginal life. Why are there no other evidences of writing, with so great a mass of debts, undischarged obligations, future commitments, titles which may be called in question? Why special messengers to summon other tribes to initiations and rituals? Why is there no clear record of native history? Why do the alleged powers of communication stop so inconveniently short?

IV.

The aborigine does not think constantly about the universe and his relation to it, but that he has thought about certain phases of it, and built up a store of knowledge about it, his social life, as I have shown, clearly offers much evidence.

But it may be well to ask, what are we to mean by "knowledge" in an unilliterate primitive society such as that of the aborigines? And what is the relation of "knowledge" to the rest of an unilliterate society's "culture", that complex whole which in Tylor's words "includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"?

The sense in which Tylor used the term "knowledge" is not wholly clear. From one aspect morals, belief, and custom are themselves "knowledge", for they are transmitted through human media from one generation to another. The whole of aboriginal culture may be said in this sense to be "knowledge", for what is not known cannot be transmitted. It seems that Tylor was referring to a body of knowledge existing apart from art, belief, morals, law, custom, and so on; the literal interpretation of this passage would suggest that this may have been his intention. But in what sense could this be true? Does any "knowledge" exist, significantly, apart from these other aspects of culture? The answer is clearly that there is. Is there some culturally-possessed "knowledge" which does not itself receive some form of cultural expression? The answer would seem to be that there is not, or that if there is, it must be so held in the recesses of individuals' minds that in any case the anthropologist is not likely to become aware of it. What then is the relation of culture and knowledge to each other?

There are one or two preliminary considerations. At bedrock, the "data" with which the social anthropologist has to work, and thus the only material he can draw on to answer these questions, are the things that individual

members of a tribe do singly and in company with each other, the things they say about what they do, and their small body of material *possessions*. The task of the anthropologist is to give cogent expression to the general principles which are implicit in the behaviour of these "data".

A year's experience with the Daly river tribes gave the writer a complicated pile of "material" of this sort - a long list of observations and annotations; of things seen, heard, volunteered and inferred; about the daily and seasonal tribal life, the secret and public rituals, hunting and fishing methods, technological activities, camp-brawls and inter-tribal fights, myths, betrothals, marriages, genealogies, kinship terms and behaviour, sorcery, magic, trading and exchange, punitive expeditions and wife-stealing.

A great deal of the heterogeneous mass of information was drawn from a handful of individuals who are justly reputed among the tribes to be men with "strong heads", men who know more than others. Such men as these carry a great share of this cultural mass which is transmitted from one generation to another by the spoken word and the physical lesson. There are no written archives preserved against the decay of men, the failure of memory, and the accidents of history; there are no buildings to house the

material bones of institutions, and so give a physical bridge over which the more corporeal things may pass, when the men and women who compose the institutions themselves die; one generation has succeeded another in apparently the same mode of nomadic life, in which caves, gullies, and precarious shelters of bark and bushes piled against the wind have been the only shelters, while the complex aboriginal "culture" has remained the same. In a sense therefore, as I have observed before, all the native culture might be regarded as "knowledge", belief, and ritual, no less than empirical fact. But, clearly, some measure of abstraction is necessary to reduce to measurable limits the statement of aboriginal knowledge which such a definition would make necessary. It is therefore my intention to limit this chapter to a summary statement of the compact body of common, everyday, rule-of-thumb, practical knowledge possessed by the aborigines, and of some of the general principles which are implicit in their body of knowledge taken as a whole.

There are, however, five preliminary points to be dealt with. These are concerned with the problem of the validity of such knowledge; its completeness; the relation between the form in which it is presented to the anthropologist and the form in which it must be rendered

by him; whether the "information" is composed of data which are all on a simple level of equivalence; and the general limits and selectivity of aboriginal knowledge.

(i). What of the validity (i.e. the accuracy) of the data presented in this way? The question is one of great difficulty. Validity is an implication of definition and is relative to a particular set of postulates. The practical situation of the anthropologist, unfortunately, is such that he is not always in a position to test the accuracy of the information in the form in which it reaches him, either by referring it on the one hand to the assumptions to which it is (or should be) culturally related, or by referring it (except perhaps a fraction of it) to his own criteria on the other hand. I would think it in general, however, clear enough that I would not be justified in pressing the notion of validity too closely in relation to the data here presented.

(ii). It is not, of course, implied that a complete system of data is being presented. The anthropologist, even when working under the best conditions, is able to record only a partial section of the general body of knowledge. The aborigines clearly know more than the anthropologist is able to record,

or the aborigines to recall, or to state systematically; so the anthropologist's enumeration of the things they say they know is not an exhaustive inventory of the full resources of their cultural possession. There are good reasons why even the anthropologist who is fully aware of these limitations cannot explore the background of knowledge of each member of the community. Time and the limits of human endurance are ranged against him no less than the subtleties of communication with men whose interests may be elsewhere or who, be they ever so willing, may be unable to tell all they would. The fieldworker's degree of competence is also relevant; a sociologist untrained in the natural sciences is at a disadvantage, and his recognition is consequently faulty. The "inventory" presented in this chapter is therefore admittedly only a fragment.

(iii). The form in which and the conditions under which this information reached me raise several considerations. The complexity is self-evident. It ranges from information about the physical properties of organic and inorganic substances, to detailed and often rigorously reasoned information about the totemic and kinship organization and religious beliefs and rites of neighbouring tribes. In its bulk it represents data of at least two "orders" - data derived by direct

observation and statement, and data of an inferential kind. From the outset, of course, the anthropologist is compelled to go beyond the limits of simple enumeration of what "things" the aborigines "know". He is involved at once in problems of inference from statements and activities. For example, in the technological methods of the Marithiel, it is common to see old men making "shovel" spears. As these near completion and the weighty laurel-leaf points are hafted into the end of the bamboo shaft, the spear is experimentally poised in the spear-thrower and tested for balance by putting it through the motions preparatory to throwing. If it seems to be out of balance a piece of the narrow throwing-end is lopped off, thus altering the ratio of the variable weight and length of the spear to the fixed weight and length of the spear-thrower. It seems reasonable that one should credit the Marithiel with "knowing" something of the mechanical principles of balance. By careful observation of a number of instances, and by weighing and measuring spears and spear-throwers, the anthropologist should be able to state with some precision what this knowledge amounts to.

It is in relation to these problems of inference (and thus of presentation) that certain difficulties are met. The aborigine no less than the anthropologist

brings the activity of thought to bear on data which are presented to them. Native concepts, themselves the product of thought, stand between the anthropologist and the original data ^{upon} which he has to estimate aboriginal knowledge. It might be held that the anthropologist records only the social mode or socialized form of aboriginal knowledge, that is, the aborigines' conceptualized rendering of the original sensorily-given data. That part of the social form of aboriginal knowledge which is recognizably the same as the anthropologist's knowledge of what he presumes to be the same data is recorded as "knowledge"; the rest is segregated as "belief". Obviously the anthropologist blunders his way with somewhat clumsy instruments of measurement through a delicate situation. He may, for example, find himself in a situation in which both he and an aborigine are in a comparable relation to some event about which it is desirable to assess native knowledge. Let us take as an illustration a native choosing stone for a spear-head. The anthropologist, by observation of what the aborigine does, and perhaps what he says in response to questions, may be attempting to estimate the degree of native knowledge of the structural qualities and workability of stone. He has to reckon with (a) the original data available no less to him than to the aborigine, e.g.

the megascopic qualities of the stone (b) the concepts of the aborigine and of himself, which give meaning to these qualities, with (c) the information and comments proffered by the aborigine, i.e. what I have termed the social mode of aboriginal knowledge, and (d) his own (i.e. the anthropologist's) inferences from both (a) and (c). In a few instances he may be able to make this kind of comparison. Ordinarily however he will not be able to do so. In any estimate of what the aborigines know it is, however, this sort of situation, sometimes considerably more complex, with which he has to deal. The judgment at which he arrives must itself, implicitly or explicitly, be related in the record of fieldwork to a general body of social (and, in the case above, also scientific) theory. Ordinarily, it will probably be implicitly and without careful systematization, and although over a good field of common technical practice and simple science this would be not inadequate, the results must inevitably be of unequal value. What I have spoken of as "direct observation" is itself, of course, a particular kind of inference and there is no reason for believing that data obtained in this way are necessarily any more valid than those obtained by abstraction and inference from more complex situations, e.g. an estimate of aboriginal mathematical insight made

by inferences from their system of numeration as compared with their social manipulation of larger, though unidentified, totals.

(iv). The point, whether or not we are dealing with data of a simple level of equivalence, is really answered in the foregoing paragraph. It would seem that no such claim can be made. The results are of unequal value. This is not simply a question of validity, or of accuracy. It is more a matter of the data being on different levels of abstraction.

One might attempt to isolate the core of "knowledge" embedded in the matrix of beliefs such as those held by the aborigines concerning their environment, and in the theory which explains how parts of it came to take on its present shape and nature. They clearly, too, have a certain body of knowledge about the working of their society. A discussion of knowledge which does not extend to these, and, to cosmology and history, even though they may not be demonstrable in the way in which e.g. ideas about local topography are demonstrable, cannot be considered complete; but such an examination is not within the scope of this chapter. The material which might be won in this way would, however, be rich. There is for example, a coherent set of beliefs

how tribal life should be lived, and on whose authority the code is based. They have religious and social objectives, and they measure the extent to which their tribesfellows conform to such standards and rules of life. There are methods of social control and agents who see to it. In a sense, therefore, there is tribal "law" and punishments for breaches of law. There are techniques for demonstrating guilt where guilt may be first be obscure, and there are tribal ceremonials at which men and women may be purged of their guilt. Here on all sides is, apparently, social life based on principles. Age, sex, passion, the rightness of retaliation for hurt done or for neglect, the drawing of blood for blood, are all recognized to be the approved basis for certain forms of conduct. These principles are not always, or frequently detached, and these in turn are based on a body of common wisdom and experience, from the body of the things they say and do, and they cannot speak about them with the clarity with which, for instance, they discuss their technological processes. Some of the principles, however, do at times emerge as censorious denunciations of things men and women have done in deviation from the way of life they "should" have followed. Every camp disturbance is marked by a cross-fire of accusations and reproaches: "You did this". "You should

have done this". "I did not". "I did this".

On the other hand one hears men and women praised, because they are mamak kue, or strong fighters, or merbok kunburi. On the less spectacular side of camp life men can be heard regretting that they are growing old, that their wives are unfaithful, that women are sexually greedy or are mischief-makers, or they can be heard perhaps excusing a boy for doing something because he is not yet old enough to understand, or grumbling at young men who are lax in conventional observances.

All these incidents are pointers, indicating values, regulative principles, and codes which give consistency to native life, and a predictable quality to social behaviour. In the background of each is a body of social knowledge, which reveals the source of authority and the origin of convention, the justification of punishment as well as the type of punishment, a body of knowledge which makes continuous and stable social life possible. They all seem to bespeak a rich knowledge, culturally if not individually possessed, of human personality, the curbs it needs and the constancies it exhibits; of the crises and conflicts which occur and recur when men and women live together; of the limits of human capability and,

perhaps, of "needs" of non-human assistance. Are not these, too, legitimately to be termed "knowledge"?

(v). Yet on every hand the anthropologist encounters the evidence of sharp limitation of aboriginal interest, and sharp boundaries of knowledge. What, for example, are widli, the stars? How far away are they? Why does the moon stay in the sky? These are not problems for the aborigine, and do not disturb him. They are not questions which the aborigine characteristically asks himself; but if such questions are asked, they will be (and are) intelligibly answered - perhaps that he does not know, that they are a long way off, that the moon was once a man and jumped to the sky, and so on. What is the wind? He does not seem concerned to know. Where does it come from? This is something which interests him - blackfellows in a neighbouring tribe make it. Why? He does not know. So, too, with most of the cosmic phenomena which discipline or interrupt or affect his social life in any way. They are noted, some aspects of them explained, other aspects ignored. The lunar cycles and phases are noted, and are interwoven with myths which explain or justify them. The heliacal shift of the sun is apparently ignored while its daily motion is made the subject of myth. So, too, with

the phenomena of comets, meteorites, and eclipses; with the regular flow and sequence of tides and directional winds, of clouds and rain; with the monsoonal dichotomy and the cycle of the sub-tropical seasons; with the occurrence of floods, storms, and whirlwinds; with the dramatic revelations of fire, death, illness and sorcery. Some the aborigine will discuss with animation; some not. Some have stirred his imagination to the concoction of myths about them; some not. Some, to judge from the amount of talk about them, still seem in certain ways a problem for him; some not. Aboriginal "interest" moves eclectically and with a selectivity in which there is apparently a bias for the colourful, the utilitarian, the dangerous, the asymmetrical, the prominent, the superficially striking, though it is true that other less spectacular aspects are noted as well, but not with such emphasis. Insofar as myths express a bias of interest, the Daly river myths can be seen to give greater attention to, say, the giant bill of the pelican; to the origin of fire; to the quills of the echidna; to the genitors of sorcery and witchcraft; to the origins of prominent hills, pools, rivers, and striking natural phenomena; than to less striking features of the natural landscape and fauna and flora. This process of exclusion is

extended to objects in the environment which are not markedly relevant to their life or culture; there is an historic inattention to some shrubs, plants and stones, which are economically useless, of no use as food, and serve no other purpose for the aborigines. These frequently go unnamed, particularly when they possess no striking characteristics which, though of no utility for aboriginal purposes, would in any case attract attention, either because of the danger which lay in them, or for some other reason.

Non-useful objects (that is, to the aborigines) which are vividly coloured, or have irritant or harmful qualities, or for one reason or another obtrude themselves upon the natives' attention, (such as otherwise obscure plants which may be the favourite food of birds) become identified by a name.

Many inventories which I attempted to draw up of all the things within my view at any moment showed this selectivity of aboriginal interest; smaller hills around a dominant central hill were frequently unnamed; the prominent individual parts of a range were named but not the range itself; and, as I have stated above, no attention was paid or names given to (or known of) many varieties of stones, plants and shrubs. But this does not imply that the aboriginal system of

knowledge is even principally functional in so narrow a utilitarian sense; for the natives show a deep and a sustained interest in many things over and above the activities, and the objects of those activities, which are required to maintain life.

It is a simple task to set out a list of what are to us "problems", but in which the aborigine is not interested, and which do not constitute problems for him. Some of the characteristic problems of white North Australia have little or no meaning for the changing and semi-civilized aborigine; for these problems are themselves the by-products of a particular type of society in a particular historical setting and cultural tradition. The conflict of economic interests, the problems of social inequality, and the problems which are arising in North Australia from the local variations in moral codes, lose their relevance and most of their meaning if placed against the background of aboriginal social history, culture and knowledge. This, of course, is precisely what the aborigines do when they witness, as they must, the outward manifestations of these problems - unemployed disturbances in Darwin, the co-existence of high and low standards of living among whites, and prosecutions for sexual misconduct.

The low level of native interest in and appreciation of these matters is very striking among those who are in substantial relations with the aliens. The same incapacity or indifference is exhibited on other levels. Although now accustomed to motor-cars and farm tractors the blacks have not developed any interest in the mechanics or the physics of internal combustion. Their technical knowledge, of course, does not enable them to envisage the problems involved, and their general level of knowledge does not permit them to carry out the enquiries which are necessary to investigate these problems, but this indifference is due not to incapacity. They are simply not intellectually interested. They may fear aeroplanes, and associate motor-cars with the arrival of food and tourists who can be sold brummagem boomerangs, but their "interest" of this order has another derivation.

In relation to their own universe of discourse there is an entirely different attitude. There may be no great zest for life as such. But the natives dance with abandon; in hunting they give themselves up to the pursuit with a vigour uncalled for by any narrow calculation of the outlay of energy required; they fight, not only in duty, but often with a tinge of pleasure; the camps are kept awake by gossip until

late at night. All these bespeak interest, and interest bespeaks some - it may be implicit - classification of experience, some standards of the mundane and the uniform, and these in turn bespeak consistent organization of knowledge, principles, and attitudes.

The anthropologist can readily feel, almost under his fingers, evidences of such order and system and continuity in the lives of these tribes. Part of the orderliness of life is now derived from the settled routine of the farmers, but many of the aborigines live their own lives in the adjacent bush, largely unaffected by the settlements, and for many months of the year even the working blacks are left by their employers to fend for themselves, without direction and without assistance, while the farmers rest between crops. During these periods native life reverts to a pattern which closely resembles that of the pre-white tradition. The order and continuity within the system of knowledge on which this rests owes nothing to the alien culture represented on the river. It is order and pattern derived from a long aboriginal and indigenous tradition. For this pattern to persist in a non-literate society

such as that of the aborigines, for it to be in a real sense traditional, recurrent on regular lines, and formally standardised, there must be a recognition of common intellectual limits, of how to behave socially, when to carry out such traditional and standardized activities, under whose guidance and authority, in whose company, on what basis of co-operation, with what disposition of tasks and privileges, and with what social and individual ends in view.

V.

The body of knowledge which underlies economic action is, with some qualifications, shared with rough equality by all members of the tribe. The qualifications are that the young know less than the old; that women have or are supposed to have special kinds of knowledge which men do not or are supposed not to have, and the same is said to be true of men, and that there are certain specialists who lay claim to and are conceded to have specialist knowledge.

We may perhaps divide this body of knowledge into knowledge of economic technique; knowledge of contemporary economic conditions; and knowledge of the conventions of economic behaviour.

(1). All mature aborigines who are not physically or mentally incapacitated are at least competent in all

the techniques connected with hunting, fishing, fire-making, weapon-making, appropriate to their sex. The same is true of women. Within this general competence particular degrees of individual skills are common. Men such as the Marithiel Jack Canoe surpass in canoe-cutting; the Nangiomeri Tiger is a noted hunter, though still a young man; Barak, the Ngolok-Wanggar, is a noted fisherman. But no great economic privileges accrue to these men as the sought or implied consequence of their technical skill, and it seems that the economic effects of their sub-specialization are not great. They perhaps work on such tasks with less labour than their less skilled fellows; but they do not continually work only at the task in which they are particularly competent. Like other men, they share in all the productive tasks upon which the tribe or local group engages. They do not perform these tasks as specialists acting on behalf of a wide range of people. The particular skills are moreover on a rather different level. Katar is inter-tribally known as a fine canoe-cutter, but does not work as an inter-tribal specialist. Men, in fact, usually cut their own canoes, working with close kinsmen, such as a mother's brother, or a brother, or son. Within his own tribe Jack Canoe

is sometimes invited to do the main work on a canoe, and later is given a gift for his labour. But the skilled hunter does not, even to this limited extent, hunt as an employed specialist on behalf of others. He may be more successful in a hunt than others; he may lead a party; he may try or be given the most difficult hunting feats, but he is not a working specialist, even in the very partial sense in which this is true of the canoe cutters. The only case in which a working native has become almost a full-time specialist is that of Barak, or Jack Fish, who as his name implies, is a line and spear fisherman of the greatest skill. He is said to know the seasons and times and places, where fish will bite or can be found, better than any other native on the river. He now spends much of his time working in this role for whites, and is paid for his labour; he also brings a steady supply of fish to the Ngolok Wanggar camps, where he draws on foods of other kinds brought there by other men and women. But other Ngolok-Wanggar also fish daily, so that Barak's specialism is by no means exclusive. He also takes part in other food searches and hunting activities.

It thus does not appear that in the traditional native economy there is any special economic reward in the acquisition of unusual degrees of technique-skill; there is, certainly, a social distinction directly derived from it; but men do not seem to try to develop greater skill under the drive or because of the promise or possibility of any economic reward which might follow. (1).

The question whether the actual possession of greater degrees of technical skill does in fact have important economic consequences, apart from personal rewards, is not easily answered. Skill has, as it were, little elbow-room in which to work. All the skills involved are relatively simple. The size of the social groups involved is very small. The division of tasks is, after all, rudimentary, but it enables an adequate volume of production of food, equipment, and ninymer to be maintained. In times of great stress the extra margins of skill which some men possess do become important, for, even in good

(1). In Central Australia there are said to have been specialists in hut-building who were in great demand and were "borrowed" from camp to camp. v. Horne and Aiston, op cit p.19, 20. These authors also report that not all the Central Australians were good weapon-makers. Some specialized in the making of stone tools, and usually confined themselves to these alone. "Very often" a man specialised in only one tool, and made nothing but that.

country, every camp knows the misery of repeated days when hunters return emptyhanded after missing their quarry, when yam patches unaccountably fail, when floods inundate food areas, spoil vegetation and drive game away. But there are also other factors at work. As will be shown in Chapter V., aborigines do not appear to want to raise themselves, so far as economic possessions are concerned, above the general level of their fellows. Special skills are not cultivated or directed to this end. Thus the factor which would, under other conditions, probably make specialization of economic function the source of continuing and perhaps of mounting inequality, is here removed. We need to note, too, in this context, the absence under traditional native conditions of some of the cumulative tendencies and directive characteristics which mark Western European social economies. Tribal population stayed, presumably, at a more or less constant level. (1).

(1). We have only presumptive evidence of this, but the presumption is very strong. It raises the interesting (and from the point of theory) most important problem whether the aborigines' resorts to infanticide, to the killing off of old people and misfits, in fact, all their attempts at an upper limitation of the size of the local groups, can be regarded as attempts to maintain what had been found to be an optimum sized group. We cannot, I think, exaggerate the importance of such a finding, if it can be reasonably based on what evidence we have,

(contd. overleaf)

neither real income nor stocks of goods showed a disposition to increase cumulatively, either in response to the needs of increasing population, desire to increase standards of living, or individual possessions; changes in social habits and tastes were apparently slow, though undoubtedly they existed. Nor can we rule out the probable effect of other structural differences as outlined on pp. The traditional economic context of the Baly tribes is, therefore, one in which different degrees of technical knowledge are relatively small, and though their economic effects are noticeable, they also are small, and the nature of economic wants is such as not only to offer the specialists no positive encouragement to capitalize technical skill but to offer positive opposition or at least indifference not to.

(ii). The second division of economically important knowledge distinguished above was knowledge of contemporary economic conditions. I refer by

for superficial consideration of other (partial) accounts of native economy seen to make it appear as though the economists are irrationally, do not pursue intelligently their economic advantage, in fact, not without apparent regard to any economic principle of social life. Any intuitive estimate of native life based on close acquaintance with it finds crushing objections to such a view, but there is, at this stage, some difficulty in finding concrete documentation.

this to that knowledge, some implied in the possession of knowledge of techniques, and some necessary for intelligent economic conduct in day-to-day affairs. The aborigines need to know the physical whereabouts of food and economically valuable objects. Now, it is one of the commonplaces established by descriptive Australian ethnography that all members of an Australian tribe, even young children, do have an extraordinarily detailed knowledge not only of the physical properties of foods and materials for implemental and other uses, but also of their sources. Men know best their da, their own clan territory; second best, they perhaps know the wider reaches of their local horde territory; but they also know in different degrees of familiarity areas much wider than their own horde and their own tribe. They know their tinyun, their mother's country; the countries on their wumbun, the path which they took at initiation; to mamakaloan, the host-country of the initiates; they know the countries from which (in the case of inter-tribal marriages) they obtained their wives; they may know the territory in which their trading partners live; they may have fled with women to neighbouring tribes for a brief asylum before returning to their own tribes to face the penalties of illicit love; now, under changed conditions, most of

them have wandered even further afield. But in any case, under traditional or contemporary conditions, they have a substantial body of comparative as well as specific knowledge of such primary sources.

Of course, here again there are gradations. Some men are greater wanderers than others; some men simply have, as the natives say, "stronger heads" than others; as I point out earlier, I have seen Daly river natives temporarily "switched" on their own tribal lands; some men have wider affiliations than others, and so have had greater opportunities of knowledge; some men, for example, have no wumbun because they have never been initiated.

But there are also economic problems in knowledge of what we might call the social whereabouts of economic goods, the levels of stocks, variations and levels of men's possessions. Aboriginal social life involves its members in continuing and inescapable relations with other people. In the relations, expressed in forms of conduct, with those other people, the material possessions, even the material income, of both sides, are important. Gifts of durable articles and of food are the tangible

An early writer on the Daly natives says that the tribal territories were divided into a number of "family hunting territories". These are probably what I refer to as class-territories. V.pp. 48-49 Ch V.

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core of many such relationships; without the material embodiment, and the expression in substance, the relationships would be disembodied, and little more than words, gestures, avoidances, or physical intimacies, remain.

Many possibilities of economic action rest upon such transfers. There is also a certain, and by no means negligible, compulsion to keep aware in a positive way of the identity of specific durable articles in daily use in every camp. It is a grave breach of etiquette for a person to touch or use the pipe, or knife, of a person who stands in the relationship of kaka (mother's brother) to him; there is also a certain magical danger involved.

Thefts, or accidental misuse, of firewood, or water, or food brought to camp by others, can lead to upsetting brawls. We see in these two sets of instances illustrations of the importance of knowledge of this order. In the first case, economic action and expectances are based on such knowledge. The movements of food, and of durable articles of the ninymer type, are kept well tabulated because such movements represent or herald the confirmation of bonds between tribesfolk. Food and goods thus moving are material embodiments of the social process in operation. The hundred kinds of mi, awo, and ninymer moving on the surface of camp life

over any period can be reclassified, as it were, not only as so much filial regard, parental care, affinal duty, and payment of labour, materially expressed, but also as the material consequences of a complex set of earlier economic decisions, known to a wide circle of people and now evaluated by them; and as the basis of further important economic decisions.

In the second case we see the use of such commodities proceeding within the checks and restraints of a body of conventions whose outcome is economic if ^{their} source cannot be considered to be.

The first is, of course, much the more important. There is evidence of this in the daily gossip to be heard in any camp. The visitor, the returning hunter, the traveller passing through, are drawn upon for information. What articles has he with him? Who are they for? Who gave them to him? Did he see game or food on the way? Was it fat or lean? Where was it? Had others seen it? Had the white man paid his workers? What did he give them? Was it a good (adequate) payment? What were they going to do with it?

The relevance of his knowledge to economic action is clear. The planning of production is in part

dependent on it. The arrangement of, or perhaps concurrence with, plans for distribution and exchange are also in part similarly dependent. The delivery of reminders of indebtedness; ⁽¹¹⁾ visits to kinsfolk; arrangement of manurny and other economically-tinged ceremonials are all energized by the possession and acquisition of such knowledge. On numerous occasions during my stay on the Daly river I recorded such visits being decided upon soon after it had been learned that large supplies of goods or other commodities had come into the possession of other groups.

At any point of time the process of the social economy, the flow of action from decision and decision from knowledge, is a system of related actions and decisions which, on scrutiny, we could relate to the acquisition, and to some extent to the common sharing, of knowledge of the course of other social events of this order. We are not to assume, however, that there is by any means "perfect" knowledge in the case of any one individual or any group of individuals. Deceptions, evasions, and subterfuge are part of the common order of camp life. The camps are frequently split by open quarrels. Even when conflict does not break out on

~~(1). v. pp. for description of message-sticks.~~

the surface there are frequently beneath the surface smouldering grievances. A great proportion of these are concerned with the economic relations between people, elsewhere described - debts, trickeries, unfulfilled duties, obligations, skimmed or evaded. So that some persons in a camp may be less aware than others of all the facts which could decide them in or alter their decisions as to particular courses of economic behaviour. Much, however, of what they will do in the ordinary course of camp economy - their sharing in communal food drives, their day-to-day production of primary foods, will be independent of and unaffected by such inequalities of knowledge. Where it may induce them to behave differently is in all the secondary activities, those over which, as I point out in the chapter on distribution, most of the camp disputes arise. That is, in the economically important kinship, trading, and ritual links with other people.

This point is taken up, perhaps more appropriately, in the chapter on the final use of resources, where I give detailed attention to the general problem of the working of "the economic principle" in tribal life. One point, however, might briefly be touched upon at this stage. An exchange partner who finds that he has

persistently been deceived, that full knowledge of his partner's economic position has been hidden from him, may seek redress and retaliation in sorcery or in a challenge to fight. In other words, he seeks to improve in his favour the terms of the exchanges he has been making. The registration of grievance is thus a working of the economic principle, an illustration, apparently, in the midst of some superficially contrary instances of the axiom which lies at the base of economic theory - that men do endeavour to maximize their gains in the use of their resources.

(iii). The third division of knowledge which I proposed to distinguish was that of knowledge of the conventions of economic conduct. This involves considerably more than knowledge of the ways in which technical operations ought to be carried out, more than knowledge of the physical and social properties and of the physical and social condition of resources. It covers the field of what we might call, by analogy with the physical techniques which have been described, the social techniques. The general nature of what we must include in these conventions is clear enough.

We should see the economic process of an aboriginal tribe as a set of activities centering around material objects and certain personal services and involving the

appraisal, the production, the distribution and the final use of those objects and services. Natives need to know, for instance, not only what to produce and how physically to produce it, but also the conditions of leadership, of co-operation, of sexual division of function, and of ritual appropriateness. They need to know (and to have confidence in) the predictable behaviour of other people under expected circumstances. In all these matters we enter a field not customarily studied by anthropology, but of importance to a thorough elucidation of the nature of primitive economic behaviour.

In such matters we see, too, proof that the problems of social dynamics are not necessarily any simpler, or more amenable to study, because their scale is smaller. It is doubtful, for example, what kind of answer, except one of mere assertion, we could at this stage give to some types of questions which might be asked concerning such problems of economic behaviour and knowledge. To inquire as to the correctness of economic decisions, that is to say, as to the adequacy of knowledge, is in fact to inquire whether economic actions are really economic. Are they, in fact, economic? To speak in general terms of native economy is to assume a certain degree of compatibility of economic decisions, a certain degree of successful prediction. What degree? For the

anthropologist to record as objective data certain economic conditions, states of knowledge, decisions, expectations, and so on, and to measure, even by implication, the natives' subjective grip of such data, raises at once some fundamental issues of what may be termed the mechanics of social life.

Which part of native economy is encompassed by personal control and which is not? Do we really mean that there are economic data (changes, predictions which do not come true, consequences of actions not envisaged when those actions are decided upon) which are independent of decisions made and actions willed by natives? If we do, are we not then placed in a position where we must draw a fundamental dichotomy in the economic data we present?

These are problems which I can only pose, with the perhaps needless comment that, so far as Australian economics are concerned, we are not in a position to offer much information upon them.

VI.

A thorough investigation of aboriginal technology was not part of my field plan. Some general observations, however, were made.

In its widest sense, technology might be considered as the instrumental process of knowledge, that is, knowledge as it is put into social operation by means of a skilled mechanical performance. A single technological act might be considered from the viewpoint (i) of the body of knowledge of the qualities and properties of the materials in use (ii) the skilled process which is applied and (iii) the relation of the technical activity to the social and towards which it is directed. In the next chapter (i) is to some extent reviewed, and (iii), in the chapters which follow. Some comments upon (ii) are offered here.

The performance of technical activities also, of course, implies certain institutional arrangements and continuities to enable such knowledge to persist, the process to be applied, and the end to be fulfilled. A fully adequate account should, no doubt, discuss these aspects. But it is difficult under such circumstances to decide where relevance ends. A discussion of the content of knowledge in technical activity, would lead one into questions of primitive philosophy and epistemology.

Some of these considerations are taken up in ^{earlier in this} Chapter. ~~(III)~~. Here I shall make only some general observations upon the superficial aspects of aboriginal technology.

By comparison with Polynesia and Melanesia the aboriginal techniques of North Australia are of a fairly simple order.

On the north-west coastal flats, in none of the tribes is there any building of complicated huts or camps, or manufacture of elaborate tools or weapons; there is no metal-working, no pottery, no agricultural technique, no animal husbandry, no working in textiles.

The activities in which techniques are important are (i). hunting, fishing, fowling; foraging for small game, insects, honey, and vegetable foodstuffs; (ii). food preparation; (iii). extraction of raw materials; (iv). manufacture of artifacts, tools, implements, weapons; renovation and repair of equipment; building of camps.

The most important foodstuffs are the kangaroos, wallabies, goannas, crocodiles, bandicoot, snakes, lizards, emu, jungle-fowl, geese, ducks, and other birds; barramundi, shark, mullet, catfish, and other fish and crustacea; the eggs of turtle, geese, ducks, jungle-fowl, snakes and crocodiles; wild honey; fly-foxes; yams, lilies (stems and pods), a wide range of tubers, grass-seeds, pandanus fruit, cycad palm nuts, wild berries and fruits of many kinds; grubs and insects.

Because of local topography kangaroos are more difficult to kill than any of the several varieties of wallabies. They cling to the hill country or to the sheltered plains between the ridges, and long trips away from the river are necessary to catch them. They are stalked by men behind moving screens of bushes, or by a silent up-wind approach which may take hours to bring an animal within spear-shot. Boomerangs are not used. The hunters, rarely alone, rub themselves all over with mud from a nearby billabong or creek. The brown mud makes them less easily seen against the tawny North Australian background, and it is said by the natives to remove or prevent perspiration odour, which the kangaroos otherwise scent from afar. Sometimes the hunters wait in hiding near the end of a kangaroo-path where it slants up a hill, or comes to water. Sometimes also they are surrounded and driven by shouting and firing of the grass down a narrow gully where spear-men are waiting.

Wallabies feed and sleep in the tall grass, in horehound thickets, and in clumps of jungle on the flats nearer the river. The numbers in some areas are astonishing. In the dry season of 1932 I counted over 500 wallabies in less than a mile on one of the less

frequented reaches of the river. The commonest method of hunting them is for a party of from four or five to a score to walk abreast, each man some paces from the next, and sweep through an area, beating the bushes and grass with their spear-throwers, stamping their feet, and mimicking the bark of the dingo. As the wallabies rush from the grass clumps the spears fly at them.

Wallabies are usually carried back to the camp. The kangaroos are disembowelled where they are caught, and may also be cooked there. The hair is singed and rubbed off, the legs are dislocated and tied together, and the body is then placed for some hours in a ground-oven (būy) of the type common among Australian tribes. Small crocodiles are caught with the hands; the larger ones are speared with a strong spear-harpoon. Goannas are knocked from trees with sticks or spears, or are pulled tail-first from their holes. They are held firmly behind the head, each leg is dislocated, and their necks are wrung. Bandicoots and other small marsupials are speared. The smaller fish are netted, as also are shrimps and crustacea. Poisoning of fish-holes is now not practised, though it was in former times. The waters of small billabongs are sometimes stirred to mud. The fish rise gasping to the surface

and are easily caught by hand. Sometimes small waters are swept through with nets or by men or women with piles of bushes in their hands, driving the fish to one end. On the main course of the river there is a good deal of line-fishing. Formerly the hooks were made from bone or stone, but only European hooks are now in use. Snakes are killed with sticks, their necks broken by whipping, or are bitten behind the head till the spinal cord is severed. Flying foxes are knocked from the branches of trees during the day-time, or are caught by hand by natives who creep silently along a limb. Traps are set for emus, or lures (waving sticks, branches, coloured cloth) are used to draw them within spear-range, or men lie in wait near a waterhole where the birds are known to drink.

There are a number of simple extractive processes by which deposits of stone, minerals, ochres and karlin are exploited; wood of a number of kinds obtained for weapons and implements, canoes, camp shelters, and for fuel; and supplies obtained of other substances, such as wax, resins, gums, fibres, sinews, bones, blood, and shells.

Traditionally there has been some simple working in wood, stone, shell, bone, bark, fibres, and hair. Some of these are now decayed.

Traditionally the tribes employed the processes of knapping, flaking, retouching and grinding stone for spear-heads, axes, knives and scrapers of characteristic Australian types. A few old men still say they know how to make these artifacts, but the manufacture of them now no longer goes on. A number of specimens of Daly river workmanship have been collected at various times since 1877, and are on view in the Australian Museum (Sydney), the museum of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, and in the Department of Ethnology of the British Museum. Gerhardt Laves in 1931 appears to have been the last person to collect stone axes and knives on the river. During my two visits (1932 and 1934-35) I was no longer able to do so. None of the tribes seemed to possess any which were of local origin; those they possessed were mostly stone-tipped spears and had been received in the merbok exchange from tribes in the direction of the Victoria river. Axes, chisels, and scrapers were absent.

The technological use of heat and fire is conspicuous. Hot ashes, sand, and embers are used to soften and bend various woods, e.g. bamboo, which forms the shafts of heavy hunting spears. The bamboos are

not held in the open flame, but slowly heated so that they do not char and are then bent. I have seen fire used also to harden the pointed tips of small duelling spears. Waxes (such as spinifex-grass wax and beeswax) are softened by being thrown into the ashes, or held near the flames, before being kneaded into small pieces and used to fix the peg to the end of spear-throwers, or the tips to spears. Even where an iron or stone tip is hafted by binding, a piece of hot wax is sometimes placed over the binding and allowed to solidify, when it sets hard and holds the spear-tip very firmly. Fires are lighted in the inside of rough-hewn new dugout canoes so that the flames will char and smooth places which the axes and adzes have not been able to do properly. It may be mentioned also that fire is used to stop bleeding, to relieve pain, and to delay the decomposition of flesh foods. If a large animal or bird (such as a kangaroo or emu) is caught by hunters who cannot wait to eat it all, and want to carry some with them, the surplus is partially cooked, and may then be kept in a state fit for eating a longer time than would be the case with uncooked flesh.

A number of principles of mechanical manipulation are applied, such as e.g. the use of the lever; the

roller; the forked stick as support; several principles of hafting. There is a clear notion of the importance of balance.

Heavy dugout canoes are made in situ in the bush, often some distances from water, where the kapok-tree is chopped down. Frequently the main body of the canoe is shaped, hollowed, and trimmed before it is finally severed from the fallen trunk. It is said that the final separation of canoe from trunk is left so long in order that, held more or less immoveable by the weight of the other part of the tree, the canoe part may have stability while it is being worked on. Saplings are cut and trimmed (sometimes round bamboos are used), the canoe is placed on them, and is then gradually levered towards the water by a short stout pole placed under the end and raised up with a series of short jerky movements. The use of the spear thrower and the propulsion of a canoe by poling, may perhaps be considered applications of the principle of the lever. Similarly, heavy logs are levered up by strong poles placed beneath them, but I have not observed the use of fulcrums by aborigines.

The only use of the roller observed was in association with canoe launching, as noted above.

The forked stick is used in burial and sometimes in erecting camp shelters. Corpses are encased in bark and are exposed on the platforms made of rough poles supported by four forked sticks. In camps, sheets of bark may be leaned against a pole running between two forked sticks, to form a rough break-wind or shelter against rain.

Spear-heads are hafted in four ways: (1) by slotting, in which the tip, is simply thrust tightly into the hollow end of the shaft (usually of grass-bamboo); (2) by slotting and binding in which the tip is thrust into the hollow shaft and lashed with twine, string, fibre, or sinew; (3) by slotting, binding, and encasing with wax, in which wax is used to seal and strengthen a joint of the type described in (2); and (4) by setting in wax cement, as in the common stone-tipped spear, in which the stone head is thrust into a piece of melted wax, moulded on to the end of a bamboo or wooden shaft, and allowed to set hard.

CHAPTER V.

PRODUCTION.

Chapter V. Production.

I.

Aboriginal life has three sharp contrasts of phase - (i). the periods of ritual life set over against what Durkheim called the "grey monotony" of profane life; (ii). what one may term the pattern of day-life and the pattern of night-life for the scattered hunters and foragers of the day present no greater contrast than in the night camp within its ring of fires, walled in by the darkness; and (iii). the phases which, represented by their extremes, may be spoken of as the mobile and the sedentary.

These phases have persisted, though naturally with some alterations, through the changes which have taken place in the fundamental economic conditions of aboriginal economic life, the changes in their resources, to some extent in their productive equipment and methods, in their technology, in their knowledge, tastes, and preferences, and in some of their uses of resources.

Each contrasting phase is economically important.

Few economic productive activities go on in the camp at night, except a small amount of implement working, and discussions about future activities. The fires usually burn low after a brief period when they blaze high immediately after sunset; then there follows only faint illumination, and most of the early hours are given over to gossip, singing, dancing, and a certain amount of love-making.

The periods of ritual activity canalize much of tribal activity in narrow channels. They withdraw many adult men, old men, and youths from direct economic activity, some more than others, and throw a greater economic burden on the women, who are largely responsible for the men's food supply. At such periods there is a great drain upon tribal stocks of raw materials, there is an increase (or shift) of indebtedness, and a substantial alteration as a whole in the proportions of men's time given over to leisure-activities as opposed to "work".

The mobile and the sedentary phases of native life have, in my judgment, been lamentably misinterpreted.

The tribes must not be imagined to be continually on the move. Nothing could be a greater misrepresentation

than to picture them as restless nomads never at ease, paradoxically, unless roaming. The tribal homelands are, it is true, studded with camp sites, often centering around traditional sites, named, fairly well kept, often sentimentally regarded.⁽¹⁾ The highly mobile horde periodically settles down in these, perhaps for a day or two, sometimes for a week, but (on the Daly) very commonly for a much longer period, while the local food supplies are exploited. Later they pass on to a new (usually contiguous) camp.⁽²⁾ The sites of the camps are also changed at intervals when they become insanitary, though the next camp may be pitched only a few yards away. The widely mobile phase may last for only a few hours, or for days, according to the distance between camps, and the condition of local

(1). Two natives who revisited with me an abandoned camp site on the billabong of Korambaienda, which they had not seen for some years, wept when they came near it.

(2). One of the relatively blank spots of Australian field records is a clear account of the sequence of particular areas visited by a horde in this way under traditional conditions. To what extent the visits actually are determined by other considerations than the state of local food supplies, to what extent local food sources are reduced or exhausted before a move is made, are still open questions. Interesting related questions concern the "specificity" of such areas - whether they produce a single or a limited food product, and the comparative content of native "food income" in difficult areas during the same and different seasons.

food supplies, or, more rarely, according to the stage which the "walkabout" has reached. When food is low, very rarely when it is plentiful, the horde may press on after only a night's rest. I have been told how yam patches had been found to be rotten, how ordinarily reliable fish-supplies seemed at times to disappear, of kangaroos which eluded capture, of tracts of country emptied of animals by floods and denuded of vegetable foods by fire and drought, of water holes unexpectedly empty. Such conditions naturally prolong the mobile phase, and shorten the sedentary stages between camp movements. Ritual activities, food gluts, heavy kills of game, plenitude of wild honey, and ennui after a bout of wandering, work the other way. I have known a band of men and women, for instance, spend ten days in the hills getting and living principally upon wild honey.

This high mobility is mainly a function of the food supply, but it has become to some extent a fixed cultural norm with an aesthetic appeal. To a degree, therefore, the aborigine is a nomad malgré lui, but this tendency has been grossly exaggerated. (1).

(1). W. L. Warner's view is that "the feeling for change of location permeates the whole society and has become the most powerful motivating factor in the thinking of any Australian aborigine including the Murngin." In my opinion this is an over-statement; the second half of

The sedentary phases should, however, be regarded as the optimum to the attainment of which aboriginal mobile life for the most part is directed, but to which it approximates only for short periods because of the physical setting of life, the level of technique, and the state of knowledge. When lasting relations with alien settlers are established, it is very significant that the mobile phases decrease in number, though they do not entirely disappear. Usually they are replaced by one or two fairly short "walkabout" periods annually. The sedentary stages lengthen markedly, for prolonged camp periods may certainly exist, e.g. there is often some duress on natives to keep close to stations, but where this is not true, the general response to alien contact is the same. The "restlessness" of natives tied to jobs and camps under these altered conditions is not to be identified with what I have called their mobility under traditional

the proposition is almost nonsense; nor do I find it possible to agree with Warner's further comments that "the desire to go to other places is forever present in the mental constitution of a black's behaviour", and that "if he is in his own clan land where he was born and where he grew to maturity - the centre of his cultural heritage - he still feels the urge to go to the next horde or food ground". - A Black Civilization, p.148.

conditions. That mobility I believe to be for the most part a response to the primary economic conditions. There are other factors continually ~~changing~~ contributing to camp restlessness among station and farm natives - weariness of white ways, uncongenial work, food monotony, and wish to carry out rituals which are out of place or forbidden in most settled "white" camps.

Throughout all these contrasting phases the aborigines have a continuous, persisting social life, in which some of their material possessions are used up, some become in need of replacement, some of renovation. These wants recurring almost daily must be met if the basic human requirements of food, shelter, and warmth are not to go unfulfilled, or inadequately met. The resources which are drawn upon in meeting these and other wants, enter the social life of the tribes through the set of activities which may be termed production.

II.

Aboriginal production has often been spoken of as though it were a simple process of direct appropriation from nature. This is not in any way a satisfactory

description for the Daly tribes. The process of tribal production will be shown to be one of some complexity. Activities which may on the surface appear to be direct and crude appropriations from the environment proceed, on the contrary, systematically and in accordance with a bi-sexual plan of co-operative labour, confined within limits of place and strict convention. Men and women engaged in elementary tasks of production may, for instance, be disqualified or handicapped or even privileged by age, status, dependence, kinship relationship, or totemic affiliation. The sexual cycle of women, and men, the marital and ritual ambitions of men, may impose other disabilities. Even on such superficial evidence as this the notion of production as a crude act of appropriation is, therefore, to be dismissed. A systematic inquiry reveals that nomadism is not to be equated with pre-economy, any more than it is to be regarded as a form of bone-restlessness which leads natives to wander in defiance of their own material interests.

Production will here be considered as a complex set of cooperative activities which transform environmental resources into other forms.⁽¹⁾ Production may,

(1). We should also note that transport of resources from one area to another, even the holding of stocks of goods over a period in order that they may later be made

even under primitive conditions, be a lengthy process; as in the case of the use of bamboos, which are used for making spear shafts. These have to be located, cut, trimmed, sun-dried, smoothed down, fitted with points, lashed, tested, and re-worked before they are finally ready for use. They are also sent away long distances to other tribes. The whole set of processes may take weeks, even months to complete, and may be done by different people at different stages. The production of a spear is thus a process which is not limited to the initial set of activities which give bamboo its first transformation, but includes the chain of separate productive, i.e. transforming acts which intervene between the appraised presence of the resource and its social use in its final form. The emphasis in this discussion of production is upon the activities which are involved, not upon the products of the activities. But production is not therefore to be equated with all the economic activities which follow the first transformation of resources. We must, of course, distinguish from the production of resources their social diversion or distribution to individuals and groups who put them to their final

available to others, are activities which may legitimately be called production. These aspects seem, however, to be relatively unimportant in Australian aboriginal production. Wherever they do seem to be important they are referred to in this and other chapters.

uses, that is, "consume" them. These other activities will be dealt with later.

The essential difference between the productive and the other activities is whether they alter the physical form of resources, or goods. If they do they are activities of production.

Such productive activities are associated with a body of knowledge, and with a body of technological equipment which is itself the product of past production. They are, moreover, carried out under traditionally prescribed and commonly understood conditions as to occasion, locale, participants, technique, leadership, division of tasks, object and (to some extent) quantity of production, apportionment of product, and the social or individual objective. Frequently they are also roundabout activities with considerable duration in time. We should note, too, as a background to the description, the homogeneity of native labour, which enables it to transfer from one occupation to another without loss of efficiency; the flexibility and mobility of the native economic system, which frees it from rigid ties to any one locality; its meagre, though adequate, equipment; and the highly centralized life of the small groups which, for the most part, are the effective

economic groups among the tribes; the presence of so few intermediaries in the economy; and the directness of the link between men and nature.

III.

A division of economic task on a basis of sex runs through productive activities. Tasks classified on such a basis fall into six groups:

- I. tasks appropriate to men only.
- II. tasks appropriate to women only.
- III. tasks which men and women may both perform.
- IV. tasks specifically forbidden to men.
- V. tasks specifically forbidden to women.
- VI. tasks forbidden to men and women during certain periods only.

The position of children in production is not unimportant. I have not included any reference to them in this list because, as children, they are not rigorously debarred from activities for which their sex will, later, debar them. They participate, often usefully, in many productive activities carried on by men and women. It is not until they approach puberty that their economic functions begin to be sex-defined. As over a period of years in later childhood they are drawn into the socialized sex

dichotomy which becomes relatively rigid for them at puberty they lose the privileges of the dispensations which accompany sexual immaturity and senility. Until puberty nears (until they are about 9 or 10) boys and girls accompany their fathers fishing, go with their mothers grubbing for tubers, wading for lily roots, or for lizards and insects. But they are disqualified by technical incompetence and physical weakness from taking any great part in the wider-ranging hunting activities of the men, and by social immaturity from an active role in the men's secret activities, though in some of these they frequently have an important part, as for example in the economic preparations for the ² zirwat namesake ceremonies, ^{(1).} and for the first two stages of the initiation ceremonies.

Men's traditional and appropriate tasks are as follows. They hunt the larger game, fish, and forage for eggs and honey. They construct traps, pitfalls and snares for game. They obtain many of the raw materials of which there may be local supplies, notably red ochre, limonite, kaolin, stone for tools

(1). See my paper on "^{Modes} ~~Forms~~ of Address and Reference in North Australia", Oceania, Vol. VII. No 3.

and weapons, and wood for weapons. Where these do not exist locally they may make expeditions to secure them. They perform such "industrial" processes as fire-making, hair-thread spinning, wood, stone and bone working. They manufacture, maintain, repair and replace, (a). weapons (spears, spear-tips, clubs, swords, spear-throwers); (b). implements (stone knives, scrapers, adzes, and axes; canoes; fishing lines and hooks; bark belts for tree climbing); (c). musical instruments (tapping sticks and drone pipes); (d). decorative articles (arm-bands, pubic pendants, pubic and leg tassels, waist-bands, forehead straps, string from human hair); (e). secret possessions (bull-roarers, tjuringa magical objects. They also engage in trade.

Women do not normally share any of these tasks, but occasionally may be seen taking part with the men in some of them, though they do not and should not under any conditions participate, for example, in the manufacture of men's secret possessions. Women's appropriate and traditional tasks are to hunt for small game, reptiles, and insects; and to forage for such vegetable foods as grass seeds, yams, other tubers, lily roots and stems, pods, fungi, berries, and fruits. They clear camp sites and do the camp

chores; in between camps they transport the domestic gear; they build wind-breaks and bark humpies when it rains; they collect firewood, draw and carry water, and do most of the cooking. They obtain some raw materials, mostly those of vegetable origin, such as bark, leaves, and fibres. They roll thread from hair, fibre, and wool, and weave and repair baskets and yets. They manufacture their own characteristic implements and weapons - the fighting club and yam-stick (used for many domestic purposes beside yam-digging). They make many decorative articles for themselves and for men - necklaces, head bands, arm bands, of fur, wool, teeth, claws, and fibre. They also have trading partners.

I have not included in these summary statements a number of other sex-tasks which have obvious economic implications. These include (in the case of men) the decoration or ornamentation (pigmenting, polishing, greasing, painting, carving) of ritual objects; the adornment of initiates and attendants (including women) at ceremonials; or, in the case of both sexes, the exclusive performance of ritual and social acts or ceremonies (circumcision of boys, introcision of girls).

These are all important economically. They draw upon stocks of materials, upon the time of men and women, and divert activities from one channel to another. To consider them here, however, raises prematurely the difficult matter of evaluating economic services in primitive life, and leads moreover, into the non-economic aspects of socialized sex differences and sex functions. Most of these are economic at the penumbra; but they are not of any great importance, for the moment, in a description of productive economies.

The marginal invasion by one sex of the province of tasks traditionally appropriate to the other sex should not be confused with the set of tasks which are common to both men and women.

Both sexes tend the fires, though men frequently order the women to see to it. Both build huts and pile up rain and wind-shelters. Both carry the fire sticks between camps. Both cook, though women do the larger share. Both spindle hair; both make implements; both, at times, collect small game. Both carry children when on the walkabout, though men frequently go unencumbered. The entire range of these economic tasks, the material labours of the economy, may be visualized as a series falling into

three sections. At each end are those tasks, or labours, or functions, expressly reserved to one sex. In the centre, where are also those tasks common to both, there is a certain overlapping with the "reserved" sections. At the extremes there are much more rigid sex reservations. Women do not and will not hunt kangaroos.⁽¹⁾ Men do not and will not carry the domestic gear from camp to camp. Men may and do draw water, fetch firewood, help to clear camp sites, and tend the fires; women may and do fish. What the penalty would be if men or women overstepped the limits of the sex preserves can only be a matter of speculation. I have seen none who do, nor have I ever heard of a case.

On the other hand there are certain tasks which it is perhaps inadequate to describe as merely appropriate to one or the other sex, though they must be included within the tasks classified in that way. They are those which I have singled out as specifically forbidden either to men or to women. Some of them

(1). Stephan Viljoen makes the following generalization from secondary sources, on p.184 of "The Economics of Primitive Peoples". "So rigid is this incipient specialization of work between the sexes that an Australian woman will not dare to throw her waddy at a startled wallaby, but will draw the attention of the nearest man to its presence. A man, on the other hand, if he sees an edible root, will call a woman to dig it out". Such has not wholly been my experience, but I agree that there are rigid sex observations.

have been mentioned already. Women are, for example, expressly forbidden to take part in any of the productive work upon men's secret possessions, or to prepare raw materials for the decoration of dancers. Men (some say) are forbidden to catch the fresh-water mussel - this is "woman's" food. By "forbidden" I refer not to verbal edicts so much as to the quality of the sex reservation of a task. Those which I have cited are hedged around by "sacredness", or secrecy, or perhaps fear, or shame. Men whom I have asked why they did not dig for the mussel have usually given me a sheepish explanation that mussels were too much like women's genitals. But "forbiddal" in this case is not so intense as that which prohibits a woman from working on (and thus seeing) the men's secret possessions. They have sufficient in common to enable them to be classified together.

The last group which I would distinguish are those tasks forbidden to men and women during certain periods only. Women are not supposed to cook, even to touch, food for their menfolk during menstrual periods. Young boys and young men are not supposed to catch or cook or eat certain kinds of plants or animal foods during their initiation stages, and this prohibition is relaxed in a traditional and very gradual sequence, one

kind of food following another in a pre-determined order.

These sex-limitations of economic function form the ground-pattern for the system of productive activities. The prohibitions are important economically, in a negative sense, because, first of all, they limit freedom of access to and use of resources, and, secondly, they decrease the time which may be devoted to particular economic undertakings. In other words, they limit still further economic means which are already limited.

The general economic effects of this division of labour are clearly, of course, to increase the volume of real income of the local group, and thus to raise the aborigines standard of living to a level higher than would otherwise be possible. Not only is the volume greater, because of the greater efficiency with which a food-area can be ransacked, but its content is more various. A greater variety of foods are appropriated; the nutritive balance is probably better; and there is a clear offset to the food monotony which frequently overtakes the aborigines, and has at least some share in promoting his nomadic mode of life.

The inter-tribal exchange later described is an effective and valuable extension of this primitive

principle of division (or specialization) of economic task.

Associated with the sex-specialization of labour is a rudimentary specialization of equipment⁽¹⁾.

There are also one or two individual men who could perhaps be called specialist craftsmen.⁽²⁾

1 & 2. v. Chapter IV.

IV.

The productive activities in progress on any day may be classified somewhat crudely by reference to (i). stage, (ii). personnel, (iii) purpose, or objective, (iv). form, i.e. organization.

The essence of production being the alteration of the form of economic resources or goods, these successive forms may be called orders or stages. I propose to distinguish "primary" stages of production from all others, which will be grouped together as "secondary". This disregards the fact that there are, in reality, tertiary and even quaternary "stages" distinguishable in some cases; but since this would perhaps be an over-precision, I propose to limit the differentiation of stages to primary and secondary. There will be goods, therefore, of a primary order, that is, goods of the first stage, and goods of secondary orders, that is goods of the second stage. The emphasis will remain however on activities rather than goods. Thus, the procuring of food is production at a primary stage; cooking is a secondary stage. The cutting, lopping, and drying of bamboo spear shafts is production at a primary stage; polishing, fitting and hafting is production at a secondary stage.

It cannot be claimed that these stages are

distinguished by the Daly tribes, in the sense of being conceptually distinguished and named; but that there is a social distinction of this kind is perfectly clear.

Around such outwardly simple situations as those in which, in any Daly camp, people who have not personally procured food may yet be seen cooking it, or diverting it to still other people; or those in which men on the mununuk ceremonial grounds may be seen putting to technical, cosmetic, and medical use red ochre which was rubbed to powder hundreds of miles away; or in the working up into spears by the Kimul tribes (Fitzmaurice river) of bamboo lopped on the Daly river, may be grouped the fundamental problems of production.

The aborigines have to decide what consumers' goods they are to produce. They must decide in what quantities, and in what proportions. They must decide at what points, and over what periods, they will divert resources and equipment, the means of production, to the chosen fields; what use they will make of stocks; who is to do the production, under what conditions of leadership, and under what conditions of reward.

Aboriginal production at secondary stages is thus the centre of a number of important problems for the anthropologist. It is, on the clearest evidence,

associated with a different balance between the elements entering into production - land, personnel, leadership, technical equipment, general and specialist skill and knowledge, site, and the general social conditions under which it is carried on. It is set in a very different social context from that of work in its primary stages. Its relations with the distributive and consumptive side of the social economy, and with the complicated set of claims, demands, privileges, and wants manifest therein, are perhaps more immediate.

The proportions of time, for example, which are spent in secondary and primary productive activities, have determinants and consequences of a varied order. Insofar as the proportions are traditional, and more or less fixed, they will clearly have produced a structural pattern in the economy which will bring itself to the attention of the fieldworker, and demand elucidation. The anthropologist interested in economics should be in a position to describe what factors determine this "pattern" or "design" of production - the constant relations and proportions it exhibits, the type of distribution of resources among individuals and groups, the state of and progress of technology, the relation of knowledge and skilled direction to the

continuous flow which enables this pattern to persist and function over periods of time. Insofar as the proportions are not fixed, but vary within wide limits, it betokens a fluidity and flexibility in the whole want-satisfying set of activities which raise some of the most fundamental issues in economics.

V.

To deal with the four criteria singled out above:

On an empirical level it may first be asked: what broad and clear correlations with these productive stages may be seen among the Daly tribes? Are the age, competence, and status of aboriginal workers correlated with the stages of work in which they take part? Is sex? Is there a seasonal link between different stages of productive work?

One can at once rule out any systematic correlation of sex and stage of productive work. Men are not the only secondary producers nor are women the only primary producers. Both sexes do important work at every stage. In certain fields of production the primary work is left to one or the other sex according to the sex tradition of economic function which has already been described. Thus, only men collect the larger game,

only women collect some of the vegetable foodstuffs. Only men cut canoes; only women weave dilly-bags. But these are not systematic correlations of sex and stage of production as such. They are, in part, the economic aspects of a rather arbitrary socialization of sex difference, which runs much deeper than the economic; in part they are no doubt to be related to underlying physical aptitudes and competences. Women do in general, but by no means only, the tasks for which they are physically most apt; men, those for which they are physically most apt, though they do others which women might do just as well. Men and women do in general the tasks which are appropriate to their socialized sex roles; men, the hunters and fighters, do all the secondary work upon the tools and implements they use, though doubtless women could do some of it equally well. Thus, I have seen both men and women making, from fibre, twine which men use to lash and haft spears. There are not, in fact, many inconsistencies and discontinuities in these secondary aspects of sex-specialization.

Age and type of participation in productive work are evidently limited a little more closely. The primary phases of work in a hunting and foraging economy tend to be more arduous than the secondary. ¹⁵ In this

way, perhaps, a greater proportion of the secondary work is in the hands of elderly people? Old men, sitting in the camps watching over the women and children who stay behind when the rest are out on the food search, have always, probably, done a great deal of the typical secondary work of manufacture and renovation, the spear making, the hair-spindling, the flint-making, and so on. Thread-making, basket-weaving, seed-pounding, cake-making, are tasks which the older women also do on such occasions. The younger and more vigorous men and women invariably do most of the hard primary hunting and delving. I am not prepared to attempt any closer estimate, but it can be said safely that the greater part of the secondary work is in the hands of older people.

There is not, however, as a result, any evidence of higher status derived from or associated with productive task, or of lower status consequent upon it, either type of task or stage of task. Men who did women's work would suffer some loss of their fellows' regard, but this is another matter entirely. Status among the aborigines is determined by age, knowledge, personality, and personal history, not by crude economic factors or functions. Economic competence is certainly one factor which determines a man's or woman's social

adequacy and thereby his or her common reputation. Competence in an economic function may even directly confer a certain superiority. Jack Canoe and Jack Fish are by-words for efficiency in the crafts which give them their nicknames, and they have won some merit because of it. When these crafts are mentioned and questions of competence are raised one may hear their names coupled with an admiring "Tch! Tch! He understands!" But the referent is their competence, not their economic functions, and there is certainly no necessary link with the productive stage.

There is a seasonal pattern in the economy which results in a broad association of tasks with seasons. The early part of the dry season is pre-eminently the ritual season, though important rituals do take place in the wet season. (1). Primary food gathering activities are, of course, very largely seasonally determined, e.g. geese eggs are available only around February and March, with some variation either way; there are clearly delineated seasons for other wild-fowl eggs, crocodile eggs, yams,

(1). On the Daly river all the initiations of youths and camp festivities which I saw took place in the dry season (the early winter) and also one of the initiations of young men into the superior grade - the bullroarer cult. But the longest cycle of bullroarer ceremonies took place in the depth of the wet summer.

and most vegetable foods; where other foods (animals, birds, and reptiles) are not seasonally-restricted in the same way, the unfailing sequence of floods and late dry-season drought interpose lean periods which are really not unlike seasonal fluctuations. The effects of such fluctuations are to force the aborigines into alternative lines of action - using other foods, extending the food hunt into other areas, to some extent dividing their time in different proportions between different activities. When food is scarce, food-getting naturally absorbs most of the attention and energy of the day; there is comparatively little economic activity at night in any case; under such circumstances primary activities are dominant. Under better food conditions the proportion of time free from the food search enables the other aboriginal interests to be given attention - care of equipment, new manufactures, camp festivities, renewal of associations, preparation for rituals. Ideally what one should know concerning the seasonal cycle of activities would include a seasonal account of the foods available and utilized; of the proportions of time spent in the primary and secondary activities; the proportions spent on camp rituals, festivities, fights; the kind of decisions made concerning these activities, the

alternatives available, and the conditions under which the decisions were reached. There is no reason why, even in/^arelatively disturbed aboriginal tribe a great many data should not be reclaimed concerning such points. I have the impression that they would prove to be true what I can now only assert as possibilities. It is obvious enough that there is a seasonal determination of primary food gathering activities. This is true also of the gathering of raw materials. In general the food-pinch sets in at much the same time each year. I think we can fairly infer from this a seasonal determination of much of the secondary productive activities. Apart from urgent renovations, replacements, and maintenance of equipment, which must go on throughout the year, most of the new productive activities of the secondary type go on in the periods of food plenty and in the non-ritual periods.

VI.

The personnel involved in production may be individuals working alone, in pairs, in married couples, in families, in small groups of families, in small groups of individuals some only of whom may be "families" or "couples", in local hordes, in aggregations of hordes, even on more rare occasions in inter-tribal

aggregations. They fish alone, wade alone in the sedges for turtles, alone may track down snakes, if they are fairly near their tribes fellows. They do not care to make long expeditions alone for fear of hostile natives, ghosts, witch-women, sorcerers, and devils. Women normally seldom work alone away from camp. They run the risk of being raped; as well they share the other fears with the men. Also, their husbands are cautious; clandestine workaday meetings with lovers are the source of much camp trouble; and working in team reduces this risk. It must be pointed out, however, that working in company is the custom. By stressing the fears which bolster the practice, or the suspicions which may be associated with its enforcement, I am not trying to suggest a precise causal link. Women, and men too, do steal away from working parties to meet their lovers. At a whisper by an intermediary, or a pre-arranged signal, the lovers may drop behind, or slink away from a working patch, but they usually dare not stay long. So "company" working, to use the pidgin term, is the common rule. A woman and her kapi (husband's sister) are a common foraging team. The kapi is both friend and chaperone: she will, or should, protect

her brother's wife from his ill-treatment, but she will also watch her moral conduct, and should tell her brother if there is any serious lapse. A man and his son or sons, or a man and his brother or brothers, own and tribal, are also common working teams. Parties of young men, brothers, and parallel and cross-cousins, frequently hunt together. The patrilineal local totemic clans of one or two men, related as blood or tribal brothers, with their wives, sons, and children, are groups admirably equipped to scour in a day or two a substantial area of country. They have an area of country to which they are related with a special intimacy, they can provide an effective combination of men and women's labour to comb it thoroughly, yet they are sufficiently few in number to make it unnecessary for some members to walk great distances, which is the disability of large bands of hunters and foragers. The traditional practice on the Daly is for the horde not all to hunt together in the sedentary phases, but, when it is temporarily localized in a food area, to split into a number of smaller groups, and for these to comb restricted areas. In this way domestic needs can usually be adequately met in the better areas with

economy of effort. The actual radius of operations is difficult to calculate. Natives do not walk further than they need. I have known men hunt seven and eight miles afield when game was scarce. Special expeditions, e.g. for geese eggs, crocodile eggs, or red ochre, may take them on longer distances. Parties of women may have to go several miles from camp to find vegetable foods. I have known them go four or five miles afield. The chase is often arduous. Yam-grubbing, following the thin roots of the tubers feet down into the earth, can be a great and wearing labour. No aborigine works for work's sake, without calculation of the fatigue-costs involved.

The size and personnel of working parties are in general, determined by the interplay of such factors as (i). the traditional technical requirements of the task, (ii). the social objective in view, i.e. whether only domestic, or special requirements, have to be met, (iii). the labour available (which may be affected by the seasonal atomization of the horde, and the ritual condition of individuals); (iv). the labour which can (because for example of kinship affiliation) be called in to assist; (v). the technical apparatus available (there are not canoes on all the billabongs); (vi). the varying limits of human mobility

under different conditions of topography, season,
(1).
and supplies of food and water.

The incidence of all these factors upon the personnel-coefficient of daily activities is a matter of such ready observation, that one tends to overlook rather than to analyse it. The working of expediency in accepting and making shift with any

(1). The size of the largest "residential" group, the local horde, and the size of the territory it occupies, are probably responses to the interplay of the relatively constant factors of (i). the biological limits of native mobility; (ii). absence of aid to transport; (iii). the level of industrial technique and knowledge; (iv). topography, with such relatively variable factors as (v). food and water supplies, and (vi). the local balance of geographic controls, e.g. rainfall, evaporation, temperature, humidity. If the aborigines knew more, had better industrial equipment, could store food or increase its supplies by cultivation, the ratio of population to territory would be increased; where the "variable" factors change for the better (as they do in the higher rainfall areas) the ratio does change. I have noticed as between Central Australia and North Australia an obvious decrease in the size of horde territories, though the size of the horde population seems to stay much the same. I incline to an hypothesis that in Australian conditions a band of about 30 to about 60 people is a group which combines in relation to its physical and climatological setting, its technological equipment, and its level of knowledge, that is its command of resources, the optimum degree of mobility, economic control, and social cohesion.

particular balance between them is noticeable. I have seen canoes of roughly the same size cut by two men and by five men. In the second case the canoe-owner (the man who had "marked" the tree from which it was to be cut) called in some close relatives to help him. In the first case, there were no helpers available, and secondly, since they were small canoes, they were not vitally necessary. Nor is the social occasion of canoe-cutting as important as, for example, the drives for kangaroos to feed the dancers and participants in the ⁿyuzuana ceremonies. When I saw these there were available, and otherwise unoccupied, more men than were technically necessary to hunt for kangaroos. I found that it was often easier to explain why numbers of men and women were not engaged in specific tasks which came under my notice than to decide why the numbers actually working were in fact at work. One man, it is true, will not and cannot cut, shape, and launch a canoe alone; one or two men are not left with the entire responsibility of providing food for an initiation ceremony; but more men may be seen at such tasks than clearly are needed by its technical nature. The technical requirements of a task may thus set the lower but do not set the upper limits to personnel.

VII.

Size of the working group cannot, for all these reasons, give anything more than the roughest basis of classification of productive activities. What I term the social objective or purpose in view in any productive activity presents the anthropologist with the most striking contrasts of this sort. One social objective will have a greater capacity than another to enlarge the scale of a productive activity which in any case must be undertaken (i.e. food getting) and thus to call upon more workers, and to put forth more energy. The production of ninymer for merbok, is an example of an activity which may competently and adequately be met by the services of one or two men; but the approach of an initiation will galvanize a camp into a greater food-drive than it might ordinarily undertake. These "objectives", the immediate inspiration of productive activity, are classifiable simply into two types according as production is for:

- (i). domestic purposes.
- (ii). special purposes, e.g. initiations, marriage feasts, camp festivities.

All these are "domestic" in the sense that they have marked effects on the family economy. The real distinction between them is in what may be called their cycle. Some productive activities of type (i). go on, of course, every day; they are par excellence the main everyday activities of the horde, the minutiae, as it were, of the economy, as the regularly recurring everyday responses to regularly recurring everyday situations - some of them what Malinowski terms the basic "needs". Those of type (ii). are "spaced" over greater intervals and though they continually recur their regularity, being on a grander scale, is less obtrusive. There were three initiations, for instance, in the dry season of 1930, and more in the wet season, the first two within a month of each other, the other six weeks later. They determine the peaks of tribal productive effort, not its common mean; they coincide with more spectacular interludes of tribal life, not its more mundane passages. The only reason why I have suggested the "objective" as a convenient basis of classification is that it is expedient in the field to do so; this is the usual referent given in aboriginal explanations, of why any special productive activity is undertaken.

It is always clear when there is a special objective of this type in view because it is almost invariably of a nature to affect the whole camp directly. Initiations into one or other of the three grades; marriage feasts; camp festivities; large-scale fights; namesake ceremonies are objectives of this type. The whole camp knows of them and of their imminence; the whole of the camp is in some measure involved by them; they commonly become the dominant interest of the period. But no clear account has yet been taken of a third group which might be distinguished, (iii). the numerous "special" objectives which complicate the lives of individuals or of individual families. These do not necessarily, or commonly, have the wider effects discussed above. They are of a more personal character. A full statement of what these may be and under what conditions they occur will be given later when the economic factors in the development of personality are considered. They may here be given summarily as including enduring kinship obligations which from time to time need material affirmation, for example, those to warugun and other affinals, and to merbok partners. They include, too, individual debts for which the day of reckoning comes, as with mima debtors, and for whom

special efforts may be necessary, though many such efforts are not strictly of the productive type. Men's friends accommodate them from time to time by the loan of implements, weapons, decorative articles, even raw materials, when they may be in special need and possess none or an insufficiency. These have to be returned, in kind and in equivalence. Such of them as are locally available may be produced for this kind of return if they are not obtainable by less laborious methods - as the proceeds of merbok, of kinship dues, and so on. The picture of life which results from all these is thus one of some complication. The common mean of production for the recurring needs of daily domestic and camp life is to be pictured as at intervals forced to higher "peaks" to meet special needs of a public character, and as at narrower intervals for individuals interwoven with the extra efforts needed to meet personal or familial obligations of a type which are not "special" (i.e. fortuitous) but "normal" concomitants of becoming a social personality. Men who are betrothed, who marry, who have affinal relations, who are initiated properly, who acquire trading partners become, that is, debtors as well as creditors, who beget children and launch them upon the traditional path of social development, are to that extent taken beyond the level where their total produce effort need be limited

to the degree of work, in concert with their camp fellows, which would satisfy their basic daily needs. Classification of production in such a context by the crude list of objectives which I have outlined is clearly not to be taken too seriously. But, for what they are worth, the immediate and ostensible objectives of production may well be mentioned, if we are not to plunge too precipitately into the speculative realm of "wants" and try, without benefit of intermediaries, to relate to them the elementary and crude acts of production. To me it seems a matter of some doubt whether even in the simple aboriginal system one can with any real clarity link this or that productive act to this or that "want", whatever a "want" may be. Native production is not self-energising, does not (although there is an almost unfailing round of daily activity) proceed mechanically as a constant flow of wealth-producing activities independently of human acts of will. It is undertaken as the result of acts of decision, which are either catalysed by obvious daily needs, or by the special individual requirements referred to earlier, or by common knowledge of impending major social activities. The range of choice is always fairly closely limited. The place at which a camp is

ordinarily situated is, for instance, strategically nearly always placed in relation to water and a great proportion, though not all, of native food is obtained close to water. Constant revisiting of the same spot, whose food-potential is well enough known, almost eliminates the need of much heart-searching and debating what to do or where next to go. The morning scene in camps in this region show no formal councils of elders debating the issue of where to go next. A typical morning camp I saw in the rich billabong country ^{of} kaiyir slowly stirred itself. Young women and children went down to fetch water. The fires were built up in the cold morning. Scraps of food, left over from the night before - pieces of meat hung in a tree out of the reach of dogs - were eaten. So the morning wore on, small parties of women with a few senior men began to leave the camp to go to a yam patch about a mile away; a party of young men went to wade in the sedges for small fresh water turtle; not till late afternoon, after the heat of the day, did another small group of men go to beat the clumps of cane grass, horehound, and eucalypt scrub where wallabies were of old known to feed. These simple productive undertakings were moving on well known ground.

in familiar routine, which, given the chosen camp site and the known decision to stay there, needed no formality of debate or council to set in motion. Talk or gossip, outwardly almost idle, around the morning fires, is more than sufficient to decide upon or implement such daily tasks. When the whole camp moves, or goes off to a big fish or kangaroo drive, the initiative comes, not from the ancients in the camp, but from the seniors and the elders, again not from anything which could be called a formal council, but after quiet talk. The decision is not put to a vote, or any public test, nor is there any reason why this should be done. The choices are few; there are to some extent seasonal determinants of what food can be obtained and so of what people should do; there are local determinants - the camps if they must move, must go to fairly contiguous areas where the seasonal factors again come into play; on this coastal belt there is actually little need to, and the natives do not, move great distances; and, moreover, there are, so commonly, routines of places and directions. The decision permeates the camp rather than is communicated. Nearly all are within earshot. The talks are public. It may have been known for days ahead where the next move, or what the next big activity, will be.

When the decision is to change the camp site, the camp moves speedily. Invariably, within any experience, the move is made in the early morning hours. Out of the immensely long social history of the tribes most of these daily, or seasonal, routines emerge as smooth patterns of life into which aboriginal life seems to slip almost effortlessly.

VIII.

The fourth criterion for the rough classification of tribal production which I suggested was form or organization. To an extent something of the form of production has already been brought out by the descriptions so far given - the broad external appearances of productive activities, the obvious differences of size of working group, and of leadership; the relative use of technical equipment; the sex character of the activity. These are largely superficial to the activities. Other kinds of questions at once come to mind concerning the form or organization of production. To answer them adequately is to embark as well upon a deeper review of all the principles so far described. One would have also to ask: Are the various "factors" entering into production owned, and, if so, by whom? Under what

conditions are these factors brought together and through what agencies in any act of production; and in what proportions? If they cannot legitimately be spoken of as "brought together" how are they drawn upon in production? Is any attempt made, with an eye on the allocation of yield, to keep separate and identifiable the different contributions to production? Is there competition for the use of such factors or elements and, if so, what are the consequences? What specialists are there? Under what conditions do they participate? Are there specialist intermediaries - entrepreneurs who undertake production for an indirect or a delayed return? The same questions may be asked of the non-specialist labour. What are the determining and the effective conditions in which they participate in production. What inducements, if any, are held out to them, and by whom? The deeper questions of incentives need not be raised, but it is necessary to say something of the operative social mechanics of labour as a factor in production. That is to say, we want to know the socially effective reasons why men and women work in the ways in which they do work. To keep the description within reasonable limits, I shall answer these questions to the extent which may be possible in explicitly examining

the broad conditions in which the various "factors" or elements in native production are drawn upon. What are these "factors"?

In all these productive activities use has been shown to be made under varying conditions of (i). tribal land; (ii). human personnel; relationship; rights, duties, claims, traditional modes of behaviour, (v). certain kinds of knowledge; (vi). some form of leadership or at least of executive decision.

Technical equipment is discussed in the chapter on resources and technology. On the data I possess it does not seem possible to make any useful comments here upon the social aspects of equipment used in production. So far as I am aware, there are no fees, special rewards, or special allocations of the yield made to men or group who bring equipment to a joint task. Each local group has its nets, canoes, traps, spears, and so on. Where equipment is loaned between individuals a present of tobacco usually accompanies or follows its return. But, socially speaking, what important equipment there is (canoes, game-traps, fish weirs, and nets are the most important) play an inert role in the sense that they are not made the basis for claims upon the yield of

production.

Some comments are offered elsewhere upon the economic significance of leadership, knowledge, and what I have termed the social corpus of relationship, rights, duties, claims, and traditional modes of behaviour, and no further consideration will here be given them. The rest of this chapter will be concerned with offering further comments on the role of land and personnel in production.

X.

All aboriginal land is owned. It is not a "free good", available under all conditions to any aborigine who cares to make use of it. It might be called an inert element in production. The conditions of ownership are such as to make the entry into production of "land" either in the narrower sense in which I use the term here, or in the wider sense of classical economics, not a matter of simple statement.

Native ownership of land reveals itself most clearly in terms of the rights recognized and exercised over it and its products, and in the relations recognized to exist between persons and land.

Rights of a certain kind to localities are recognized to exist, and are asserted, and maintained.

Rights of this sort are freely ceded to persons by others who themselves make no such claims to an area, and possession, occupancy and use of the land by such free consent approximates to a body of common law of native land ownership. The rights, which are expressed in possession, occupancy and use, are validated by myths which describe the historical conditions under which the rights were established. To me, however, the emphasis in aboriginal ownership has always seemed to rest primarily, or as much, on the practical fact of occupation and use by free consent, a consent which is inter-tribal rather than narrowly tribal, as upon occupation and use under the authority of mytho-historical title.

The emphasis is very heavily on the right to use. The question of disposal does not arise. Under traditional tribal conditions there is no trace of permanent invasion of others' territories, of buying or sale or transfer of land. Indeed, the problem of land disposal or sale would present the aborigines with a problem for which they have no traditional solution, and no apparent basis for reaching one. (1).

(1). A notorious case in point is that of the Warranunga tribe at Tennant's Creek. When in 1934 the local native reservation was about to be thrown open to prospectors

Their land ownership is neither only "individual" nor "communal", and is not adequately to be described in terms which imply such an antithesis. Tribal land may be said to be "owned" by the tribe in the sense that the members of the tribe are jointly the possessors and occupiers of that territory by traditional title to it, by traditional association with it, and by (1).

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it was reported that an official agreement had been concluded with the headmen of the tribe. The agreement was that the tribe should give certain areas over to the prospectors in return for other areas (as it happened, areas belonging to another tribe) some distance away. Inquiries I made proved that the "headmen" were not headmen, that they claimed and were conceded by their tribesfellows no rights to make any such decisions, and that they themselves were not at all clear as to the implications of the "agreement". The disposal of land, the transfer of rights over it, the possibility of revocation, were concepts which they had never before handled in such conditions. I reported at the time that the "agreement" was worthless if it implied any adequate comprehension on the part of the natives of what they had committed themselves to do and to accept.

(1). "The country of a local group, with all its products, animal, vegetable, and mineral, belong to the members of the group in common. Any member has the right to hunt over the country of his group at all times. He may not, however, hunt over the country of any other local group without the permission of the owners".
Radcliffe-Brown, J.A.I. XLIII. p.146.

contemporary consent, and in the sense that they exercise over it commonly conceded rights of permanent occupancy, use, residence, inheritance, descent, and ritual privilege. Ownership is thus a complex relation of many components; and the context of ownership is one in which disposal has no particular relevance. Apart from "tribal" ownership, an analysis of differential individual rights within that tribal complex needs to explore all the above implications of ownership, which as will be shown go far beyond the reach of legal title. When one makes this study one sees that the characteristic idiom of aboriginal land ownership is best shown not in tribal ownership, but in the ownership of the subdivided areas of which tribal land is the aggregate. Tribal territory is, in fact, an aggregate of local horde territories, and a horde territory is in turn an aggregate of smaller units of land held by small groups of members of the horde. The most clearly formulated statement of the structure of land ownership can be given by starting with these smaller units and by analysing them in terms of rights and relationships. What ties there are between individuals and groups of individuals and land are stronger, less readily alienated and more rigorously expressed, in relation to these smaller areas, than to

any others.

Let us examine a characteristic land-structure in a representative tribe. We can distinguish four sets of terms for land areas. There are, firstly, individual names or descriptive terms for places, each name or term being applied to one identifiable place only. Many of the names bear a suffixed particle (such as girim) indicating a totemic linkage. These are very frequently important clues to the foods found in the vicinity. In an average tribal territory these place terms may run into thousands. A tribal area can then be visualized as dotted over with mapped places of this sort -- every waterhole, stream, or river, every hillock or range, every mound, every prominent landmark, sometimes even prominent trees or clumps of trees, often rocks or stones a few feet square, are mapped in this way. A map drawn up from such information alone shows almost invariably that no important natural features are omitted; usually it would contain information which a European cartographer would probably not consider it important to give. But, secondly, superimposed as it were, on this basis place map is a set of named topographic regions -- such as dariyaga, a stretch of open woodland, banguny, expanses of red soil country, darimun, strips of sand,

moill, strips of plain. These are essentially descriptive area terms, each linked with known kinds of food or rare materials. Coupled with the place-names, and their literal translations, this enables a striking map of the countryside to be constructed, a map moreover which conveys a great deal of direct and indirect tribal economic information. Then there is a third set of terms with direct land-reference - the terms for customary camp sites, the maternal and paternal descent areas, and the moiety areas. A camp site is called da. So also is a man's father's and father's father's horde-country, which I term the paternal descent-area. The link between da as "camp" and da as father's horde-country, which is owned and inhabited by the descent-group into which a native is born, is that in this patrilineal and largely patrilocal aboriginal community a man camps (that is, lives, works, and sleeps) in his father's country. But, if patrilocal, what of a man's mother's da? This is termed his kayatfi, which is his mother's father's da. So these two da are for any native clearly delineated on the tribal "map" which he carries in his head.

The fourth set are the names of what are commonly called the horde countries. In the Ngolok Wanggar and

Madngella tribes, for example, there are eighteen
(1).
of these names, each applied to a noteworthy physical
feature of the tribal landscape, to the area surrounding
it, and to the group of people (the horde) traditionally
inhabiting that area. Most of the names refer either to
wong or wak, i.e. waterholes, the focus of the life of
the group centering upon them, or to dag, traditional
camp sites, or larger districts. The names are formed
by the addition of a place-name to these general terms.
The most common use of the terms is as descriptive names
for the separate groups, which clearly had (they no
longer do) an autonomous life of their own on some

(1). These local groups were as follows:

Madpangaran, centering around kumerki, (Hermit Hill).
Worgdigyenda, centering around the camp site of Digyenda
on the Bangar billabong. Worgkoramba, centering around
the Korambaienda billabong. Worgkenyin, who lived in
the district called Kenyin. Dagdilg, who came from the
hill country of Dilg. Worgkareal, who also shared the
Bangar billabong; Pudjeder; Wakpamaiak; Worgkarer;
Dembel; Wuliana, from the billabong of that name.
Dagwanit, from close to Pamaiak. Wagylnulminet, from
the Copper Mine country; Wagyerer, from the district
north-east of Komani billabong; Worgkomani, who centred
on the billabong of that name; Dagtimba; Wag Magat,
from Nagan, (Mt. Litchfield); Dagngabala, from the
district near The Crossing.

occasions during the year. One can trace systematic links of title, direct or derived, expressed in certain kinds of rights, between the aborigines and this complicated descriptive classification of tribal land.

By "rights" over land I shall mean both the sanctions for conduct in relation to land and the actual operation of these rights in terms of behaviour. The emphasis in this brief account is largely upon the latter.

The aborigines appear to draw a distinction between:

- (i). rights over land, as distinguished from
- (ii). rights over the products of land.

Concerning (i):

We should distinguish:

- (ia). rights of permanent residence.
- (ib). rights of temporary access and residence.
- (ic). rights of permanent social and economic use.
- (id). rights of temporary social and economic access and use.
- (ie). rights of possession, inheritance, and descent.
- (if). rights of ritual privilege.

The distinctions based on permanency and temporariness are extremely important, and there seems

to be a great deal of evidence in support of them. They do, in fact, cut deeply into aboriginal daily and seasonal practice. There is evidence that tribes without frontiers to the Daly river have traditionally had access to it through the territories of river tribes in other areas; of expeditions through other tribal areas to obtain raw materials; of initiation "paths" running through country forbidden and even dangerous to aborigines under other conditions; of men being "free" (i.e. having special privileges of access) of their mother's local horde country; of unobstructed freedom to move over tribal boundaries at times of festivity; of asylum for absconding lovers in areas where ordinary their freedom to move would be restricted. The history of Daly settlement is filled with instances of tribes going through other tribal territories under the special conditions of cultural disruption which accompanied alien contacts. There are many other instances referred to elsewhere in this essay and all such instances are examples of a very complicated set of modifications of exclusive tribal rights in land. The conditions under which and the periods during which rights of temporary access use and residence are permitted are sufficiently sharply marked off from those conditions and periods in which the permanent rights of the same type

are operative to justify, in my opinion, their separation as differentiated rights.

The contemporary situation, for example, is one in which the indigenous river tribes concede to tribes like the Nangiomeri, the Marithiel, and the Marimanindzi the right to stay on and use the river country but stoutly maintain that it is in no sense their "proper" country. Nor do these intrusive tribes disagree. They have come to a working arrangement whereby each tribe (in some cases the fused remnants of tribes) stays in one area - the Nangiomeri, Marimanindzi, and Waganan at The Crossing and Fletcher's Gully; the Marithiel, Marinyar and Moil tribes at Mt. Litchfield, Parry's and other south-west bank farms; the Ngolok Wanggar, Madngella, and Maranunggo at the north-east bank farms, Bamboo Creek, Wuliana, and Dinggeriet. But the genealogies of the intrusive tribes show that they are bequeathing to their children totemic sites (i.e. descent areas) in their old, traditional territories. The children of these tribes, even those who have not been taken out to see their "proper countries" (the pidgin term) can recite the names of strings of such places.

An elucidation of the permanent rights to tribal land, or to any of its subdivisions, will not be given

here, since I am concerned here principally with the productive economics of land. Substantially, the explanation would be the same as that given by A. R. Radcliffe Brown for the Kariera and other tribes whom the Daly natives so closely resemble.⁽¹⁾ Permanent residence, permanent social and economic use, ritual privilege, the power to possess, inherit and be a member of a descent-group based on tribal land or its subdivisions, are rights freely conceded and recognized among the aborigines, who cite myths and historical titles often as much for themselves as for neighbour tribes.

What of the rights over the products of land? Some are clearly corollary to the rights in land: Men have indisputable and undisputed rights to game caught and raw materials found in land of which they "own" the traditional title. Others are perhaps concessions to expediency. Others are determined by arbitrary conventions and social usages: among these I would put the access given to other tribes to food caught for the large feasts.

There are, for instance, sex rights to food and economic articles (only women may eat mussels, only men may wear pearlshell); there are rights of totemic

(1). A. R. Brown: "Three Tribes of Western Australia" J.R.A.I. 1913.

privilege, age privilege, and status privilege over foods and economic objects, even when caught or procured in men's own local areas. In many tribes in Australia, though not only the Daly river, men's freedom to eat, but not to give away, their totem species, is limited; all the Daly tribes allow only some individuals to eat particular foods according to their age, ritual condition, and initiation status. A full list of these prohibitions and privileges is given elsewhere.

There are the commonplace set of rights of use, control, and disposal which are consonant with the aboriginal system of limited private ownership. There are also the rights over foods which rest on kinship privilege, interpreting this in its widest sense to include the two sides of kinship relationship - obligation as well as privilege, and affinal as well as blood-kinship. I do not know whether this complicated aggregate of "rights" is best dealt with on all counts in the kind of presentation which I am following, but it does bring out certain of the limiting conditions under which in aboriginal production land is used in production. The productive use of the products of land could partly be dealt with under the title of "equipment" used in production.

Aboriginal land is thus owned, but it is not the source of rent, interest, or dividends; it is not hired or transferred to others for use for a consideration of fees or payments; I know of no rights to a portion of the yield of any productive activity in any way based upon the use of land in that production. Not even the traditional owners of areas on which a productive activity may centre seem thereby to possess or to claim yield-rights greater than those of others who are party to the production. Aboriginal land is one of the inert factors of aboriginal production.

Different areas of tribal land are called into use at different periods, according to minfall, seasonal variations of food supply, floods and progressive drying up of the smaller water courses. At the approach of the wet season there was a general shift of camp sites to the drier areas. Because of the smaller tribal areas, the relative pressure of population, and perhaps because of the more certain food supplies, the camping arrangements of the smaller Daly tribes seem traditionally to have been rather more stable than those of tribes in the more arid and in the dry temperate zones. In the Kamor, Yunggor, Ngolok Wanggar, Meran, Ponga Ponga, Madngella and Maranunggo tribes the

the practice seems to have been for each horde to have a more or less settled dry season camp site or group of camp sites at no great distance from one another; sometimes two or more hordes shared the same site. Thus the three Madngella hordes of Dagbangar, Kenyim, and Madpangaran all camped at or near the large billabong of Magat. This lasted from Aridangit, burning-grass-time, to well after the peak of Pundumiri ("sun-burning-head"), the hot months of September and October. Then they separated and went, some to higher ground near Tjimul, some to Kumerke (Hermit Hill) and Digyenda. The camp site known as Yinindaitj was used by both Kamor and Ngolok Wanggar during the wet season; in the dry season they went to camp on and at various places around Ngulukminet, the billabong near the Copper mine. I compiled a long list of these seasonal movements and they establish two important points concerning the use of land. First, the amount of border-line contacts between the tribes (particularly between the Ngolok Wanggar and the Kamor at Ngolokminet, Yinindaitj and at Wuliana, and between the Ponga Ponga and Maranunggo at Tjuriyin) shows that we are not dealing even in primary production with closed tribal economics, each tribe jealously guarding an area from competitors.

As is common in many other parts of Australia, some hordes are bi-tribal; in pidgin the phrase commonly used by them of themselves is "half-half". Secondly, the seasonal shift gives areas an opportunity to recover this productivity. Only the river and the greater billabong systems are continually in production.⁽¹⁾ Local groups for the greater part of their time use their own land, but for portions of the year they work on other groups' land - usually their neighbours, or the land of intimate affinal relatives. A detailed picture of actual traditional tribal land use over a period is no longer possible.

XI.

Much of what can be said of the place of personnel, or of labour in production, has already been said. The daily need of food usually sends all adult members of a family on the food search, and is the main determinant

(1). In North Australia "in dry times the rock holes and most of the springs become dry and the natives are compelled to keep in the vicinity of the rivers and water-courses, but as soon as the rain comes in sufficient quantities to replenish the rock-holes and revive the springs, the people make an exodus into the back country and remain there as long as the water lasts, because that is the only time they can pursue the game and obtain other foods in those parts of their hunting grounds. They proceed first to where the water is known to disappear most rapidly; then they go to those places in rotation where it remains longer, and in this way utilize their water supply to the greatest advantage." Mathews, A.A. II. p.501.

of the amount of time given over to "work" and what may crudely be termed "leisure". This does not take into account, of course, the number of productive tasks done in such leisure periods (weapon-making etc.), but these are looked upon in a very different way from the arduous (and rarely exciting) search for food. For women the position is rather different. Their time is proportioned rather more disadvantageously. The preparation of vegetable food (e.g. grass seeds, yam soaking etc.) often cuts into the period spent in camp. This opens up interesting problems of attitudes to "work" and "leisure", which are dealt with in more detail on pp.

Even children help, but the camps are seldom entirely deserted, except during the mobile phase. Very old men and women, and others who may for one reason or another be incapacitated, stay in camp. Young children are sometimes left with them, though mothers often carry even suckling children out to work. The children sit on their mothers' shoulders, are carried in a coolamon, or very occasionally across the hip. The older children walk, sometimes long distances.

I can add nothing further here to what has already been stated about the size of the working groups. But it may be pointed out that there are many factors

of which the labour-force at work in production is but the outcrop. When they come within view, we are thereupon at once embroiled in matters of population, movements and treads, the reciprocal relations between material progress, standards of life, and technical development, and wider cultural changes. For instance, on the Daly river the spread of new totemic cults has induced economic movements in its train, clearly affecting through the personnel the productive patterns which were characteristic in their absence. There seems no reason whatever to suppose that such changes do not occur also under undisturbed traditional tribal conditions; we have, in fact, the clearest prima facie evidence of cultural movements under such conditions, and although there is no longer any way of doing more than speculate upon the economic changes which they brought with them, or induced, or were associated with, such changes there may well have been.⁽¹⁾

The bases of reward of personnel are reviewed in the chapter on distribution. Leadership in production, or the relative absence of leadership, has already been briefly discussed. So, too, have the limits of specialist work.

(1). For instance, the spread of new totemic ceremonies north-east to the Daly country is leading to a greater demand for red ochre, feathers, and other materials, for the patterns of the new bodily decorations are much more complicated.

The co-operative aspects of labour have not, perhaps, been given the attention their importance merits, but nothing much further can be added here. It is clear that, while there are rudimentary specialists, there are no entrepreneurs, even in the simple sense of men consistently undertaking production on behalf of others, forming estimates of vicarious requirements of a consumer's good, and proceeding to its production. To ask the deeper question - what are the socially effective reasons, not why men work, but why they work as they do, is the same as to ask: why do men continue to obey the economic principle. The answer cannot be given in economic terms. But some of the inducements and the compulsions which seem to surround their economic behaviour will be outlined in the last chapter.

XII.

The final picture of aboriginal production which results is that of an outwardly simple, but in actuality fairly complicated process, which maintains the aborigines on an effective standard of living despite the natural hazards of flood, fire, drought, and seasonal flux. Without entrepreneurs to shoulder the constant risks of production, with only rudimentary specialists whose economic effects are not important, without formal

councils, chiefs or leaders, to plan far ahead, or to make current decisions for the group, production is nevertheless maintained at a level which brings a constant flow of goods and services to all members of the effective economic group, the local horde. The volumes of real income per head are very small and nothing much is to be gained by their measurement, though it is possible to do so. Seasonal factors, and the traditional routine and organization of native life, reduce to a minimum the necessity of difficult or complex choices as to what fields of production to enter at any time and what to produce. Where these necessities do arise the leadership comes from the senior males of the group, but not in formal session. The rest of production is not, however, self-energising and self-directing. Economic decisions are constantly being made, but by their nature, that is to say, because of the social conditions in which they are made, they are undramatic and unobtrusive. Access to the means of production is on a basis of equality, and where it is limited it is determined not by the existing state of distribution, that is, by the diversion of the real income derived from past production, but by sex, age, kinship, the local affiliations of descent, by ritual and trading links, and also by conventions which, in times of plenty

as well as in times of scarcity, increase the mobility of aborigines in relation to land and other means of production, even outside their tribal boundaries. There is no separate class or group of producers; the two groups, consumers and producers, are to all intents and purposes the same, except for those exchange partners in other tribes. There is no competition between producing groups or individuals for the factors of aboriginal production which are within human control - land, personnel, equipment, and certain forms of leadership. Production is, on the contrary, always orientated towards the maintenance of a volume of real income sufficient to satisfy bodily needs and social requirements. There is no production directed towards constant accumulation of possessions. Stocks of food are negligible; of raw materials they are very small. Accumulation for the sake of possession of valuables for long periods does not exist, and would not be permitted. The emphasis is on social rather than upon individual gain by production. A number of conventions tend to level individual incomes to a rough equality. In summary, it may be said that the social principles which underlie aboriginal production are (for families, if not for individuals) equal access to the means of production, and equal risk and (on the whole) equal gain in its yield. The process of production is marked by

great stability of technical methods, which may perhaps be attributed to the apparently constant level of population, the marked tendency for wants to remain static, the absence of stimuli to the development of technique knowledge, and the rigidity of the conventions which stand in the way of concentrations of power or material possessions in the hands of individuals or groups.

CHAPTER VI.

DISTRIBUTION.

I.

Between the production of food, raw materials and other goods, and their final use, a complex set of activities of transfer intervene. Some of these activities transfer from one set of hands to another, both within the same tribe and between tribes, goods which are still in the productive stages, and which will go to yet further hands, and perhaps through further productive processes, before final use. Other such activities bring articles to those who will usually make personal use of them. All such activities may for convenience be classed into two general groups - activities of exchange and activities of distribution.

There is no complicated organization given over to the management or conduct of these activities. The scale of aboriginal life is so small that for the most part the economy pursues a course of the greatest directness, nearly all consumers are also producers, the small numbers involved reduce the possibility of great division of economic functions, and much production is for direct and immediate needs. The proportion of the total volume of goods which is directly consumed in this way, and not further disposed over a wider social area, is substantial. This, coupled with the limited social and physical distance over which the economy operates, reduces the importance of the agents and agencies which serve the physical processes of distribution.

Distribution may be viewed (i) as a process, the transfer of the material means of real income from producers to consumers, (ii) as the final mode in which the materia economica are disposed and possessed after apportionment, (iii) as the fixation of the value of the factors which have entered into production. This factor-valuation approach to the apportionment of the yield of production is, I believe, inherently inapplicable to aboriginal production.

Not only, as I have shown, is the segregation of independent "factors" of doubtful utility in a descriptive analysis of aboriginal production, but there seems to be nothing in the product-apportionment which is empirically or conceptually isolatable as factor-valuation. We must, I think, note not only the absence of the conditions which would prepare one to find fixed claims to proportionate factor-shares in the yield of production - a common measure of value, a noticeable degree of specialization, inequality, and power concentration, and an established and personalized economic leadership - but also note the presence of conditions which would seem to operate against it. These are taken up below, in discussing the aspect of distribution with which I am principally concerned - (iv) the underlying principles which determine the aborigines levels of real income, which is to be defined in terms of the use of economic goods and services proceeding from productive activities.

These individual real incomes are, in part, determined by the total volume of tribal production and in part by the claims exercised by individuals and groups over the stream of material utilities.

By exchange I shall mean those distributive activities in which goods are transferred against goods and not in response to claims of another derivation. In some exchange activities it may, in a sense, be said that goods are being transferred against claims; but if we trace these claims sufficiently far it will be found that they rest upon indebtednesses arising from prior exchanges of goods, and not upon claims derived specifically from kinship affiliation, the privileges of status, or ritual title.

This chapter is, therefore, concerned to set out the rules which determine the levels of native real income, the bases upon which the total production of a tribal community is divided among its members.

II.

It is important that we should, if possible, establish the applicability of the concept of income to aboriginal society.¹

1. One reason why it is important that this concept should be clearly established is because of the interest which is being aroused in native standards of living. This, too, is a concept in need of clarification before it obtains too wide a currency among anthropologists. A standard of living is to be measured by the volume of goods and services consumed over a period. But in current use the concept has many normative implications. The first step towards establishing the actual standard of

(Continued overleaf)

Income is here taken in its conventional economic meaning as the stream or flow of goods and services which come to an individual.

An important limitation on anthropologists' use of the concept is that in economics it implies measurement of income in terms of a medium, and over a fixed period. There is no aboriginal measure of quantity appropriate for this purpose, and though appropriate periods are recognised by the aborigines, the notion of income in relation to period is totally absent. The anthropologist, recording objective data, could, however, describe and compare the physical contents of native real incomes, and relate these accounts to the wants of the recipients over periods and cyclical or seasonal activities recognized by or existing among them. There is ^a clearly marked periodicity of native life, and there are cyclical returns of seasonal activity which would give appropriate time-marks.

The normative aspects of income, which arise in situations of culture change, can only adequately be dealt with if we have

(Footnote continued from previous page)
living of a people is to determine the lowest level of real income per head of any substantial section of that community. The general or average standard of living then may be roughly measured by the extent to which the averaged real income of the remainder rises above that minimum.

first established the actual levels of real income. They provide possibilities for precise comparison between the actual levels of real income and certain other levels (standards) which can be set up - the level necessary for bare physical efficiency; the level or levels implicitly or explicitly recognised by a community as necessary or desirable; or perhaps, in the case of administered tribes, the level set by administration as desirable to be reached.¹

Aboriginal incomes can be compared, if they cannot be measured. The quantities involved, however, are very small, and estimates of total volume, or of real income per head, while interesting in themselves, would have no particular value as tests or as references where there are clearly no big differences in the levels of income.

There is also, of course, the difficulty of calculating the value of aboriginal services of an economic character, which are an important constituent of real income. I see no way in which these could be given a measurable place in an assessment of the material streams of goods which come to individual aborigines.

1. In broken-up Australian tribes the concept of changing levels and contents of real income throws some light upon tribal decline. Regrouped around these notions much of the data of "culture contact" takes on a sharper meaning. At once are raised such questions as: when the sources of native income change do aborigines receive or seek more or less of the same constituents of income, or more or less of particular constituents? What is the effect on health, position, and social behaviour? These points are further examined in ~~the last~~ chapter^{VIII}.

In aboriginal life there is no way of reducing goods of various kinds and services of unequal degrees of economic importance to a common valuation. Some goods can be counted, weighed, and measured; some can be analysed for nutritive and protective value and energy-content; others can be tested for their technical efficiency, their performances perhaps related, for example, to the norms of mechanics; there may even be aboriginal commodity-valuations which can form part of the field-record; but the values of the services outlined hereunder remain, however, unmeasurable. The one possibility which it might seem worth while to explore would be to list for each individual the economic services to which he could lay claim. There are patent inequalities in this respect.

III.

We can divide into two general groups the claims over all the goods released by production:

1. direct claims.
2. derived claims.

The direct claims are those based on:

- i. personal participation in production.
- ii. personal contracts.
- iii. ownership.

Derived claims are those based on:

- iv. Kinship relationship.
- v. affinal relationship.¹
- vi. age status.
- vii. ritual status or relationship.
- viii. personal services.
- ix. personal services of a specialist character.

This separation of direct and derived claims is not based on any radical differences between them. But there are several reasons why it is valuable to make the distinction. (i) It expresses the (perhaps) greater immediacy, perhaps a certain priority, of those I have singled out as direct claims; (ii) it enables a useful difference to be drawn between independent kinds or sources of income;² (iii) it enables us to see clearly the limited usefulness in aboriginal conditions of a theory of distribution concerned mainly with factor-valuation.

Some of these claims ^{are} exercised by groups rather than by individuals. It should not be necessary for me here to go into any of the obscurities raised by the attribution of

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1. Kinship relationship and affinal relationship are separated here only for the sake of convenience. I do not mean to imply that affinal relatives are not kinsfolk.
 2. See p. 20 VIII for a description of the way in which social personality and the possession of certain kinds of income are related.

functions to groups. Individuals exercise such claims, of course, on behalf of or as members of groups. However, there do not seem to be any individual or personal rights or claims in which other individuals do not have some interest, or by which they are affected.

My use of the term "claim" is slightly ambiguous. By "claim" I mean, in general terms, a sanctioned right to goods and services which is freely conceded and is customarily invoked.

IV.

I shall now deal in order with each of these groups.

(1) Direct or Primary Claims.

This group corresponds most nearly to an evaluation in distribution of the claims of some productive factors upon the yield of production. Individuals are fully entitled to make personal claims, and do make such claims, upon the yield of most productive activities in which they take direct part. Unless production is undertaken for special purposes such as Ku feast, or the palwa and yirwat payments,¹ in which case it is a convention that the persons responsible for the production should not share immediately in the

1. ~~These are described on pp. of this chapter.~~

commodities gathered together, all the participants share directly in the yield.¹ Food or raw materials obtained by men or women working alone tend to be retained by them for only small quantities usually result. Members of working parties often abstract portions of the yield for their privy use, and sometimes do so publicly as well as secretly. Women, particularly, cook small meals privately in the bush before returning to the camp with the food they have collected. The apparent niggardliness with which men treat their wives in camp must be offset by this fact. If the women are caught by their menfolk they may be thrashed, particularly if food is scarce, but the practice is common. Men hunting in groups, or men hunting alone or in pairs, disembowel and often quarter heavy game to make it lighter to carry, and at the same time cook some of the internal organs on the spot before returning to camp to share out the rest. Kangaroos are frequently disembowelled, cooked, and quartered in the bush away from camp, if the distance is too great to carry them. I have never seen large game quartered and taken back for cooking in small portions. The hunters eat substantially and then take the rest back to the camp for further distribution. Crocodiles, emus, and

1. Roth observes that "the tribes of Australia divide the spoils of the chase or the vegetable collection of the women without any reference to the individuals who obtained it". J.A.I. XVI. 112.

other large game may be treated in the same way. Smaller game is mostly taken uncooked to camp. The process of "picking" at the yield of tasks is an established custom; though it does lead to quarrelling and to recrimination when carried to excess, or if detected in bad times, or when for other reasons tempers are short. Children are given liberties of this kind which adults are not. I have seen boys taking small fish from nets without protest by their elders, and then cooking them at small private fires. They do not touch the larger fish.

There is not, among the Daly tribes, any formal sharing out of all food in camp. It is brought to the camp, as we have seen, under very different conditions, as the different kinds of productive activities indicate. Frequently throughout the day children may catch or eat or bring to the camp small catches of game; women may return to camp in pairs or small groups, bringing a wide variety of food in small individual quantities, or small portions of a few foods; they may bring a large amount of one vegetable food, as when a yam-patch is thoroughly dug over; men may return with a few fish, a small marsupial, or a wallaby; on other occasions they may bring a net full of fish or three or four Kangaroos from a drive; the whole camp may sweep a billabong for fish or a gully for wallabies. Foods thus

collected under so many different conditions are not brought back to camp and formally shared out in individual portions. Formal sharing is reserved for the special occasions described below. There is otherwise no common rule except that if there is food in the camp no one ever appears to go without, even if (like the older men and women, or children) they do not directly take part in the production. This can be explained in several ways.

Almost all the aborigines are efficient food-getters; there seem to be few complete failures; they thus always tend to have some food of their own getting; but personal claims on yields do not set the limit to the stream of food and other commodities which come to them, as will be shown later in discussing the "secondary" claims they exercise over the material means of welfare. Thus, even if they should give to others (and they seldom do) all the food they personally obtain, more food would still reach them¹ and compensate for this loss. The division of labour described earlier almost makes this necessary, preventing as it does men and women from personal efforts to obtain all the kinds of food they need or want. They are thus by the very system of work made dependent on others for some of their food.

1. The persons obliged to give them food are listed below.

Where a family or a group of one or two families works together in procuring food they retain among themselves all the commodities they collect, forage, or extract. Each individual may have (probably has) "picked" at the food before it is brought together; but it is then shared out in a roughly equivalent way between each family. Men do not do all the actual allocation. Women may also be seen doing it. Quite commonly there is no specific act of allocation by any one person. The contributors take their own portions.

When larger groups work together, individual contributions are not necessarily flung into a common pool, though sometimes they may be - in a fish drive, for instance. But often in grubbing for yams, tubers, and lilies groups of women may be seen with individual yields carefully separated by the side of each. In the case of a common pool (as in a fish-drive) each individual directly or indirectly receives a share from the joint-yield of the work. Any rule as to quantities is nearly impossible to estimate. It appears on all occasions to be sharing into rough equivalents - calculated, apparently, not for each person in the group, men, women, and children, but rather for each family group, and for the groups of old and young men. In one fish-drive which I saw, men, women, youths, and children all taking part,

the fish were flung into a canoe as they were caught. No individual's catches could thus be identified. Nets strung together into a chain were being used, and as the fish were netted they were taken out by the nearest person and put into the canoe. One elderly man, apparently tiring, took a large fish and walked away with it. There were no protests. The fishers merely glanced at him and went on with their work. When the drive was over the fish were taken from the net in an informal fashion by the men (all of whom were married), not by the women. Their shares were all roughly equivalent. Some men took several fish, though the man mentioned earlier took only one large fish. An elderly widow took part in the drive, but I did not record what her eventual share was, nor through whom it was directed to her. There was no dispute over the sharing, no feverish rush to snatch before others, no recrimination.

Quarrels over food-apportioning do, however, occur. They are among the most common sources of camp trouble. But they do not seem commonly to arise at the initial distributions of the yield of a productive activity - they seem to occur principally over the alleged non-fulfillment of secondary claims, that is, claims to share in food in the production of which men had no direct personal share. The complaints are usually of parsimony, of evasion, or of wrongful claims.

Quantities, then, are important, though they do not give the appearance of being precisely calculated. Ill-temper, suspicion, grudges harboured for other reasons flaring out over a convenient point which in itself possibly is insufficient for open anger, though enough to stir chagrin, can thus lead to quarrels over secondary apportionment of food. I do not suggest that they cannot or do not occur over primary distributions; simply that I have not seen any occurring in those circumstances.

If only small quantities of any food are obtained, as is frequently the case, they may be consumed on the spot; or withheld by the procurer, though they are not necessarily consumed by him; but they are not split into minute quantities so that each person may have some, unless in the case of a small nest of wild-honey found on the march; in any case there are usually a number of ritual food rules,¹ which at once disqualify a number of people, or there may be special persons such as the parents, or a lover, or, the father of one's betrothed wife, to whom the food (particularly if it is rare and highly prized) may be presented. In such cases as these the secondary claims may operate to the exclusion of others where they would certainly not in the case of commoner foods or larger quantities. So all the people in a camp are

1. See pp. 16.

not to be thought of as all eating the same foods at the same time. Some may have smaller quantities of food than others, but not usually where they have taken personal parts in the procurement unless they have then given it away to others with claims over them. The inequalities probably arise, as I have suggested, from the failure or deficiency of secondary sources. It may be stated as a rule that none will be in actual want unless all are in want; when there is food, all share, on a rough level of equivalence.

The fact that there are quarrels show that inequalities do arise. Aged people seem sometimes to be stinted; children do not; blind and lame camp members are fed, but they do not get the lion's share; women on the whole fare worse than men in the open camp apportionment; probably they have their own ways of compensating for it - men allege that they do.

The conclusion seems to be the personal claims over the yield of food production are admitted and are operative and regarded as valuable rights; but are conditioned by a working camp rule of equivalence. But alongside the working of equivalence, commonsense in maintaining good camp relations, and intelligent expediency in food-sharing, one sees common evidence of selfishness, ill-temper, evasion of obligation, denial of others' rights. There are husbands who fling scraps

of food to their wives while giving generous portions to their children; there are also husbands who treat their wives generously as well as their children. Children never seem to be stinted.

The basic claim to food obtained in productive activities is thus, the right of men and women to what they have themselves produced or helped to produce. But it operates alongside and sometimes is subordinated to a principle which tends to equalize the shares of the great majority of adult persons within a local group. And direct rights to the yield of production are probably of less importance than the derived rights to food in the production of which individuals may have had no direct share. The tendency to equalized shares of food is conditioned by (i) food taboos¹ of the types set out below, (ii) kinship obligations which

1. For instance, boys after initiation are forbidden certain foods for lengthy periods. The prohibitions are relaxed slowly, and in a traditional order. Also the foods are given to them; they are not allowed to take for themselves. This is the order: opossum, pinya bor; wallaby nandin and big kangaroo tjayir; turtle, durin; barramundi, kul; watersnake, punderan and goanna, arainy; the small brown duck, diringin; the whistler duck, pudjerun, and black duck pornirk; catfish, koror, and mullet, biyi; flying fox, darabin, and emu, nūwūt. These avoidances are said to be the same for both boys and girls who have reached puberty. They are relaxed more rapidly for girls than for boys. A girl, for instance, can eat the ritually-dangerous geese eggs a year after her menses-ceremony. A boy must wait a much longer time. Such foods as tyayait, which conveys the meanings of forbidden, dangerous, ritually important. The last two to be given are the great yam, maramban, and geese eggs, bor, in that order. After the foods have been given to the initiates they are no longer tjayait, but tjayirk. These prohibitions are of the same nature as those imposed at other periods. They are dealt with more fully in

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can be met only by a diversion of food-income, (iii), a slight degree of sex inequality operating on the whole in favour of senior adult men, (iv) factors of a purely personal nature - meanness, greediness, brutality, laziness, and so on, all of which quite frequently lead to camp upsets, quarrels, brawls, and sometimes deaths. I witnessed one such quarrel in a Marithiel camp. Mawun, a native who had been working for me, went back to his camp at sundown after eating a meal with me. Several men came into camp at the same time with a large barramundi caught in the billabong some distance away. Mawun said that he wanted some fish. The others knew he had eaten with me. A violent dispute arose. Tempers soon flared. The man who caught the fish refused to share it with Mawun. He called out "Awo yigin numundzi" i.e. "(This) flesh-food mine own (i.e. for my disposal)". He pointed to a number of

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the section dealing with the claims of age and ritual status. They all make a considerable impact upon the economy of a camp. Boys and girls who are nearing or are at puberty, or are between puberty and adulthood; menstruating girls; pregnant women; the husbands of pregnant women; adult men about to be or involved in one of the senior initiations, all need to observe restrictions upon their use of food resources. These bans may be regarded as sumptuary restrictive conventions on the use of resources.

I have been unable to discover in this area any principles of apportionment comparable to those described by Fison and Howitt for the Kurnai, who dissect animals so that specific portions go to special relatives, v. Fison and Howitt, Kamilaroi and Kurnai, pp.261-267. All tribes of the Daly and Fitzmaurice areas have a convention by which parts of the human body symbolize special relations - the breast represents the mother, the shoulder the father, the leg the brother, and although this would seem to give a basis for such apportionment, I could discover no evidence of any sort that it is done.

persons and said "I will give some to you, to you, and to you. But I will give none to Mawun". The uproar rose higher at this. Others could be heard calling out "Awo nangi winyim", i.e. it belongs to all of us. The drift of what then went on was lost in the din. There were blows, a run for weapons, the fires were scattered by the screaming lubras so that there would be no light for spear-throwing, and it was half an hour before quiet was restored. Many other latent grievances were liberated in the general brawl. This was despite Mawun's attempt at conciliation by saying that the "little bit of beef" which he had had with the white man (actually he had made an excellent meal) would be enough for him, and that he would do without the fish.

The Madugella term wunjurk, which perhaps may be translated as "share", connotes the general obligation upon members of a camp to share liberally with others any food they bring to it. The term came to my notice when used about myself by natives to whom I showed hospitality though they had performed no service for me. I was told that I was mamak wunjurk kunburij, literally "hand - share - generous", or more freely, "one who generously shares out what he has". When I made inquiries into the way this term was used in native contexts I found that it was applied in two ways, one of which was the same as in my case - a term

of praise for people who habitually are liberal (for the most part this also means efficient) in sharing out food they bring to camp. This supports what other evidence suggests - that there are no set "rule" or "rules" of food distribution, binding, specific, detailed, but that, on the contrary, there is a good deal of free play of personality within a set of conventions somewhat elastic in their working. The other use of wanjurk is as a general principle of conduct which is cited in praise and blame.¹

My notes at this time say: "It is a generalized obligation, not specific (i.e. towards special individuals) in any sense which I can discover. It is felt to be desirable, and in accord with good manners and the demands of hospitality to share in wunjurk fashion. This means (as far as a man's own camp) goes, even those not covered by waragur or other special obligations, such as küyün dü, anbüzgöl, werag and naor; visitors as well. There is a far greater danger of it breaking down in regard to people permanently in camp than with visitors, who are always assured of hospitable treatment."

1. Among natives of North Australia studied by Spencer & Gillen "there is no such thing as allowing an old and infirm person to starve. It is the duty of everyone to supply certain other older people with food, and this they do cheerfully and ungrudgingly."

v. Northern Tribes of Central Australia, p. 31.

Personal claims over other kinds of commodities released for use by productive activity are more clearly defined, and less subject to immediate communal limitation. They are numundzi - a man's own. There is no dispute over personal rights to firewood which is collected; fights occur if it is stolen, as happens not uncommonly. Bamboo cut for spear shafts remains a man's own at his right of use and disposal; so are the branches cut for spear-tips, and Ochre, bark, and stone, likewise. These are phases of the productive process in which, directed by other than the driving daily needs which must be met if life itself is to persist, men and women add to their real income, sometimes providing for future income, apparently under different conventions. The commodities produced, the durable stuff of income, are here by free consent the possessions of those who produce them, not part of a virtually common fund as usually in the case of food. The physical and social conditions of production are, of course, markedly different, as well as the nature of the goods themselves.

A personal claim of a slightly different order is that implied by the custom of putting a wülümü mark on certain foods, food sources, or other articles found by a man. A kapok tree could be made wülümü and this reserved for a man until he wanted to make it into a canoe. Yams, the eggs of

turtles, snakes, and crocodiles, could also be made wüldmü. So also could firewood. The unauthorized disregard of these claims was womu, theft, and commonly led to a fight termed daiiman.

1. "A tree containing wild honey is marked by the finder, who thus protects it until he wants it; and anyone who disregards the mark is under disapproval as a wrong-doer". v. Palmer J.A.I. XIII p.288. Smyth op.cit.I.p.145.
2. "If two or more men have the right to hunt over a given territory and one of them breaks off the top of some grass-trees (thus forming a proper receptacle for the growth of grubs), by their laws the grubs become his property. The man who took the trouble to break off the tops was entitled to gather the grubs; but he acquired no rights to the trees, and they could not, by his simply breaking the tops, become his property as a huge gum-tree might, or a parcel of land." Smyth, op.cit. I. p.146, II. p.289.
3. Thurnwald gives a useful comparative summary of some references to these points in the Australian literature. "Men and women" he says (op.cit. pp.268-269) "put together what they have separately obtained but keep separate stores. There is, however, this difference, that roots, small animals, and etc., collected by the woman are destined for the use of the whole family, while the meat provided by the man is often regarded as his exclusive personal property. At the same, this does not apply when the spoils of the hunt are larger, for custom and considerations of utility then demand that the surplus over and above what the individual can consume should be shared with the other members. Moreover, these people usually have no arrangements for preserving meat. Besides, the fortunate hunter would be exposed to the ill-will of his companions, if he failed to share with them. The regulations for division of the spoil are frequently of the minutest character: certain persons receive particular pieces, or everything in excess of a certain amount must be divided in accordance with fixed rules (Eylmann p.173; Howitt, pp.756 et seq.) This division is sometimes made by the fortunate hunter himself and sometimes by the chief or some other man possessed of authority, preference often being given to certain senior relatives. Many totemistic food prohibitions are doubtless due to a manifest favouring of the old men as regards the provision of food. Children, women and young men are generally less favoured in this respect. In some places sons-in-law

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(ii) Claims based on personal contracts.

I have with a certain doubt included these among the primary claims over goods as a means of income, because of the immediacy of the claim, though they could equally well fall into an entirely separate group. They are of two kinds (i) claims over merbok trading partners and (ii) claims over mima debtors. The merbok claims are to be set off against merbok debts; the mima claims are claims for the repayment of loans of ninymer, in which there is said to be need only of replacement and not of payment of a "fee" for the accommodation. Neither will be further considered at this point, but will be discussed later in the chapter in another context.

(iii) Claims based on ownership.

The notion of ownership was shown in the chapter on production to involve a number of complexities. Nothing in aboriginal life - neither land, capital equipment, sources or stocks of raw materials, rituals, dances, songs, or anything else which is "owned" - is owned and used for its direct or indirect "earning" power; there seems to be nothing which can be termed "investment", nothing from which anything resembling an "income" is consistently derived.

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are obliged to make certain contributions to their fathers-in-law (Spencer & Gillen ('99) p.469), which usually means that the younger men have to provide food for the leading old men. The most important economic advantage enjoyed by the old men in this connexion is that, owing to polygamy, they have every facility for making use of the women's work....."

Men and women do derive predictable, constant and measurable incomes of commodities and services from other men and women, but these are not from "investments" which impose debt obligations. Such incomes, in so far as they are consistently derived from other people, are the material symbol of social ties, with those people, not of debts, in their disfavour, or of capital investments with them. But in a sense it is true that additions accrue to the real incomes of individuals through claims on commodities based upon ownership. The placing of technical equipment at the service of others - canoes to cross streams, to use in mullet-spearing, or bark-gathering, or egg-collecting, axes for use in the bush, ornaments to wear at festivities, is equated by the return of the equipment and a gift.¹

(iv) Derived claims.

The claims of kinship over goods and services are well-formulated, strongly-resistant to change, and persist when much traditionally surrounding them has altered. They are both reciprocal and one-sided. Those which appear to be

1. There are other payments of this order which could perhaps come into this group, but they are rather closer to the group of claims based on specialist services, and will be included in that section.

one-sided are perhaps more accurately to be described either as delayed reciprocals or as indirect reciprocals. I know of none which are not in some way reciprocal, though the reciprocity may be long-delayed.

The outstanding claims of this order are associated with the primary kin relationships: those of

- (a) children upon parents
- (b) parents upon children
- (c) siblings upon siblings.

Each of these economic "claims" is to be regarded as the separation of the specifically economic from the non-economic elements in each relationship. I do not wish to enter upon the complicated problems of the nature of kinship or affinal relationships, or of their form or structure. My immediate concern is with a part of what may be termed their "content".

a. Children traditionally receive from their parents (from other relatives also) material support in food, shelter, warmth, decorative articles, clothing (under modern conditions) and personal services such as cleaning, feeding, preparation of their food, care when sick. At stages during their growth to maturity they receive, or have paid over for them to others, substantial quantities of ninymer, often also of food, for specific social purposes such as the "fees" for

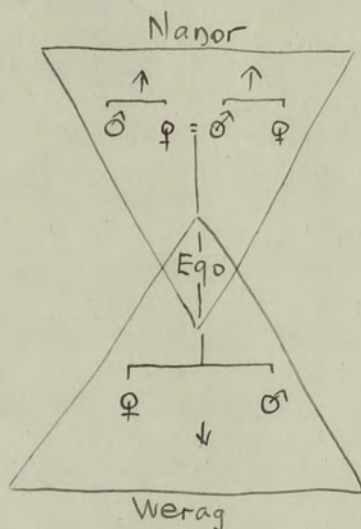
their initiation into one of the three grades - dzaban, dingiri, or yunguana; gifts at betrothal; gifts at the removal of nirwat name-taboos; and ritual silences; and at marriage. They may be inducted by their parents into exchange partnerships which may be for years sources of substantial accretions to their real income. The commodities which change hands in this way are charges upon the savings, or the income, of their parents; the services of the above types which parents perform for children are a tax upon their energies, which are part of their economic means. A portion of the total parental income from a multiplicity of sources - from direct apportionment in their productive tasks, tribute from relatives and affinals, the proceeds of exchange, shares of distributions from other sources - is thus always diverted to children. The children may be said to have a right to such a portion, at all events to possess a freely conceded claim upon it. Without being able to give total or proportionate quantities, there seems to be no great disproportion in the amounts thus diverted by mother or father to the children, and no apparent inequality as between children. Other close kinsfolk of a status comparable with that of the parents also contribute to children's material welfare. The mother's brother, the father's sister, the grandparents, many of whom may habitually be in the same camp as the children,¹ assist

1. See below p.

them - give them food, play with them, mend their weapons, help to educate them. These may all be regarded as accretions to the real income of the recipients, as part of the general allocation of tribal resources.

b. The economic claims of parents upon children are also among the strongest and best formulated of such claims. Children, children's children, brother's children, are in their way an "investment" which normally provides parents with a material competence in their older age. These may best be illustrated by the werag and the naxor of the Ngolok Wanggar and Madugella. The terms are applied to somewhat ill-defined constellations of relatives. One's naxor is composed of close relatives, male and female, in ascending generations; the werag of close relatives, male and female of descending generations. A man and his brothers and sisters have the same werag and naxor, but are not werag or naxor to each other. The naxor includes the father, father's sister, mother, mother's brother, father's father, mother's father, father's mother, mother's mother. This may be called the primary naxor. Informants will also, if specifically asked, bring within the naxor the brothers and sisters of these people, but ordinarily they are not counted as such. The werag on the other hand includes one's children, children's children, and the offspring of one's brothers and sisters. A man is

thus the pivot of his werag and his nazor yet belongs to neither. He himself is a member of his father's werag and his children's nazor.



The claims set out in (iva) are werag claims upon nazor at their strongest. As shown there, responsibilities for the material welfare of children do not stop sharply with the parents; one continually observes kindly attentions being shown to children by close parental relatives; food is handed over, children are fondled, nursed, taught, amused, guarded, cleaned, in ways often indistinguishable except by their frequency from the ways in which the same functions are performed by parents. Therefore, the specific claims of parents upon children cannot be set sharply against the economic relations between men and their brother's children,

or children's children. The difference is one of degree and gradation, not of kind.

From their earliest years children make small material contributions to the family economy. Part of their social development to maturity (at least for boys) is ceremonially to bring food to camp, to the larger economy. Part, too, of the moral training which they undergo is to be told that they should "look out" or "look after" their parents, feed them, find them narcotics, protect their interests. When parents' active years are over much of the responsibility of their support rests upon the children; a great deal of resentment is felt by the older men and women in the native camps in the settled areas of Australia that the young men no longer are willing, or that their working conditions under white employers do not permit them, to observe this filial requirement. Such a defection amounts to the collapse of an expected insurance, and much of the pauperism of the station camps is to be attributed to this cause. The changed tribal circumstances have also in the same way affected the affinal claims of older upon younger people.

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1. Among the Arunta and Urabunna tribes of South Australia it is reported that "the husband is, all his life, under certain obligations to supply food to the relatives of his wife. The portions of the chase go to (1) his father-in-law, (2) himself, wife and children, (3) his wife's brother's children, (4) his mother-in-law, (5) father of his mother-in-law (6) sisters of his mother-in-law's father. Nor is he allowed to eat the flesh of an animal caught, killed, or touched by any of the above-mentioned people". v. Wallis. American Anthropologist XV, p.110.

The claims upon sons, daughters, and grandchildren, own and classificatory, do not extend only to food; they include also claims upon secondary products and upon services. Children are expected to help in the collections of ninymer which from time to time become necessary for their parents, who have economic duties to affinals, to siblings, to trading partners, and other creditors, and, of course, on ceremonial occasions. Economic services - the drawing of water, carrying firewood, performance of camp chores - are part of children's obligations to their parents and elders.

c. The sibling - sibling relationship is one of great importance, economically no less than for non-material social reasons. Between siblings are sex taboos, social formalities, name-avoidances, and ritual precautions, as well as intimacies. Each has certain implications for individuals' command over resources.

When sexuality ripens at puberty a constraint settles upon brother-sister relations which is not relaxed until old age. The constraint intensifies at her menstruation; after her marriage; during her pregnancy. Ordinarily they talk little; but nothing a girl handles during her menses must even be touched by her brother; they do not make free with each other even at ordinary times during adult life; and usually they do not work together; but at menstruation the

severance is much more rigid. Before puberty their relations with each other are quite free, but at the girl's first menstruation and at the boy's several initiations they are physically isolated from each other. The Mangiomeri call the relation between them yirigimumpi, one of "shame". The girl's personal names are not used by her brothers. Nor is she called by common kinship term. Instead, she is called by such terms as mutjin (which is translated in pidgin as "rubbish") and adida (an evil spirit). The girl herself initiates the closure upon her freer pre-nubile relations with her brother by warning him when her menses commences. She tells him in so many words what is the matter, she is at once called by a new term dandZagiak which describes her condition (the term means "menstrual blood"), a small hut is built for her some distance away from the camp and during the day she must stay there isolated from all menfolk, returning to sleep in the camp only well after the small boys are asleep and darkness has come down. When the period is over she is taken by close women kin, ritually washed, rubbed in red ochre, and returns to the normal camp life. Before many days she is required to be associated with her brother or brothers in a ceremony which ends the warbaitj relation between them (the term implies the complete absence of any social or conversational relations). This ceremony consists in an informal exchange of food-gifts between them,

the boy brings gifts of meat, the girl of vegetable foods.

From this time on their relations are always circumspect - no close contacts, no use of personal names, no informality of approach or conversation. Economically, however, they remain closely linked. A girl looks to her brother for a certain amount of economic support, while he looks to her directly or indirectly for a substantial amount. She receives from him a share of much of the flesh-food which he catches or controls and he receives vegetables and other food from her. The sister-brother relation does, in fact, strongly express the interdependence of the sexes upon one another for different kinds of food. The girl's marriage imposes a check upon the volume and the regularity of the support that a man receives from his sister, and may explain why many natives say, when discussing the economic tribute which a woman's kin claim from the man who marries her, "you do not get a man's sister for nothing". The substantial gifts of kué and warunun which a bridegroom has to give to his affinals are not, of course, all to be accounted for as crude compensation for the interrupted economic services rendered by a woman to her brothers and parents, but no doubt some at least are so to be considered. After marriage a girl's primary economic obligations are to her husband and children; they have first claim upon her; but the sister-brother tie is never wholly obliterated economically. The balance is probably

always in favour of the brother. When they meet, if their camps of residence are apart, presents pass between them. Indirectly, a man's sister remains, even after marriage, the guardian of his economic, and even of his marital, interests by the close supervision she is supposed to exercise over his wife. Where exogamy of the local group is not necessarily the case, a man's wife and his sister are thus often flung together for long periods. They use between them a special reciprocal kinship term: they are kapi to each other. They are a familiarly seen working team. Because of sister-exchange, not infrequently the sister may marry a brother of her brother's wife. There is then formed a highly integrated little group, whose economic fortunes are still more closely identified one with another. The two women are kapi to each other, mates, working-partners, with enduring economic bonds to both men; the men are warunun, and are by this convention thus both entitled to receive from the other a constant flow of gifts of material worth, and by affinal and sibling relation are entitled to receive a constant flow of food and other objects from both women. The men may also not infrequently also be merbok partners, which further identifies their economic fortunes. Such congruences occur, apparently, fairly common. Even where they do not, it is still often the case that merbok trading transactions take place between brothers and sisters,

thus superimposing upon their partial dependence on each other for daily food-staples what may be a lifelong personal interest in each other's personal property of ninymer. We must, on all these counts, rank the sister-brother relation as one of high economic importance.

The relationship of brother to brother is one of prolonged intimacy and enduring strength. Its particular quality is unlike any other in tribal life. Economically, it has the importance one might predict from such facts. Radcliffe Brown has adequately emphasized the closeness of the social tie between aboriginal brothers. The social contacts between them persists throughout life, for two brothers necessarily have the same local group, they necessarily belong to the same totemic clan, the conditions under which they grow tend to keep them together and to equalize all the other contacts they make. They occupy similar social positions in the total social structure. Their social personalities, as Radcliffe Brown has said, are almost precisely the same.

Numerous idioms of native speech express the closeness of their bond - they are spoken of as "mates", "one sweat", "one fire", "one blanket", "one country". Some of the Daly tribes make the usual Australian distinctions between elder and younger brothers, that is to say, distinctions in the kinship terms used of them and between them. Others apply

only a simple reciprocal. In the Ngolok Wanggar they are neda to each other. The order of birth is, of course, always remembered; a certain authority goes with it; and only the junior levirate is practised. Brothers do not use each other's personal names, but the ban on them doing so is much milder than that between other age-contemporaries, such as cross-cousins.

There is ample evidence of deep affection between them side by side with the convention that they should be gentle with each other, speak quietly to each other, feed, watch over, and help each other. The commonest empirical facts disclosed by casual observation are the working together of brothers in hunting, fishing, canoe building. Two brothers, with their wives and children, or two or three groups of brothers, are perhaps the commonest subdivisions into which the hordes break when walkabouts start. They exchange weapons; they build and share the same canoes; they sleep close together; they can be seen to share food; genealogies show that they are often inducted into the same exchange sequence, and as in the case of sisters, add this common relation to the same articles of ninymer to all the other mutualities which hold them together.

It must not be imagined, however, that the relation is always and unfailingly one of the harmony these generalizations imply. Brothers fight and brawl in camp;

they may be separated by marriage, or under modern conditions by working for whites in different areas; they may, as I have heard them do, profess a love for a distant brother, but they do not necessarily return to him. A case came to my attention of two brothers who seldom spoke, not because of any ritual avoidance between them, or because of any quarrel, but simply because of their undemonstrative personalities. Yet, against this one must set such an instance as that in which I saw a powerfully built older brother fight furiously, with men who were holding him down, in order to get at his weapons to fling at other men who were initiating his younger brother. The older man's face was contorted with grief and anger, and he struggled so terribly that it delayed the initiation. Now, this antagonism of brothers and other close relatives to initiations is common enough; it seems to accompany nearly all the rites; at all events, I have seen it at three of the four initiations I have attended. But the struggle which Djabini made was too real and too determined to be explained as a mere conventional display.

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1. This may possibly be the explanation of the fact that the men who play the most active part in the Daly initiations seem always to be men of other tribes. The man who performs the circumcision, the men who lie beneath the boy who is being operated upon, are usually all from other tribes.

Broadly speaking, brothers have access to the same resource-area, and to the same means of production, because of their tie to the same horde or clan land. When one is initiated, the other brother or brothers often impoverish themselves, even place themselves in debt, to find ninymer to make a well-displayed gift to end the warbaitj silence between the initiate and the mamakaloan men who took him away and then brought him back to mululuk to be initiated. When a man is betrothed, he calls on his brothers to help him provide the long series of kué feasts which need to be given to his paléet relatives. This they are supposed to do willingly and with good heart. If one puts probing questions to test the normative attitudes to the brother-brother link the greatest emphasis in the answers is on this kind of giving and helping. To make a brother free of one's property and income, to speak quietly to him, to "stand up alongside him in his fights", to help him with the material tributes to his wife's peoples, to watch over his wife when he goes away, all make the totality of this relationship one of the great sources of personal strength and support to every aborigine. Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of the nature of the relation which the fieldworker can see is in camp fights. A man, embroiled in a fight, and getting the worst of it, does not need to call for help; his own, even classificatory brothers, invariably rush in, thrust spears

into his hand if his own are exhausted, or by screaming indecencies and insults at the opponent (by this time probably joined by his brothers) try to draw the fire away till the spent spears are brought back.

We can, therefore, see the brother-brother relation as an important source of real income. Goods and economic services of substantial worth pass between them in the secondary phases of distribution.

v. Claims based on affinal relationship.

This group is of importance as a source of real income. An effective proportion of an adult man or woman's command over valuable commodities is derived therefrom. The general class may be subdivided as follows:

- a. claims upon Lambara (sons-in-law)
- b. claims upon waruwaru (brothers-in-law)
- c. claims upon narul (spouses)
- d. claims upon kaka (mother's brothers)
- e. claims upon other affinals, such as kuyūdūt
and the anbūzgūl.

Some of these claims are more periodic than the claims set out in (iv). A graphical record of the flow of income derived from most of them would tend to move in a series of peaks, separated by zero periods. The line representing the stream of commodities derived from (iv) would be more continuous, more even, and the amplitude of the up and down movements would be much less. The reasons will emerge in the

following descriptions.

Aboriginal marriage always has economic concomitants. The excessive formality of physical and social relations between a man and the parents of the woman he marries is (at first sight it would seem ambivalently) associated with intimate economic relations between them. There are certain differences noticeable among the Daly tribes in the tone and texture of this economic relation: among the Nangiomeri the economic claims upon a son-in-law seem more onerous, because apparently more enduring, than among the Ngolok-Wanggar. But the constants are much the same. The following account, drawn from Ngolok-Wanggar material is adequately representative.

By singling out the economic threads in a bond between two natives one is apt to fray the main body of the bond so much in the process that, put together again, it wears a changed look. Such distortions are inseparable from the attempt to isolate for description the economics of native social life, where economics are only a part, and not the whole, but they distort no more than an account which undervalues the economic. Of all the socio-economic linkages which may be taken, that between men in the relation of kaka-nambin, (lambara) mother's brother - sister's son, perhaps most needs this approach and is most distorted by it.

These two, as I have shown, are also, or can also be son-in-law and father-in-law. The term lambara is coming

into use as a term which may mean both father-in-law and son-in-law; and according to the new systems of marriage, totemism, and subsection organization now spreading to the Daly river, it is used now to mark off from those of appropriate kinship status who could be but are not at the same time fathers-in-law and sons-in-law, from those who are.

The kaka, as Warner has pointed out in his exposition of Murngin kinship, is in such kinship systems always the man to whom an aborigine looks for a wife. Marriage with this man's daughter is preceded, accompanied, and followed by the making of a long series of gifts to him, both of food and other valuables. There are also return gifts by the father-in-law to the son-in-law. In each case, as I have pointed out earlier, these gifts are not so much the gifts of the individuals qua individuals, as gifts to and through them on behalf of themselves and their close kin.

Claims on lambara¹ are formally expressed among the Ngolok-Wanggar and Medugella in the conventional Kué feast. Though the emphasis is always on the claims upon lambara, this is really an elaborate reciprocal exchange of gifts primarily

1. This term lambara has a very wide currency in North Australia. It is understood by almost every tribe I have visited, though I believe it is a Victoria river term, probably of the Ngarinman language. It is in some cases on the Daly river superseding the local terms for son-in-law. The traditional Ngolok-Wanggar and Madugella term is nambin.

between the lambara and his wife's parents, but involving secondarily wider groups of relatives on both sides. I shall take up here only the economic aspects of this ceremony. The legal aspects and the social symbolisms which are also involved therein are dealt with elsewhere.¹

Kué is not expected to be made until a few years after marriage, preferably, it is said, when there are children of the marriage. Then the appropriateness of making kué is canvassed by a man's new in-laws. The initiative comes from the claimants - the wife's parents, but is not on this occasion pressed on their own behalf, but on behalf of lambara's second-order affinals, that is, the close kin of the wife's parents. The conventional arrangement is that the feast, for which only some kinds of foods are appropriate, should be prepared by lambara for these second-order relatives, followed by a second feast, and it may be by several successive feasts, on later occasions. Then the kué for the affinals of the first-order, the real paléet² relatives. These always mean a greater effort by lambara, for it is the convention that the close paléet relatives

1. A detailed account of the kué is given in my article in Oceania June 1934, Vol.IV, No.IV, pp.458-471.

2. op. cit. p.461.

should receive more than the distant affinals. From lambara's side the kué articles are always foodstuffs. Goose eggs, water lilies, yams, sugar-bag, are the most appropriate. The difficulty of securing enough of them may be great, so that the personal "costs" of the kué obligations may be very substantial and lambara needs (and receives) the assistance of his own and classificatory brothers. The quantities of food involved are also great, and to procure a sufficiency on five and six occasions is a laborious task, it is offset to some extent by the reciprocal kué, which is a gift of ninymer (not of food) made after the kué feast by the wife's relatives to her, from her to the husband, and through him to his relatives. In any case, the emphasis remains throughout upon lambara's contributions in kué. The curious three-sidedness of the results which the reciprocal kué produces is taken up elsewhere. Economically the importance of the transactions is difficult to calculate, according to the volume of the effects on income which it produces, but it does not wholly square with the social emphasis given them by the aborigines. Both foŋŋ and ninymer pass hands; they cannot be measured in terms of each other, and I know of no situation in aboriginal life where this is attempted or done.¹ But the

1. Kué is only one instance of the ceremonial separation of food from ninymer. Their emphatic separation in this transaction resembles that which occurs in other ceremonies.

economic consequences of the transfer of ninymer probably outweigh those of the food transfer. The food is drawn from natural sources, from stocks which replenish themselves. The ninymer has to be collected from other persons, for two reasons, (i) the quantities involved are greater than those any individual is likely to possess and (ii) the marriage is more than, or as much, a contract between groups, as between individuals. The economic effects of this rounding-up of valuable property are substantial. It usually exhausts what small family stocks the natives possess; it often forces them into debt in order to procure their contribution. But we should note that it is one of the conventional and most appropriate methods of using ninymer and that it sets in train a number of economic movements, keeping the economy in the continual flow and its valuables in circulation.

While considering the kué it is interesting to note Elkin's suggestion¹ that bilateral cross-cousin marriage

1. Elkin's hypothesis seems to be strengthened for this area by the fact, as he points out, that "as a whole" a man completely avoids, or observes restricted intercourse with, his wife's mother's brother - an impossible position if marriage with father's sister's daughter were allowed, for then wife's mother's brother would be a man's own father. But it raises some difficulties if we seek to apply it to other areas. They also observe restricted intercourse with their sisters, and their wife's brothers, sometimes almost to the point of avoidance. Are we to put this forward as a reason why men and women frequently marry into another horde? But situations of constraint upon social intercourse between individuals are also common for other reasons than affinal relationship. Bans of silence, ritual avoidances and restraints, formal canons of etiquettes, are continually

(Continued on next page)

has been superseded by ⁴³unilateral cross-cousin marriage, in some of the Kimberley tribes of West Australia (father's sister's daughters becoming ineligible) because of "a strong desire to maintain the solidarity of the father's (that is, one's own) local horde". This authority attributes to these natives "a desire to be as free of each member of that horde, including his own father's sister, as he is of his father" and points out that if a man makes this woman his wife's mother he may no longer see or have any social intercourse with her. So that, given the taboo on the wife's mother (universal in Australia) and the associated (but much more restricted) taboo on her brother, Elkin says that "we can understand the growing aversion to marriage with the father's sister's daughter".

He does not offer any information upon the comparative economic concomitants of these marriages¹, though they appear to give a certain buttress to his argument.

(Continued from previous page)
encountered by at least some members of the horde. It is, perhaps, doubtful whether in Australia a native is ever (or can ever be) "as free of all members of his horde as he is of his father."

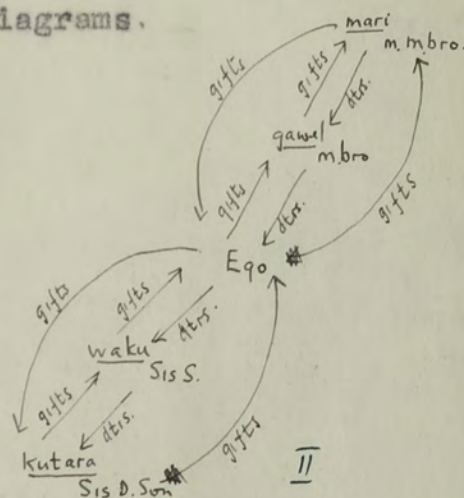
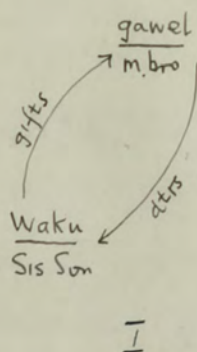
1. It is also to be mentioned that Elkin does not allow in his argument for the effects of the locality of residence in marriage. Patrlocal marriage under the conditions given would remove the father's sister from the father's horde and so remove some of the difficulties of being "free" of the members of that horde.

It is customary in all aboriginal tribes known to me (and probably is true also of the Kimberlies) for the resources involved in marriage gifts or "payments" on the part of the bridegroom and his blood kin to be collected from those upon whom they have economic claims. Most of these tend to be in their own group. Such a conscription of resources under ordinary circumstances affects almost everyone in a local group. Such gifts are an important correlate of marriage; the obligations they express are often of long duration; they are a serious ~~xxx~~ economic drain; where the network of relationships is sufficiently involved, and the resources low on any particular occasion, the situation might well arise in which people were indirectly called upon to contribute to an economic levy nominally for their own benefit. On the Daly river, for example, the ninymer used in the reciprocal kué described on page of this chapter is always collected from a different direction than that from which the recipients come. The intention is to avoid just the situation I have described above. There are then, it would seem, potent economic reasons why it is an advantage to marry a woman from a distant horder. I do not put them forward as a causal explanation, but clearly they must be of importance in consolidating such a convention. I cannot say, however, that I have ever heard them given by

any aborigines as an explanation of why extra-horde marriages are favoured. But they must be taken substantially into account in any explanation which is not to be superficial.

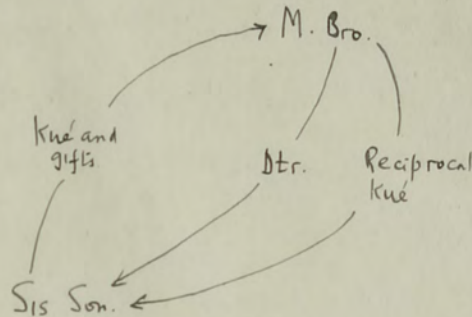
Warner has expressed diagrammatically for the Murngin the structural nature of these relationships. The term structure is here used to denote the permanent relationships, of whatever nature they may be, between kaka and nambin, expressed in social actions such as bride-giving and gift-giving.

Warner's diagrams.



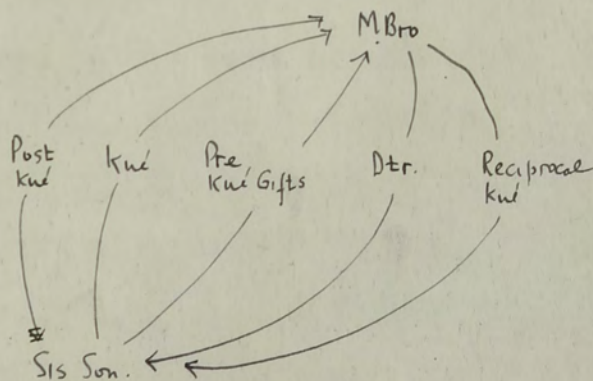
These do not, however, sufficiently bring out the complexity of the comparable relations among the Daly tribes. We need here to represent at least three "elements" - the gift of a bride by kaka to nambin, the kue gifts by nambin to kaka, and the reciprocal kue gifts by kaka to nambin.

This apparently creates a three-sided rather than a simple two-sided relation:



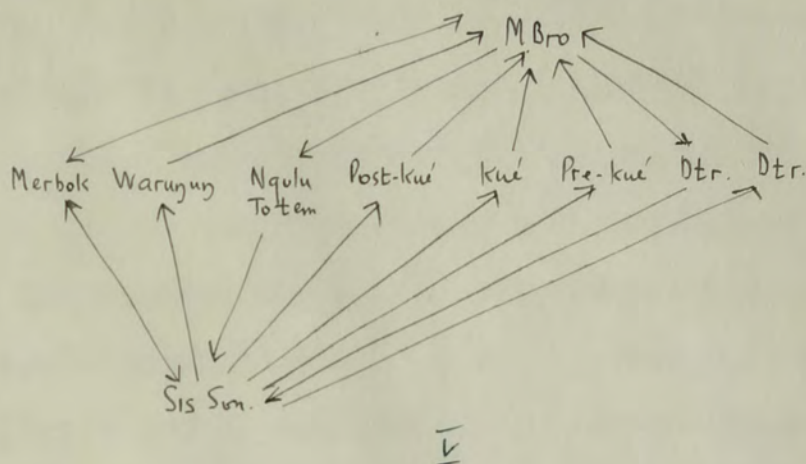
III

But nambin actually makes gifts, not termed kué like those immediately following the marriage, and, moreover, of ninymer and not of food, both before and after he gives the kué feasts. The diagram perhaps should be:



IV

But there are also other important relationships between mother's brother and sister's son in, say, the case of the Mangiomeri, which can be roughly represented:



The full economic import of this link is not, therefore, easily estimated. It is certainly too complex to express suitably in a diagram of two elements - daughter and gifts.

The economic consequences of merbok (between mother's brother and sister's son) are outlined in the chapter on exchange. The warungun gifts will next be described, but it may be mentioned here that they involve the wife's father as much as her brother to whom they are, perhaps, nominally directed. The inheritance of the Dalu totem from the mother's brother is now coming into vogue among some of the Daly natives; as yet it is only potentially of great economic significance, but there is not much doubt that it, when well integrated, assumes greater importance. The various other

gifts have already been enumerated. The explanation of the second "daughter" in the diagram is to be found in the new systems of marriage, totemism, and subsections which are spreading to the Daly river. Marriage with a daughter of the sister's son is conventionally associated with these sub-sections. The position which arises is that two men, standing in the relation of mother's brother and sister's son, can by the conventions of the new sub-section system exchange daughters with each other. A man X, who gives a daughter to his sister's son Y, can receive in return Y's daughter by another wife (not the daughter's daughter of X). What would be the full economics of a mother's brother - sister's son relationship involving, over a long period, all these relationships, it is beyond my competence to say. No one has yet made the attempt, on actual instances, to work them out.

There are several other interesting aspects of the relationship which the diagrams bring out, but which cannot be entered into here. We might, for instance, examine what the full sequence of relationships implies for the notion of reciprocity in tribal life. The characteristic use of this concept is often tinged with the suggestion that it means also equivalence. Here, however, we have a situation in

which the balance appears to tip one way. We might also estimate the economic outcome over a slightly longer period, two generations instead of one, taking not only the mother's brother - sister's son relation, but the intimate complex in which they really inhere in tribal life, where some such situation as the following is likely to arise:

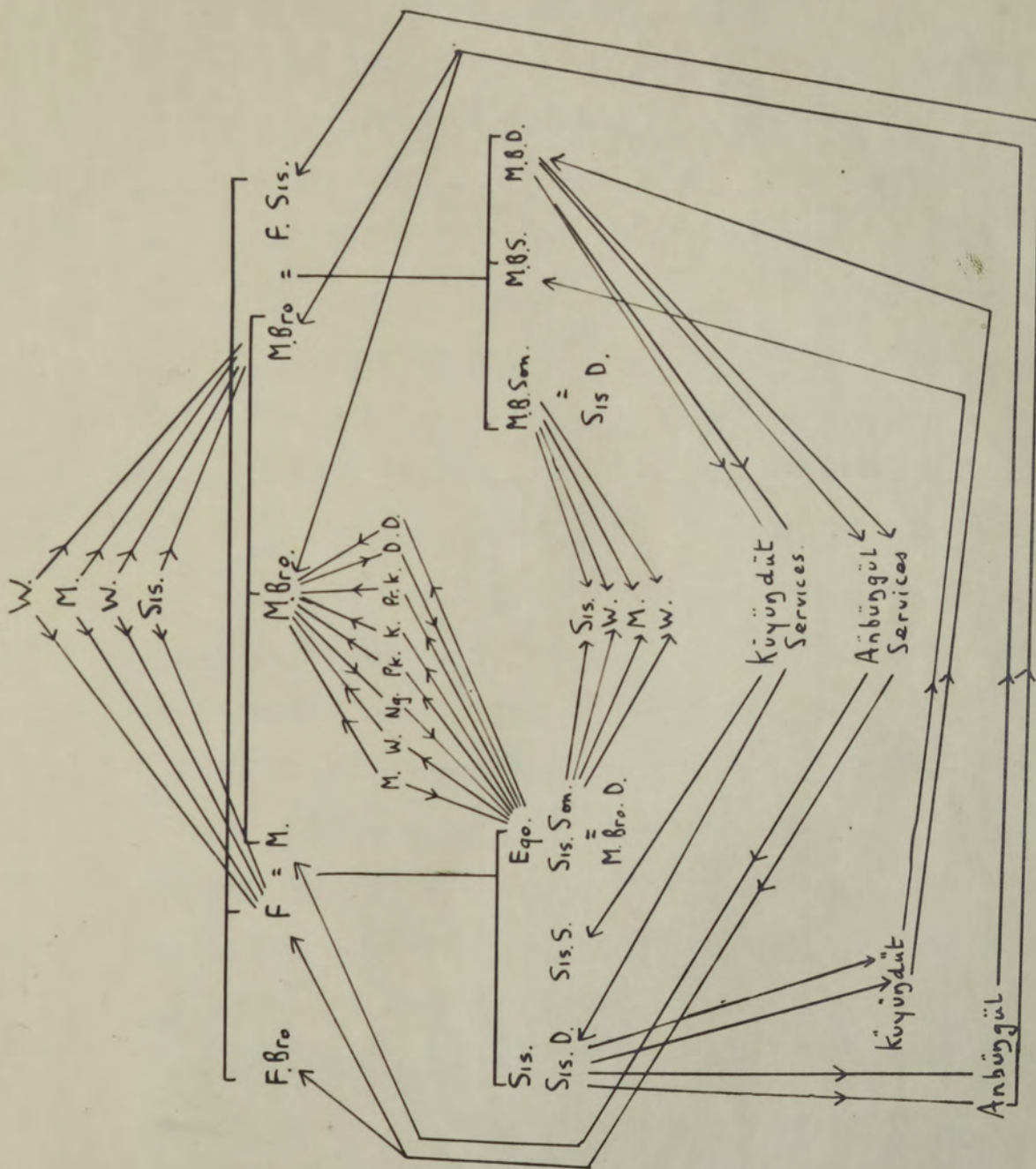


DIAGRAM III

It is, thus, possible to approach a descriptive statement of the kaka-nambin relationship by singling out for emphasis the daughter - gifts aspects, but this is at once seen merely to abstract from the full social body of a much wider and deeper set of relationships a few superficially visible physical transactions, as it were, which express in part only the quality of those relationships. It has, of course, other expressions, apart from those diagrammed. There are rules of etiquette to be observed between them: a nambin who smoked his kaka's pipe would be committing a breach of good manners; one who spoke to him roughly, who approached him with physical familiarity, who did not obey his suggestions as to conduct, who did not send him good portions of the meat brought to camp, would be breaking strands as important in their way as any of those brought more obtrusively into the light by the embodied transactions. One who approached a ^{Nq}Jagun (that is, a wife's brother) without violently expressing the breath between the lips so that it made a curious sound, would also be guilty of a breach of formality. The difficulty in adequate description of all these relationships, some embodied, some little more than canons of conduct, some negotiable in goods, as it were, others in a variety of services, is to find a conceptual medium in which they may all be expressed.

Perhaps we come nearest to doing this by estimating all these relationships, as I am attempting to do, as sources of real income.

We may say that these five kinds of claims upon affinals are, from the viewpoint of the claimant, rights to the goods and services of certain people, rights derived from the link with them by marriage. They are important constituents of the real income of those claimants. The claims of anbüngül, for instance, are claims upon the economic services of a woman by her husband's siblings, and the claims of küyükdüt are claims on her services by her husband's super-ordinate relatives. The quality of the services is in both cases much the same - camp chores, building wind-breaks, drawing water, fetching firesticks and firewood, clearing sleeping places etc. Such domestic services are no small part of daily welfare. They conserve valuable means - time, effort, attention. Performed under duty by someone else, they take much off the edge of the discomfort of native life, on the bare earth, where there are few helps to economy of effort, and even the protections against all the winds that blow need to be piled afresh, or renovated every day.

The reciprocal claims of lambara and kaka can perhaps be expressed also in such terms. They are greatly more important than the küyükdüt and anbüngül. From the view-

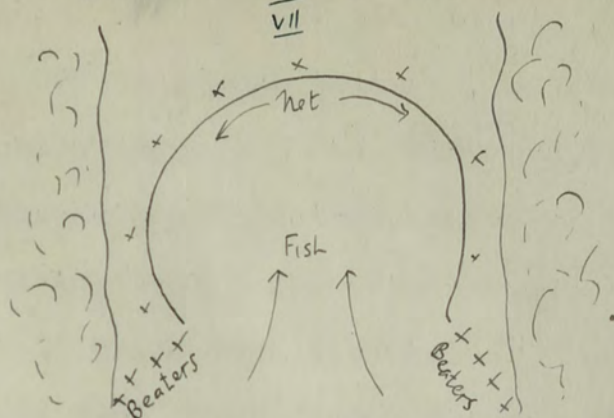
point of a father-in-law the stream of gifts and food which come from a son-in-law over the course of a lifetime are, outside his own productive efforts and gain from merbok, a part of his income which he can ill afford to lose. In grossly irregular marriages of the types which are now common there are frequently none, or few, of these economic acknowledgments between sons-in-law and fathers-in-law. This is not only an obvious material impoverishment, but a loss of status as well. As I have pointed out before some of the constituents of income have a greater premial quality than others. Real income won from direct effort in a productive task is valuable enough; and on a man's competence therein rests much of his reputation; but articles sent from a distant exchange partner, gifts regularly made and services regularly rendered by a son-in-law whose own repute is high, bring with them more than their material utility. So, too, does the stream of gifts and less obtrusive services which make up the warunun relationship between a man and (primarily) his wife's brothers. This too imposes a continual demand upon a native's productivity. The warunun relation is taken seriously. The formality between brothers-in-law is always of some severity. Among the Daly tribes certain differences

exist; for example, among the Moil and Nangiomeri tribes the outward formalisms observed towards a wife's brother can hardly escape the observer's attention. Two men in this relation meet perhaps at a hunting party; they both expel the breath between the lips in a peculiar way, at the same time saying naguny, naguny, naguny! a number of times in quick succession, and at the same time uttering some such nonsense phrase as "I have been eating sugar-bag". They can give no clear explanation of the custom, except that if they did not do it they would, from what they say, feel ashamed of themselves, guilty of a breach of manners. The custom loses much of its strangeness when put within the complex of other conventional mannerisms observed between them: personal names are taboo; if they have exchanged sisters and domestic quarrels and violence arise, the other man does not interfere between husband and wife, even though his sister is beaten; they support each other in fights with other men; they do not use abusive language in the hearing of each other; they talk quietly when they meet. On the positive side their duties and privileges are equally clear. "You do not get a man's sister for nothing". This is a committal to make gifts to the brother-in-law over a long period, until long after maturity. These are the things to which the term warunun is applied - gifts of food, narcotics, manufactured articles. Where sister-exchange takes place the warunun becomes

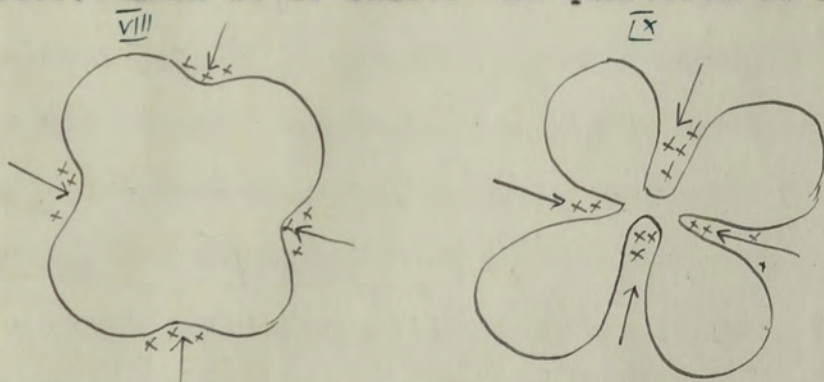
indistinguishable from a gift-exchange. The relation is further complicated, from one point of view, and from another point of view made even more intimate, by the fact that men in such a relation are very often also trading partners. Undoubtedly these close associations are one of the forces which help to bring real incomes to a general equivalence. An accretion to any one income ramifies quickly and widely, and is helped so to do by the conventions which make the personal accumulation and hoarding of property in great excess of the level of one's fellows an effective way of losing the traditional rewards which stand highest in aboriginal valuation.

One special occasion on which the warunun obligation becomes important is in the communal fishing parties known as delig. This is a method of sweeping by joint labour for fish in the shallower billabongs. Komani, Karer, Bangar on the southern bank and Wuliana on the norther bank have been traditionally fished in this way. Most of the others are too deep and too infested with crocodiles. Four local groups by agreement send a contingent to the chosen billabong, each with a length of net, (usually made up of smaller nets joined together) perhaps from 25 to 35 feet long. The

lengths are then joined together and the fishing proceeds thus:



By splashing, beating the water, and shouting the fish are driven down a long length of the billabong and into the net, which is stretched across one of the narrower reaches of the water. Then it is closed and quartered as follows:



The haul is then divided among the workers, the fish in one division of the net going to each group participating. It is the convention of this undertaking that each man who has a warunun has to share equally with him the portion he receives of the product. In such gifts a man's wife commonly acts as the intermediary between him and the warunun.

With this general setting given, the economic relations of spouses may now be considered. Their mutual and complementary dependence has been established; women in the main are the producers of mi food, men in the main of awo food. They each have in these respects a claim upon the other for part of their real income. Divorces of marriages occur (at least, from the side of the man) for sustained disregard of these obligations towards the spouse. Domestic quarrels and grievances for the same reason are very common. I have heard innumerable complaints by husbands about their wives' laziness; this sort of ill-humoured grumbling is, in fact, almost one of the stock lines of sex-criticism, and is to be rated on much the level of native men's statements that women are trouble-makers, incessant chatterers, and sexually insatiable, and of women's statements that men try to make night assaults upon them, gossip about them, "humbug" them, are evil-tempered and are stingy with their possessions. But the anger of men at the scarcity of vegetable food or small animals brought in by women, or at the suspected "picking" at the proceeds of the day's hunt before return, is one of the most frequent camp disturbances. The contributions which one naqul makes to the other's receipts or possessions of durable commodities are not so readily estimated. There is no primary obligation to procure such articles for the other as part of the daily economic round; the conditions of

production make that out of the question. The raw materials which men use are for the most part obtained by themselves directly from primary sources in their local territories or near afield, or in trade. The men themselves obtain and masticate the inner fibres of the bark of some creepers and pass it over to the women to be rolled to fibre, but I have recorded nothing of this sort from the women's side. But although, with the exception of food, there is little direct contribution of the other material constituents of real income from one spouse to the other, their fortunes in ninymer do come to be bound up one with the other, and from this point of view they contribute to the other's receipts and possessions. The woman acts as intermediary recipient of the reciprocal kué gifts intended for her husband after the marriage; she also receives and passes on to him the periodic warunun gifts received from her brother. She may have one or more exchange partners independently of her husband, and receive from them articles which are later passed on to her husband in the usual merbok way. If one has no other partners except those in the one sequence in which she and her husband are joint participants she still shares with her husband the articles received in this exchange. This situation also leads to quarrels, some of which came directly to my notice. The disputed possession

of a piece of cloth which both husband and wife wanted to wear in one case led to a very brutal assault by the husband, who knocked the woman down and kicked her viciously. Both claimed it was their turn to have it. The length of retention of such articles of equal utility to both sexes is a common source of trouble.

The emphasis in husband-wife economic relationship is evidently upon food and direct and indirect economic services. Most of the services were dealt with in the chapter outlining the sex division of economic tasks - cooking, care of the camp, drawing water, carrying the children and camp chattels between camps.

Indirectly, the sex services of a man's wife can be of economic benefit to him. The custom of madarma enables him to give a number of men sexual access to her in return for gifts of ninymer. This is done mostly by older men with their younger women. Several reasons are advanced for it, one that it was to prevent her going off on a disastrous lok kanawork elopement which would lead to endless trouble; one that it is to quieten restless and sexually insatiable women; one that it is to punish the women; another that men are frightened if they do not madarma of losing their wives to more potent and younger men; another that they are frightened of trouble with the men if they do not. In each case, however, the economic effects are the same. A man's

stocks of ninymer are increased substantially. Among the men there is no aesthetic or moral obligation to the practice; they say the women are willing, though this is doubtful.

(vi) The other derived claims mentioned in (vi), (vii), (viii) and (ix) may be dismissed briefly. The volumes of articles they normally represent are not great.

Groups (vi) and (vii), - i.e. claims based on age status and on ritual status or relationship - can be called "claims" only in an indirect sense, for they commonly are expressed more as prohibitions against certain individuals and groups than as rights belonging to others. Yet they come in fact to be considered as rights in the adult period of life.

Universally in Australia a high correlation has been noted between age and social status, between age and social privilege, age and authority, age and ritual leadership. The economic consequences of these correlations have been less surely noted. Their general effect is to produce an age-inequality, or to accentuate an age-inequality, in the control and use of certain tribal resources, that is, favourably to affect certain incomes by discriminating against others.

The age progression of each person, male and female, is marked by a number of arbitrary named stages. Some, of these stages are denoted by status terms, the reference of

which is to initiation into formal membership of a ritual grade or "class". The term class is not altogether a happy term to use in this connection, because of its explicit economic implications; yet there is a subdued economic tinge to the successive ritual grades. Those age-progression terms not formally linked with status refer mostly to the bodily changes which mark the process of the physiological cycle of life. There are special descriptive terms for a newly born child, for a child beginning to crawl, one for when it can walk, and then follow a series of somewhat arbitrary stages. It is these which also become status terms - a boy becomes dzaban at the age of 8 or 9, when he passes through the first initiatory stage; dingori at 12 or 14, at puberty, when the major initiation of youths take place; in early manhood he become y^unuana, the time when he first sees the bullroarers and tjuringa.

When age progression is thus formally integrated with status by ceremonials, special names and so on, these stages are marked by (i) exchanges of commodities, (ii) ritual prohibitions upon eating certain foods followed by greater access to them, (iii) partial or complete withdrawals from free participation in economic life. Such changes come as a series of direct interventions in the life of a growing individual, submitting him to disciplines; limiting for a period his or her freedom of action (including economic

action); making him the point, or his development the occasion, of transfer for a substantial stock of commodities; compulsorily involving a number of other people in economic transactions on his account. For instance, a boy has no option of choice about any of the initiations. He is taken, even if it is against his will (there have been cases of boys who ran away rather than face the ordeal of initiation). He is forbidden to touch water except for drinking; to talk to women; to eat any but a narrow range of foods; to touch men's property. He has to stay quiet; to conduct himself moderately. His relations are involved in a virtual conscription of their ninymer to equip him for ending the warbaitj silence; the men of the tribe which takes him away to mamakaloan are compulsorily obliged to conscript ninymer from their own resources.

Now, it is difficult to estimate the effects on income of these transactions. They are sporadic, though "regular" in the sense that they recur frequently, and tend to take place every year during the ritual season. Men of mamakaloan (those who take an initiate away) have a clear claim upon mununuk (the group of the initiate, and vice versa) but the quantities of ninymer which pass over are not, apparently, very great. Perhaps a dozen hairbelts, several dozen spears, three or four boomerangs, several lengths of cloth, are characteristic. On both sides these articles are collected from close kin of the chief participants - on the mununuk side the boy initiate;

on the mamakaloan side the group of men (classificatory cross-cousins, i.e. wife's brothers of the initiate) who take him away. The ninymer received in exchange are redistributed among those contributors. At the senior initiation the elders who initiate the young men into tribal mysteries receive corresponding payments (palwa) from and on behalf of these young men. On the whole the volume of these transactions is small, and their redistributive effects comparatively unimportant. But as claims and privileges, dependent on age and ritual status, they are important, and they will not lightly be foregone by those who exercise them. The food taboos on young men reserve for the elders not only all of these foods on some occasions, but priority of access to those foods on nearly all occasions; though the ritual "value" of those foods gives the privilege (in native eyes) an importance which makes the quantitative aspects not the real test.

(ix) To conclude this exposition, claims based on personal services of a non-specialist and a specialist type include the love-services of a woman, the magico-medical services of a wanangal magician, and the services of one of the economic "specialists" referred to on pp. It is customary for a gift (food, tobacco, or some other desirable object) to be made for all these.

CHAPTER VII.

EXCHANGE.

CHAPTER VII.

EXCHANGE.

Throughout the entire Daly-Fitzmaurice-Victoria river region there exists a system of exchange between tribes. It is the source of commodities to which the aborigines attach the greatest importance. The entire aboriginal economy offers no objects more in demand than those which enter into this exchange.

It is called by different names - merbok among the Ngolok-Wanggar and Madngella, wan-ni by the Marithiel, purpurk by the Nangimeri, kulu by the Mariwuda..

I have given a brief outline of this institution in a paper published in 1933. Here the account is amplified and one or two points corrected.

The merbok is probably representative of a type of exchange which seems to have been widely established in Australia.

To be seen in a full light the merbok needs to be placed against the background of all the other occasions on which goods are passed from person to person, and from group to group, among the Daly tribes.

The gift-exchange is one highly developed custom in

this area, as indeed it is recorded to be among many Australian tribes. On the Daly there are cross-gifts of goods at the several initiation stages, at the menstruation of girls, and at marriages; at camp festivities; at the end of periods of silence between brothers and sisters, and the longer silences between namesakes. There are also one-sided transfers of food or goods between medicine-man and patients, between lovers, between men who lend (the pidgin phrase is "sell") their wives for sexual purposes; between a man who acquires from another (usually a cross-cousin or a mother's brother) the right to wear his totem-mark at rituals and that person; between visitors to a secret ritual and the ritual headmen; between a man and the brother and close relatives of his wife. Each of these instances is described elsewhere in this essay. What I desire to emphasize here is the width of the net which gift-giving throws over tribal life. With gifts so frequently made, sometimes in circumstances difficult to separate from those in which merbok itself takes place, the kind of transaction which we set aside as "exchange" or "trading" must not be thought of as set over, in a hard materialist way, against the goodwill, or the friendship, or the renewal of intimate social contacts, the recognition of service performed or obligation accepted or fulfilled, represented by the "pure" gift exchanges. In tribal reality it is not.

The setting in which the merbok takes place illustrates why it may not be set down as mere bartering. Thus, a man may merbok with his warunun, that is, with the man whose sister he has married, and to whom he is obliged by affinal convention to send periodic gifts. It is often extremely difficult to know when warunun tribute stops and merbok begins. Then, again, merbok transactions go on at mamurn and initiation ceremonies, at both of which there are handings over of gifts, not as trade, but as goodwill gifts, between the parties to the merbok transactions. Since partners are so commonly friends, there is need of goodwill between them also, there is need of constant recognition of the bond which links them. All that the gift-exchanges do the merbok does also. What marks it off is that in such transactions there are men each of whom wants the goods of the other, who are prepared to exchange them under conventional ratio, and who have an eye on this occasion more, or as much, for utility as for goodwill.

TRADING IN OTHER AREAS.

The works of Spencer, Spencer and Gillen, W.E. Roth, Horne and Aiston, Curr, Howitt, Mrs. Parker, and others make brief references to systems of "trade" or "barter" in areas as widely separated as East Australia, South Australia, the north of South Australia, central and north-eastern and

western Queensland, and West Australia. There is a strong probability that they are of the merbok type. I myself have collected direct evidence of trade routes, apparently of this type, traversing immense areas into central Australia from the north and north-west coasts. Miss Kaberry reports a trading system almost identical with merbok in North-West Australia. Map IV shows the location of the places from which these systems have been reported.

(1)
Spencer and Gillen point out how pitcheri is "traded far and wide" in Australia. The leaves are gathered by the natives and are packed tightly into bags made of woven fur string. "These bags are traded for many hundred miles, right away north into the central parts of Queensland and New South Wales, shields, carved boomerangs, spears and other articles being received in return for them. Whatever may be the faults of the Australian aborigine he is perfectly honest and trustworthy in regard to matters of trading. A native will hand over his bag of Pitcheri to another man who acts as intermediary, with the most perfect confidence that, sooner or later, he will receive its full worth in kind."

(2)
Marett records that "we hear of more than one Australian tribe that used to send expeditions to raid the

(1) Spencer & Gillen "Across Australia," p.106.

(2) R.R. Marett, "Head, Heart & Hands in Human Evolution, p.178.

land of the stranger when they needed red ochre with which to paint their bodies, or the leaves of a certain bush called "pitcheri" that were chewed for their narcotic properties. A regular war-party was organized, and it would fight its way through hostile country for a distance of two or three hundred miles, returning home with marvellous tales of adventure among monstrous peoples who grew toes on their heels. Only picked men could join the muster. They must carefully arm and paint themselves for the part, they must never halt too long by the way, or fail to set a watch at night; in a word it was a sheer act of invasion, on a par with those forays across the border that occurred in the good old days when Scots and English perpetually coveted each other's cattle."

It is interesting to note the method of acquiring a barter-partner or "agent" recorded by Marett. "A child's umbilical cord is preserved and tied up in the middle of a bunch of feathers, being then known as a "Kalduke." Two fathers of different groups exchange these objects, thus causing their sons to become ^{ngia} ^{ngiambe} "rigia-rigiambe," that is, taboo to one another. When they have grown up, these individuals become the agents through whom all tribal barter is carried out. The only trouble is that they are barred by the very sacredness of the tie between them from even speaking together; so that their dealings can only be conducted through third parties."

Warner writes: "The Australian aborigine is a most industrious trader. Articles of trade are passed over well-known routes for hundreds of miles and through many tribes. The Murngin and their neighbours are no exceptions to this rule. The Ritarngo and the Djinba trade stone spear-heads to the sea coast for red ochre and pipe clay, or for wooden spears. Ranga string is exchanged between them, as well as many other articles. The waku-gawel (mother's brother-sister's child) reciprocal is utilized for this trading. All men try to have as many distant waku as they can. Presents are constantly being exchanged between the two, not to acquire material wealth so as to extend a man's sphere of influence beyond the nearby clans. It pleases a Murngin to have a present sent from a distant people and adds greatly to his social prestige. It also gives him a feeling of safety when travelling to know that he has a waku or gawel with whom he has this trading relationship. Waku and gawel often visit each other and their behaviour demonstrates real friendship when they meet."⁽¹⁾

Curr records of the Dieri tribe that "their whole life is spent in bartering; they rarely retain any article for long. The articles received by them in exchange one day are bartered away the next, whether at a profit or a loss. Should any one of them, more shrewd than another, profit on one

⁽¹⁾ W.L. Warner, "Morphology & Functions of Murngin Kinship," American Anthropologist, April 1930, p.244.

occasion by this traffic, he is sure immediately after to sacrifice his advantage, and the majority of their quarrels are caused by bartering or refusing to barter."⁽¹⁾

Of the East Australians in general he says" it is common for one tribe to exchange with another articles which their country produces in excess, for commodities which are not found in it. Thus, a tribe which is in possession of stone fitted for the manufacture of tomahawks often exchanges this product for red ochre, pieces of grass tree suitable for making fire by friction, gum, or pitcheri. In some cases expeditions for the purpose of barter extend to the distance of a couple of hundred miles. In consequence of this custom, all sorts of objects have been met with in blacks' camps by explorers ~~are~~ at places very remote from where they are commonly found. For instance iron tomahawks and iron which had belonged to have been found in the interior several hundred miles from the sea coast or the nearest settlement of white people. It is probable that the meetings of the tribes for the purpose of barter had something to do with the dissemination of smallpox after its introduction at Sydney; and certainly with the spread of syphilis. But though a few tribes have a passion for barter, and the practice is known to exist in many, the amount of business done is not great; and in many cases communication

⁽¹⁾ Curr "The Australian Race," Vol. 11, pp. 47, 71, Vol. 1, pp. 77, 78, 79.

is almost entirely cut off by waterless wastes and other natural obstacles. Between tribes actually engaged in barter, peace, of course, prevails for the time; but it is no guarantee against sorcery, nor, as soon as business is concluded, against those murderous night attacks by which native warfare is carried on."

(1)
Mrs. Langloh Parker mentions in her account of the Euahlayi tribe of north-west N.S.W. that dark greenstone tomahawks, which could not be made in the district, were bartered to them. Flat light shields were also sent from Queensland, and grass-tree gum from the Narrabri mountains. Gidya boomerangs were given in exchange.

According to Spencer, barter and mourning ceremonies are closely related among the Kakadu of North Australia. "In some curious way this ceremony has become associated with a system of barter. What is the connection between the two it is difficult to understand, and of course the natives have no idea of it. Each man then states what he wishes to secure in return for his weapons. Nothing more is done that day, but, next morning, messengers start off carrying the spears to a distant camp; the Kakadu people send theirs to the Umoreu people, for example. If there should happen to be any men from this distant camp visiting the Kakadu, they will carry the spears back with them to their own country,

(1) Mrs. K. Langloh Parker "The Euahlayi Tribe," p. 124.

but, otherwise, special messengers will be sent. Arrived in the strange camp, where the meaning of their coming is well understood, the spears are placed on the ground in bundles, each one containing those belonging to one individual, and the visitors are asked what they want in exchange for them. There appears to be a regular, well-recognised, tariff, and, if the bartering takes place, the goods that are being exchanged for the spears are placed opposite to their respective bundles. When the business is over the men gather the different articles together, return to the home camp, and distribute what they have brought back amongst the owners of the spears. In due time many of the articles will again be bartered for spears. It is by means of this system that the natives in one part of the country, who are especially skilled in the making of one implement, such as spears, receive others that they, perhaps, do not make themselves, owing, it may be, to lack of suitable material."⁽¹⁾

⁽²⁾
Howitt mentions ".... an extensive system of intertribal communication and barter, which was apparently carried on by men who were the recognized means of communication. But there are also established trade centres at which the tribes meet on certain occasions for a regular barter. One of these old trade centres is Kopperamana on the Cooper, where

⁽¹⁾ Spencer, "Native Tribes of the Northern Territory of Australia, p. 247.

⁽²⁾ Howitt, "Native Tribes of South East Australia," p.714. See also pp. 119, 305 et seq.

the surrounding tribes met periodically to confer and barter their respective manufactures."

Thurnwald records that among the aborigines "the national festivals formed a special occasion for the organization of exchange transactions. There were also trading expeditions for which the Australian hunters owing to their nomadic mode of life, had a special predilection."⁽¹⁾ The "festivals" were those "connected with the celebration of maturity," and were "accompanied by exchange of presents. The visitors bring with them the hand-made products in which they specialize, and raw materials, the latter often in large quantities. The proceedings begin by making presents to the chief who is acting as host and to old personal friends with whom business relations have been established. Thus, on these occasions, there is developed a real process of marketing between two or more groups, the wares being exchanged either singly or collectively for foreign products intended either for personal use or to be traded to a third party.

"The women also take part in this business," says Thurnwald, (reproducing Howitt). "They trade bags, baskets, nets, and digging sticks, while the men as a rule deal chiefly in weapons, tools and ornaments. This market trading is especially developed in the South-Eastern Territories and North-West Queensland. Such markets are held in the South-

⁽¹⁾ Thurnwald, op.cit. p.142, 160.

East Territories and are quite distinct from ordinary neighbourly meetings. The trade messenger is inviolable. In certain places markets are held from time to time, as, for instance in Kopperanama (sic) on Cooper's Creek. In Queensland, markets are often held on the initiative of individual chiefs, agreements being come to through messengers as to the kind of market, the time, and the class of goods; but it also happens that individuals take to the road in order to do business either on their own account or for others (a sort of pedlary). "These trade relations and markets naturally further the exchange not only of material objects, but also of idioms, songs, and dances as well as of ideas, customs, and domestic arrangements."

Horne and Aiston claim some authority for their reports that message sticks were sent by other tribes to the tribe which owned the Beltana deposits of red ochre, and presents were given to this tribe for permission to mine for the deposits. (P.34). Again, "the Dieri annually send an expedition of able-bodied men to the pitcheri country on the Herbert river, Queensland, about 250 miles away. The party has to pass through land of several hostile tribes and must fight its way." (p.76). There were formerly definite trading-routes between water-holes, and if traders kept to those paths they were not molested. (p.20).

From Victoria it is reported (Brough Smyth, op.cit. p.359) that there are to be seen "quarries where in former times the

natives broke out the trappean rocks for their hatchets," and "natives from far distant parts were deputed to visit these quarries, and carry away stone for implements. When one or two natives were selected by a distant tribe to make a journey for the purpose of procuring diorite or basalt from such quarries, they carried with them credentials, showing exactly their object. If they faithfully pursued their object, and tarried no longer in any place than was necessary, they appear to have been allowed to proceed without molestation, and to have been treated as guests - not always as welcome guests, but with such protection as the host gives to those that, perhaps unwillingly, he entertains. If, however, they interfered in the quarries of any tribe, violated any custom, or seemed not really anxious to hasten the journey, they were treated as enemies, and sometimes pursued and killed."

E.R. Gribble records a "trade route along the coast of north-eastern Queensland where canoes would come from the tribes in the Port Douglas district, bringing hardwood spears, and take back the cane baskets made by the Goonganjie people inhabiting Cape Grafton." He says that the last of these canoes came in 1894. Two young men and two women were on board with a large cargo of spears. After a great feast in their honour a large cargo of cane baskets was taken back. Betrothals were often arranged on these visits.

The writer also refers to a constant stream of visitors from distant tribes coming to the mission settlement at

Forrest river. They exchanged spinifex resin or the white powder from burnt gypsum for tobacco. The site of the Yarrabah Mission was the terminus of the trade route from the North, and the neighbouring tribes congregated there to meet the trading canoes.⁽¹⁾

Elkin gives a valuable account of an exchange of goods in his article upon the Kopara of the Lakes tribes of South Australia.⁽²⁾ The function of the custom is "to maintain what may be called the balance of exchange between various groups and thereby to preserve friendship and social cohesion. The exchange may refer to gifts, women, lives, injuries, or initiation rites." The exchange of gifts, he says, "is not a business transaction - not a mere bartering - but a means of expressing and cementing friendship. My own experience is that the exchange of goods is seldom, if ever, a mere business transaction, but rather is either symbolical, as in the settlement of a Kopara, or is a method of fulfilling mutual obligations between relations, own and legal." The balance is maintained between hordes, clans, and moities of the one tribe, and perhaps also between tribes, since the Kopara is practiced among the tribes from the north-east corner of South Australia south-west to Eyre's Peninsula.

(1) E.R. Gribble. "The Problem of the Australian Aboriginal."

(2) A.P. Elkin, "The Kopara. The Settlement of Grievances." Vol.II, No. 2., Dec. 1931, 191-198.

There are several points about Dr. Elkin's account which are of unusual interest. We should like to know what is the relation between the Kopara and the inter-tribal trading or barter which is reported from this area. (1) It is significant that one of the ways of "acquiring" a Kopara against another person and his group is by taking "gifts" without returning "reciprocal gifts." It seems highly probable, in view of the homogeneity of Australian tribes, that the gifts may be the articles passing between exchange partners. Elkin's perhaps over-compact description is certainly strongly suggestive of this probability; he says, for instance, that "a man who receives a gift of articles from another person is Kopara, in debt, as it were, to the latter, until he reciprocates the gift. If this be not done the creditor gathers a party and seeks out his debtor." This might equally well be written about the merbok exchange of North Australia.

There is perhaps a slight misunderstanding in Elkin's use of the term barter. As far as I am aware no exchange of goods in Australia is ever "mere" barter. Almost all the recorded instances of exchange stress the associated conventions which remove the transaction from the level of unalloyed materialism. The cross-gifts of useful and valued articles

do "express and cement friendship," for quite commonly exchange partners appear to be friends, often close relatives. As I pointed out earlier, in the case of the merbok, it is sometimes very difficult to detect, when partners are also, say, brothers-in-law bound also by other economic ties, the merbok relationship leaves off and the "mutual obligations between relations," of which Elkin speaks, begins.

Roth has some extremely interesting and sagacious comments to offer upon the systems of trade which he directly observed among the central-north-west Queensland aborigines, on which I can supply corroboration.

I was not familiar with his published statements when I made my inquiries, but except for one or two points I am almost wholly in agreement with his comments made so long ago. The main difference of the merbok and what he tells of the Queensland systems seems to be that, so far as I have been able to discover, there is not in North Australia any comparable development of trading expeditions as such. Trading in North Australia seems to be largely ancillary to other contacts, which are chiefly ritual in ostensible motive and emphasis.

The objects listed in Roth's trading accounts closely resemble those which I set out later in this description. He mentions a series of inter-tribal exchanges of:

1. blankets, pituri, human hair-belts, "bilbi"-tails, for shields, stone-knives, opossum-twine, human-hair twine, and hand-spears.

- ii. pituri, spears, opossum-twine, and boomerangs, for stone-knives and spears.
- iii. spears, ornate boomerangs, Government blankets, for lunga-lunga boomerangs, hook-boomerangs, leaf-shaped wommeras, long single-piece spears, painted shields, pearl-shell, eagle-hawk feathers, grindstones.
- iv. lunga-lunga, hook-boomerangs, shields, pituri, Government blankets, for bigger shields, yellow ochre, flat-tipped single-piece hand-spears, red handkerchiefs, shirts, white shell.
- v. lunga-lungas, stone-knives, hair of humans, kangaroos, opossums and wallabies, coolamons, short wommera-spears, long gidyea spears, for blankets, human-hair twine, other boomerangs and spears, nulla-nullas, fighting-poles, grindstones, red ochre, dilly bags, grass necklaces, hook boomerangs, shields, fishing nets.
- vi. yellow ochre, red ochre, a bluish stone (probably copper stone), large coolamons for carrying water, women's opossum-twine waist-belts, fighting poles, hand-spears, "whitewood" boomerangs, for shell-wommeras, with corresponding spears, white-shell chest ornaments, fishing nets, other spears, forehead nets, flax-twine, human hair-belts, etc.

Roth makes some interesting further comments:

"This system of inter-communication, necessitated by exchange and barter, is one to which far too little importance appears to have been attached by European writers. In the case, for instance, of implements, stress has hitherto been laid on the particular locality whence they have been collected, rather than upon the particular tribe or district which originally manufactured them. The presence in camp at Boulia of opossum-hair and eagle-hawk feather ornaments (both of which creatures are almost extinct in the neighbourhood), mother-of-pearl and other marine shells, as well as

two curiously barbed spears (which I knew from previous evidence and descriptions could only have come from one of the Northern Territory coast tribes) led me on step by step to the inquiry as to how these articles, as well as others, reached their destination. The outcome of these investigations was that the various recognized trade routes were gradually learnt, and the commodities bartered at the various swapping grounds enumerated. Mention has already been made how that comparatively large numbers of people of both sexes may be congregated sometimes at these local markets. Thus it happens that ideas are interchanged, superstitions and traditions are handed from district to district, and more or less modified and altered in transit, that new words and terms are picked up, and that corroborees are learned and exchanged, just like any other commodities. I have repeatedly obtained proofs of similar customs, beliefs, corroborees etc., holding good among tribes separated by miles of country which, except through the medium of others, had certainly not within the white man's memory ever been in communication. Thus, tribes occupying territory at opposite extremes, and beyond them also, of a large district like North-West-Central Queensland, are brought into contact through the intermediation of others: indeed, so far as philology alone is concerned, it is a matter for wonder that there are comparatively so few, where we might have expected so many, words with

common-root stems among tribes undoubtedly speaking absolutely different languages. Again, there is reason to believe that for future pioneers and settlers into the far western, and what is still believed to be arid, country, a knowledge of these aboriginal lines of travel or trade-routes might prove of great value, since only along them would there be a chance of finding water. Out beyond the Toko Ranges, over large areas still awaiting exploration at the hands of Europeans, the Undekerebina men, who were encamped at Glenormiston during my visit there, assured me of certain definite routes which they had themselves followed - they knew all about the Central telegraph line in the sister colony, which some of them had seen."

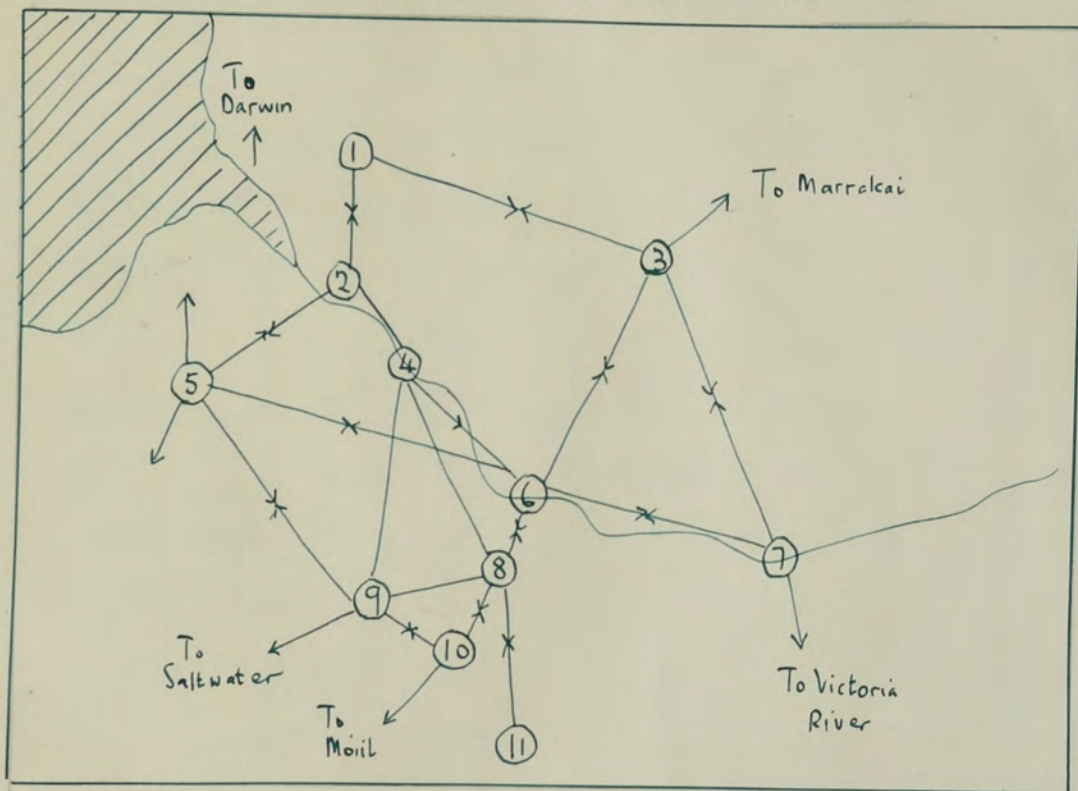
A GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

In all these exchanges we are dealing with a systematic attempt by the aborigines to increase their control of resources. None of the descriptions, meagre as they may be, leaves one in any doubt that the transactions were well ordered, had a long history of development, were surrounded with conventional observances which themselves point to antiquity, and provided a constant and largely predictable accretion to tribal and individual income. The economic effects of the exchanges, clearly, must have been considerable.

I shall not take up on this occasion the differences between these recorded systems and the system of merbok, nor

MAP IV

THE INTER-TRIBAL EXCHANGE PATHS



A rough sketch of the inter-tribal links set up by the merbok system of exchange. Apparently all the exchanges were reciprocal except that between the Ngolok-Wanggar and the Ponga-Ponga. From what informants told me this was exceptional, but I was never able to determine the nature of the difference. The numbers indicate the following tribes : 1. Kungarakan, 2. Djerait, 3. Warrai, 4. Ponga-Ponga, 5. Wogait, 6. Ngolok-Wanggar, 7. Wagaman, 8. Madngella, 9. Maranunggo, 10. Marithiel, 11. Moil.

attempt to interpret in the light of personal experience the implications of this scanty material.

Elsewhere I have termed the merbok a "ceremonial" exchange. There has been some misunderstanding of my meaning. I meant by this notoriously misused term to suggest that the merbok is not simply a coldly materialist transaction in which commodities in demand in one area are exchanged for commodities in demand in other area. The depersonalized merbok, of course, has this result, but it is one among many others. The merbok in aboriginal social life is not merely utilitarian and depersonalized in this way. It is wrapped around with life-long friendships; with trading relations based on blood ties and affinal links; with possibilities of conflict and sorcery arising as the direct consequences of one's trading behaviour; with it are involved questions of reputation and prestige as well as tribal material welfare and fluctuations of individual income; it enables men to gratify non-material as well as material needs. It was to such elements, plus the conventions and etiquette observed between partners, that I intended the term "ceremonial" to apply. There is, however, in the merbok none of the rich ceremonial found in the kula of the Trobrianders, and the term must be understood with this reservation.

The conditions under which I was able to study this institution were not favourable. As I have pointed out elsewhere, the merbok and other native institutions on the

Daly river have to some extent "suffered from the attenuation and attrition which have lowered the vitality and impaired the functioning of so much of native social life, but they still survive in the midst of decay." I offer this description as an incomplete reconstruction of a system which can probably still be studied in greater detail in other parts of Australia.

The primary interest of merbok for this chapter is in the way in which it adds to the total real income of the tribes. There is no clear way of estimating whether and to what extent, on balance, an individual or group loses or gains over any particular period. Calculations of this sort are not made by the aborigines although "adverse" and "favourable" net balances between outlay and income are both possible in merbok. We can be reasonably certain that such explicit calculations have and had no place in native attitudes to the exchange, although, of course, the empirical effects on tribal life of an "adverse" balance must make themselves felt very sharply. The volumes and quantities involved, however, are not great.

The presumption from all the evidence must be that merbok is materially profitable and that within the limitations set out below it brings a net increment to the real income of those who participate directly as well as only indirectly. Personal claims in merbok are of the greatest importance to

the aborigines.

The exchange does not work with unfailing smoothness. Defections seem to be common. All the natural and social forces which bear upon the material phases of native life are likely to affect the stream of goods entering the merbok exchange. ⁽¹⁾ Ninymer can be lost, destroyed, damaged, or forced to other uses. Men can fail in personal senses, prove themselves to be idle and inefficient. Their sources of income can shrink. Social life and economic productivity can be disrupted by raids, epidemics, prolonged disputes, or the devastation of bad seasons which increase the proportion of time and energies given to the food search. Under con-⁽²⁾temporary conditions such disturbance becomes chronic.

The dissatisfactions which occur in merbok range from inadequate returns to complete defections.

The tribal camps are whispering galleries in which grumbles of discontent are likely to be amplified and broadcast. Reputation is one of the ultimate values in aboriginal life, and it can be damaged and bolstered by economic conduct. Gossip, slander, denigration, over merbok defection, are ⁽³⁾ methods of redress as well as reproach. An inefficient partner is exposed to this sort of destructive comment.

(1) Roth recorded that in 1897 the tribes from the south of Boulia were not visiting Davenport Downs "as they are not too friendly with the Miorli men who would be met there." p.135 op.cit.

(2) v.p. 16 et seq. Ch. VIII.

Usually gossip which is repeated often enough and irritatingly enough leads to camp brawls, word-battles, or public duels. These duels are always likely to bring in hot-heads to side with one or other of the antagonists and heavy fighting in which scores of men take part may result from simple beginnings. Open conflict of this wider kind over defections in merbok is termed ninymernun. The aborigines tell of such fights in which several men have been killed and wounded.

Apart from the possibility of becoming involved in such combats an unsatisfactory partner has also to run the risk of sorcery. The kind of sorcery which is said to be commonly invoked is that of palanurk, the burning of some intimate possession of the person it is desired to harm. Illness and death may follow if counter-sorcery is not invoked, and since the only certain counter-sorcery needs the assistance of the person suspected, there is an obvious premium upon keeping an exchange partner as friendly as possible.

Apart from these negative sanctions it is clear that default damages a man's own economic position and that of his close kin as much as it does that of his partner.

Usually, the disputes and defections arise between a man and the more distant partner, not between a man and the small, intimate kinship group with which every trader is normally linked.

It is also possible for the death of a person known to

be an unsatisfactory partner to be attributed retrospectively to mamakpik sorcery.⁽¹⁾ This type of sorcery is a belief that the intestinal fat can be removed without any mark being left on the body. It can only be proved to have taken place by magical divination. In effect this ceremony is a selection by ritual methods of one of several persons suspect on a priori grounds.⁽²⁾

The merbok approximates to a market, but an analogy with the market of Western Europe is imperfect. We have in it, however, a traditional set of institutional practices which mobilize goods of various kinds and stages of production drawn from a wide area and permits them to be exchanged against each other, even if it is not in precisely calculated terms of each other.

There is often a particular place⁽³⁾ and often a conventional time, at which the ninymer is exchanged - at the big

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- (1) i.e. "witchcraft" in the terminology of Africanists.
- (2) A brief description of mamakpik is given in my general report on the Daly tribes in Oceania Vol. 1V No. 1 pp. 10-29 I hope soon to publish a detailed account in which the general features of this system will be compared with some of the features of Azande witchcraft.
- (3) The two great initiation gatherings which I saw in 1932 both took place on the same stretch of plain in a break in the trees on the south bank of the river. Other initiations have also taken place there - and at them all merbok transactions have gone on. At Port Keats the initiation was centred around the actual fixed camp site - the camp thus becoming also the "market" place. Vide also Roth's comments on "markets". ~~Op. cit.~~ Bulletin on North-West-Central Tribes.

dry season ceremonial gatherings, for example, and after the ritualized fighting takes place when grievances are ventilated. Such occasions commonly occur at ordained and predictable periods of the Seasonal year - very commonly in the early and middle dry seasons. There is also a certain set of conventional practices associated with the meeting of partners and the handing over of ninymer. As will be shown later, other general conventions of a market seem to be fairly well established among the tribes. Goods and commodities acceptable in merbok are well delimited, as are those which for one reason or another are unacceptable. Goods may, it is said, be sent with the option of rejection. Large, bulky articles are not traded (such as dug-out canoes); mi and awo are not sent; the small Daly spear-throwers ⁽¹⁾ do not seem to be in demand; unspindled hair is apparently unwanted in this area. On the other hand the kinds of ninymer most in demand are well known - aridimal, the pearlshell pubic covering; the various waxes and gums; stone-tipped spears. The difficult problem of conventional merbok values is taken up in another part of this chapter. At various points in this description other conventions are described; those relating to the privileges and commitments of partners; to the period within which debts should be repaid; to the sanctions which may be invoked in case of defections; to the "claiming" ahead of

articles known to be in merbok circulation; to permitted methods of "milking" the ninymer in transit, to diverting it to other purposes, to offsetting one committment against another.

We are clearly dealing in merbok with a complex institution which may not unfairly be likened to a market; its mechanisms are, of course, radically different; its range is narrower and its organization incomparably simpler than a conventional market; but it shares, as will be shown, at least some of the functions of a market. Its general function is to provide stable conditions under which men may meet for purposes of economic exchange. But there are sharp and decisive differences in the merbok market which mark it off from and render it incapable of close comparison with the European market.

The term merbok appears to be used both as a verb and as a substantive. A man and his partners are said to merbok with each other, and the articles they send are also sometimes called merbok.

Only material objects are sent in merbok, never food or perishables, and it is this convention which allows the introduction of a third term into the merbok complex i.e. ninymer. The mer in both merbok and ninymer are cognates. The term ninymer conveys the meaning of an object which is both "valuable" and "material." All the objects which enter into

merbok are ninymer, which is thus clearly a generic term.

In some, but not apparently in all, tribes the main directions from which ninymer are distinguished by specific terms. The Madngella use two such terms. One of these terms is certainly and the other probably derived from the identification of a certain type of article with a certain direction of origin. The rough trend of the merbok paths as they appear to the Madngella, for instance, is north-east and south-west, following the coastline in a general way. The Madngella refer to the north-easterly merbok as pork padaka and to the south-westerly merbok as nim berinken. I am unable to give a clear translation of these terms. The term pork, however, is applied to a type of hooked spear which formerly came in large quantities to the Madngella from the north-east, and the term berinken is applied in a loose way to a tribe or a group of tribes to the south-west. The meanings of padaka and nim could not be ascertained, ⁽¹⁾ despite much intensive questioning, but the general drift of the application of the terms is not hard to see.

Malinowski has pointed out in his discussion of the Trobriand kula that "not even the most intelligent native has any clear idea of the kula as a big, organized social construction, still less of its sociological function and impli-

(1) Miss Kaberry has suggested to me that the term padaka may possibly refer to the red ochre which comes from the direction of the Daly river to the tribes in north-west West Australia. In this area the term pada is applied both to the red ochre and to the north-easterly direction from which it comes.

(2) B. Malinowski, "Argonauts of the Western Pacific" p. 83.

cations." This is true also of the Daly river aborigines and the merbok. There is no evidence that they understand its crucial economic importance. None of my conversations with men who had partners revealed any direct and clearly formulated realization which they might have had of merbok either as the wide, expansive inter-tribal response to local economic deficiencies or as the source of much of their material welfare. The beginning, the end, and the further stages of the merbok sequence of partnership which they as individuals punctuate do not seem to concern them greatly. The immediate concern is the partner on one or the other side. All natives know that ninymer reaching them through merbok may have come from a tribe a long way off. Individual specimens are openly discussed in the camps; sometimes there is speculation about their age, about their history, about the men who have owned them. The native horizon from this point of view has always been fairly wide; to-day it has been greatly widened by the new liberation of the aborigines, by travel, by contact with whites, and by personal gossip with natives from even greater distances. The natives are now better acquainted with these spatially expansive aspects of merbok than before the whites came; perhaps the sense of mystery has thereby been lessened; but merbok remains an essentially personal affair, without any substantial collective organization of the Kula type (its collective effects,

however, being much like those of the Kula) and without any deep conscious influence upon native economic thinking.

THE PARTNERS IN MERBOK.

One of the outstanding features of this system of trading is the way in which it is built on close kinship linkages which exist independently of it.

Partners in merbok fall into two broad groups - those in one's own local group (who usually are close blood or affinal relatives) and those more distant in relationship and place. There are some qualifications of this statement made later. Partners are usually people of the same generation or, at the most, they may be a generation apart. There is a good reason for this. Very young children are not likely to have found efficient partners, and maximum efficiency in merbok does not normally come until perhaps middle age, and very old people are likely to have lost those they had in their prime. In any case, the conventions which surround the exchange commonly lead to the induction of children into their parents' exchange sequence, on the one hand, and on the other into the sequence of a cross-cousin, a mother's brother, or another person of these generations.

All people linked in merbok are, of course, relatives (some being closer relatives than others) because the range over which kinship relationship is recognized by the aborigines is theoretically unlimited, and may empirically be

widened to include any native who is encountered. Although two people at the tribal ends of a long chain of partners extending through several tribes, may quite well be unknown to each other they could if put to it (and such occasions do arise under the greater mobility of the present) find what kinship term to apply to each other, by inference from the terms used between more immediate partners. (1)

It is not this expansive kinship linkage which is of interest so much as the kinship character of the merbok partners within the narrower range of a sequence.

All the sequences which are not too mutilated by deaths or other factors show merbok links between close relatives - father and son, husband and wife, mother and child, a man and brother, or a man and his wife's father, or his mother's brother, or sister's son. Frequently, all the members of a small family group, children as well as parents, are described as being partners. But the merbok relations between this intimate small group, within the one camp or horde, are

(1) A wife's brother, mother's brother, father, or father's father, are commonly used as "key" relatives for working out these relationships. Once a person mutually known is found the term can be arrived at by simple inference. The sub-sections and patrilineal or matrilineal totems are similarly used; but inferences as to kinship terms drawn from them may lead to contradictions. This is due to the arbitrariness of the way in which sub-sections and totems are being allocated on the Daly and Fitzmaurice rivers. Some information on this point is offered in my paper "Murinbata Kinship and Totemism," Oceanica, Vol. VII. No. 2.

The whole problem will be examined in detail in a paper on "Nangismeri Kinship & Totemism" which I hope to publish in Oceanica shortly.

different from the relations between that group and more distant partners.

The native seem to consider the ideal local merbok sequence to be a family, that of a man, his wife, and children. I was given a hypothetical case (later I actually found one which conformed with it) of a man, his wife, and four children - two boys and two girls. The children were born with the sexes alternating, a boy being the eldest. In this case the eldest son found a merbok partner among the Warrai, a tribe to the north-east, and traded only with him. Articles received from this partner (that is, from the direction of pork padaka) would be passed on by the boy to his sister, she would pass them to one parent, this parent to the other, then to the third child, and so on to the fourth child, who would exchange with a partner among the Wagaman, or another tribe in the opposite direction from the Warrai - in the nim berinken quarter.

Diagram 11 illustrates a fairly typical family merbok pattern.

One representative sequence which I obtained, involving two tribes, links the following persons:

Nim to Belweni, his brother; Belweni to Dürmurkam, his wife's brother; Durkurkam to Wulvup, his cross-cousin; Wulvup to his brother, from this brother to a classificatory mother's brother (Nanaberi) in the next tribe; from Nanaberi

For these diagrams v. Oceania 1V.2. 165-166.

to Poivala, his sister's son, to Poivala's sister, to her husband, and from him to a distant partner in a further tribe.

This sort of sequence is probably more characteristic than the more formal pattern which I have given. Each of the individuals mentioned will include his children in the sequences, but their share is scarcely more than nominal, and the exchange is really an affair of adults. As a child grows it is inducted into the exchange relationships of its parents. At the same time, or later, it may acquire for itself other trading relationships, in addition to those it takes over. A friendship at a tribal gathering, a sister's husband, a mother's brother, a nephew, are all favoured for merbok affiliations. The partnerships may thus be arranged by an older relative, or a young person may come to an agreement for himself. Multiple partnerships are possible.

Many of these associations are enduring partnerships. But there is a good deal of change in the sequences. The merbok relationships are, like other human associations, subject to many stresses by the passing years. Parents die, and the circuit may have to be shortened by passing the commodities directly, say, from one sibling to another between whom the parents had perhaps been intermediary partners.

It is clear that merbok does not so much set individual partner against individual partner as it does say, a family group (or a closely related kinship group) all of whom ex-

change with each other, over and against an individual partner in another horde or tribe. This partner in turn is bound closely and intimately with a similar group. Except, in fact, for this flank contact with an outside partner, merbok seems to be more a family matter than an individual matter, and native statement confirms this. The merbok interests of a family tend to be identified with the merbok interests of each of its members. Cases are found where individual members of a family are for one reason or another excluded from the family merbok chain. One such case was often discussed with me by a group of natives. A man and his brother exchanged merbok with each other within the family sequence until one brother married a woman who had been brought to the country from her tribal home several hundred miles away. This woman had no relatives or friends near at hand, no one with whom she could merbok. Her new husband was a shiftless, idle fellow, and he dropped out of the merbok path because of inefficiency and indolence. The remaining brother shortened the circuit by taking as his immediate partner the man to whom the other brother had formerly sent ninymer. This particular family had shown several typical mutations. The parents had died, the brother had defaulted, and each time the merbok sequence had to be adjusted.

Diagram III depicts this family pattern and the sequence of merbok when both parents were alive. Diagram IV shows

the modifications of the pattern following the death of the parents and the son's defection.

THE METHOD OF MERBOK.

The individual in a merbok sequence has been shown to stand between two other partners, one close at hand, one more distant. Both of them send ninymer to him, and to both he in turn must send ninymer. Each individual is thus both recipient and donor. The simplified general principle of the exchange is that an article received from one partner is retained for a time and is then passed on to the other partner. The same ninymer are not returned in the direction from which they come. They must (if not used by the recipient) be kept in transit in the one direction. Articles must always progress from pork padaka towards nim berinken, and may not return. Articles from nim berinken must go north-east to pork padaka and must not return. What actually takes place is more complex than this, but such is the inner principle on which the exchanges are managed. The economic effect of such a convention is heavily to improve the terms on which the trade takes place between two groups. New ninymer are always arriving - foreign, valuable, unfamiliar, not necessarily any better or more effective, but new.

To receive ninymer from a partner in merbok creates a debt in his favour. One is committed to an obligation to make at some future date a return merbok of ninymer. The

merbok is clamantly reciprocal. The return merbok may, but need not necessarily, be made immediately. Partners may meet only once, or perhaps only a few times, between dry seasons. At any given point of time in the annual cycle the position of the merbok economy may be very difficult to describe. The indebtedness of partners, their claims upon each other, need not necessarily be the same for all members of the one local group, though the fortunes of the family sequences tend to rise and fall together. When men are members of more than one merbok sequence (this is possible), when resources are low, when other obligations are pressing, when expected income has not become material, the condition of tribal merbok as a whole may be a network of complicated claims and debts and, as it were, suspended claims. This may be illustrated by examining more closely the kind of debt-relations which may be built up.

The characteristic merbok situation may be stated as a person X (an adult) with a partner Y (also an adult) in his own local group or horde, and another partner Z in a neighbouring tribe. We may leave out of account in this illustration the presence of children in the sequence. (1) X may

(1) Children seem to be almost in the position of apprentices in a merbok sequence. Induction into merbok seems to be part of their social development, a means of educating them in the conventions of the exchange, in the management of resources, and a means also of providing them with partners. But they are not usually in the full sense of the term participants in exchange.

be pictured as under a continual obligation to both Y and Z, except that where Y is a close relative, such as wife or brother, the quality of the relation between them is very different from that between X and Z. Men expect that their partners will be efficient, will maintain their flow of goods, will not divert them to other uses to the disadvantage of their partner.

The obligation to give ninymer seems to alternate between partners, and is reciprocal, but in fact X and Y or X and Z may make gifts to each other at the same time. Or if X sends or gives ninymer on this occasion to Y and Y makes no return on that occasion then next time Y must send ninymer to X before X is under any further obligation. It must be remembered that X may have possibly more than two partners. He commonly uses ninymer which has been received from Y (though he has other sources of income) to meet obligations to Z, if he is indebted to Z, or vice versa. At any point of time it is possible, given efficient partners, to strike a balance between his commitments and expectances. A native who permits himself to be saddled with substantial obligations to a distant partner, without an adequate income from the other partner, or from other sources, is courting serious trouble. The defection of one man can thus involve his whole family in unpleasantness. Defection in merbok can be a serious offence, which may involve one in ignominy and humiliation, perhaps even in death. The merbok obliga-

tions to Z and Y may be regarded therefore as constant responsibilities upon X, though rather different in quality. The flow of ninymer which X receives from say Y may be used in three ways: 1. retained for other uses; 2. sent on to Z; 3. partly sent on to Z. The first is only possible if X has no commitments to Z needing speedy discharge. The second is only possible if X has no other pressing social commitments to which some of the ninymer need be diverted. The third will be determined by the nature of X's indebtedness to Z.

This static picture of what takes place in merbok is over-simplified. It is built up from native statements to me of the principle of the exchanges, and to some extent from my own direct observations of what takes place. But a number of modifications must be made. The first is to point out that, of course, men treat their more distant trading partners very differently from their more closely related and spatially intimate "partners." Fathers and sons, or brothers, or husband and wife, tend to be less traders than compact kin groups who share between them on a basis of kinship increments to their supplies of commodities drawn from less closely related people. The passage of ninymer from brother to brother, husband to wife, father to son, and so on, is more a distributive function than specifically a trading function.

It may also be pointed out that a man's store of ninymer is not necessarily limited to the articles he receives from

merbok partners. The various claims over economic goods outlined earlier in this chapter spring to mind. The result is that at any point of time a man is able to divert into the merbok sequence ninymer derived from other sources. Thus, on receiving ninymer from Z, it may be that X, possessing sufficient articles of value, can make a return merbok immediately and so wirngak (or "finish", in the pidgin term) this particular transaction. This would be a highly desirable situation. If it also should happen that another partner had been the last to receive ninymer, he would have now no pressing obligations in either direction, he would be in "credit" to at least one and perhaps both partners, and he would possess a store of ninymer which could be diverted to whatever other uses he desired. Since most men always have other obligations, or possibilities, for the premial use of resources, such a situation is highly favourable.

Another interesting situation was described to me. If the claims of one partner can be met, and a man possesses sufficient ninymer to settle any obligation outstanding to the partner on the other side, one can send the ninymer to him and tell him to keep for himself the commodities he will get in return from his other partner, to whom some or all of the ninymer should in principle eventually pass. In this way a man may get a fairly long period of suspended obligation during which it is possible to divert one's income to other

social relations may be disturbed by conflict or sorcery; the working of the tribal economy may make it difficult to muster sufficient resources; other obligations may be more pressing; it may be that ninymer laboriously gathered and kept for a merbok settlement may have to be diverted for another purpose.

There seem never to have been on the Daly river any long merbok expeditions from one tribe to another, though within a tribe short visits for making payments do seem to occur. Merbok usually goes on in the shadow of more spectacular events - the big inter-tribal gatherings for initiation, or for ceremonial activities, or food festivities. There, with the excitement and ritual of these great occasions, the partners meet. The ninymer is handed over without any particular ceremony, and is received without expression of thanks. There is no effusiveness, no assumption of the grand manner, for these occasions. As on so many occasions when gifts are given or exchanged some simple verbal formula is used. Bankai ! ninymer nyin wanarema. Father ! ninymer this (it is) for you. Nia ! Ninymer nyin noruma. Son ! Ninymer this (it is) for me.

The period during which the articles stay in the possession of any one member of a merbok sequence is a difficult matter

(Contd).

upon his lambara and obtained from him by mima articles which were then sent away in merbok to his partner.

for generalization. Each person in the sequence receives the articles. But children are only nominally partners and have only nominal possession of them. The transfers principally concern adults. As between adults articles seem to pass speedily, with a matter only of days between, from one person to another within a local group. As pointed out before, distant partners may meet only once or twice a year. This considerably restricts the speedy flow of ninymer within short periods over wider areas.

THE ECONOMICS OF MERBOK.

A great variety of articles enters into the merbok economy. All are durable commodities. I have never heard of food of any sort being exchanged in this way. It is possible that foodstuffs may enter (salt and wild honey are the most probable) in other parts of Australia but nothing of the sort occurs in the north-west coastal area in the traditional exchange. Sugar and tea are now sometimes sent in areas where there is white influence, but no other foodstuffs.

The articles most commonly encountered are:

- Red ochre of several varieties.
- Yellow ochre.
- Kaolin (pipeclay).
- Hair belts.
- Beeswax.
- Gums from trees and grasses.
- Paper-bark containers.
- Spears of many varieties.
- Spear-throwers.
- Spear-tips (stone, iron, wire)
- Pearl-shell pubic ornaments.

Clam shells.
Grass-woven dilly bags.
String and thread.
Fishing nets.
Decorative articles (necklaces, hair-binders,
arm-bands, waist cinctures, pubic coverings).

Formerly, stone knives and axes also entered importantly into the exchanges, but do so no longer.

A great many articles of white origin are now entering the merbok. One finds traded:

Cloth.
Handkerchiefs.
Dresses.
Coloured wool.
Shirts.
Trousers.
Blankets.
Beads.
Knives.
Iron and steel tools.
Billy cans and tin containers.
Matches.

Some of these articles (like wax, gum, ochre and wool) are only partly finished and may need further processing before they can finally be used for their characteristic purposes; others are ready for immediate use (spears, hair belts).

Some of the articles are of much less practical use than others, and a study of what these differences amount to enables some interesting distinctions to be drawn.

Now, all the articles entering into merbok are made use of in some way. The Daly tribes, for instance, do not use boomerangs in hunting or fighting. They now make little, if any, use of stone-headed spears for practical purposes.

Yet these articles make up a considerable proportion of the volume of ninymer coming to them. Natives are frequently to be seen carrying about with them bundles of spears, some stone-tipped, some iron-tipped. But I have not seen stone spears put to practical use in this area. The iron-tipped shovel spears are used for hunting and serious fighting; smaller wooden-tipped spears are used for duelling or for minor crowd-fights. Likewise, boomerangs are not used in hunting or fighting by the Daly tribes. The natives know the method of using boomerangs; I have seen local natives experimentally throwing them; they are continually received in merbok; but they are not put to the orthodox hunting and fighting use. They are sometimes carried about, are kept in personal stores, and are sometimes put to ceremonial uses (to serve as tapping-sticks at dances).

Such facts as these bring up complicated questions of economic utility value. It may be stated at once that aboriginal economics are entirely without a unitary measure of value. But there still remains a problem of value in the economy, and, as an empirical fact, objective valuations of a certain kind may be detected.

(1) Measurement of the money-value of economic utilities is logically on a level with these other forms of measurement, even measurement of their functional or their aesthetic value. That is to say, we can also measure, as functionalists, the value of economic utilities in terms of their relation to the necessary conditions of existence (Radcliffe Brown) or to human and social needs (Malinowski).

Footnote
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The whole of any economic system may be regarded as a process of producing, allocating, and consuming utilities, whether they be goods or services. Certainly we may regard a primitive economy in this way. In the absence of a price system which permits a monetary valuation to be placed upon utilities the problem of measurement is a difficult matter. But every culture must measure utilities to use them. Measured, they may be fixed or expressed in a variety of ways - in monetary values; in conventional exchange ratios; in the values of any other logical system; in traditional forms of conduct based on conventional uses of those utilities.⁽¹⁾ When the question of "value" is raised for primitive societies it usually has some implicit reference to values as prices, or as price-analogues. I have no confidence that we get near to the heart of the value-situation in aboriginal economics so long as we retain this point of view. It may be that we do not yet fully see the implications for economy of the absence of a price and money system. I believe that what may be spoken of as the "values" of aboriginal economic utilities can more adequately be shown by elucidating their uses

Thurnwald is in error when he says (v. Economics in Primitive Communities, p.54) that "in Australia, the so-called native land of the boomerang, it is used only as a weapon." The boomerang, is, in addition to being a weapon, a musical instrument and a toy. Also, it has many symbolic and ceremonial uses. It is, for instance, ritually conferred upon initiates at puberty, and placed in their belts as a sign of their new status.

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than by attempting to range, or assess, or measure them, in terms of each other, of some one of them, or of a common medium. The study thus becomes a study of utility on different levels rather than a study of value per se. The notion of value can, I consider, only usefully and critically be introduced where there are possibilities of clear measurement. And, although I shall point out later that in the aboriginal exchanges the notions of equivalence or of deficiency or of adequacy in the volume of transactions shows that a process of valuation and a concept of value are obviously involved, I feel that valuation is here potential rather existent. There are no prices in the aboriginal economy; there are, no doubt, "values" of several orders; there are clearly utilities of several orders. We must keep these clearly separated. We can discuss value in the general sense of price-value only to the very limited extent to which, as I shall show, measurements of this type are made by the aborigines. For the most part, however, we are, I think, committed to an elucidation of the nature of aboriginal utility, and this leads us, as I shall show in the next chapter, into quite different reaches of theory, in which notions of price-value are not, apparently, particularly relevant or important.

Warner tries, I think unsuccessfully, to relate the value of some aboriginal economic objects to their portability.

The "ultimate value" in aboriginal society, says Warner, is "freedom of movement," and "the largest factor contributing

to this value" is the "mobility necessitated by shifting food supply.")

(The main determinant, ^{he says,} of the value of objects which will be kept permanently by their owner (my italics) is the ease with which they can be transported by human carriage or dug-out canoe. "The amount of labour consumed in their manufacture contributes in some degree to their high value as individual property, and the relative scarcity of an object in nature or trade also makes its contributions to Murngin economic values; but the final desideratum is the relative ease of transportation of the article, since this society has no domesticated beast of burden." Apparently to meet the objection that there are obvious non-portable objects also "valued" by the Murngin, such as (p.149) totemic emblems, grave posts, ceremonial objects of dress, etc. Warner observes that these objects are not "directly used." The smaller ceremonial objects are ceremonially destroyed by burial or fire, for which "it is most likely, the burden of carrying them is largely responsible. The natives give a mythological reason, and the concept of destruction was undoubtedly influenced by the necessity of either carrying or destroying a heavy object to prevent women from seeing it."

There are a number of crushing objections to this explanation. Some are concerned with Warner's use of the

term value. What does he mean by this term?

Does he mean value in exchange, value in use, or does it perhaps imply that there is something which can be called just "value?" If value in exchange is meant, what are we to say of the value of objects which are "permanently kept," but are not exchanged, and how can we talk of the exchange-value of freedom of movement? If value in use is meant (that is utility), how are we to distinguish the "value" of non-portable property, such as game traps, food-sources, camp sites, watering places, which clearly have a great utility, from (or compare it with) the "value" of portable property, such as hair-fillets, secret stones, which would appear to have less utility? If neither is meant, what meaning does the term "value" have? Now, clearly, Warner's use of the term is confused. His first use ("the ultimate value") is an aesthetic judgment. His second use ("the main determinant of the value of objects which will be kept permanently by their owner is the ease with which they can be transported by human carriage or dug-out canoe") apparently refers rather to utility than to exchange value. If the reference, however, is to the latter, Warner quite rightly draws attention to the fact that only portable objects are exchanged; that is, have exchange value, and if we are to speak with any precision of economic value, a phrase which Warner himself uses, we must imply by value the capacity of any good to command (exchange for) other goods. But in this case Warner's explanation

offers us no information upon why, as I have said, portable objects which are permanently kept, but not exchanged, have no "value." If the reference really is to utility after all, one has only to point out that many things which are inherently non-portable, and others which are not transported because of the labour involved, also have utility. This, obviously, suggests that, except for the case in which value is used in an aesthetic sense, Warner probably had in mind either economic value, that is, exchange value, or some other sort of value, or just possibly both. His later suggestions that "the amount of labour consumed in their manufacture," and "the relative scarcity of an object in nature or trade" contribute "in some degree" to the "high value" of these transportable objects, makes it seem that he really must be referring to exchange value, though he specifically says it is to their "high value as individual property." We may rule out any other sort of value to which Warner is possibly referring. When he points out that "the relative ease of transportation" is the "final desideratum" (determinant?) of value it suggests that if within the range of transportable things there are degrees of transportability, there are also on that account different values. But if there are several transportable objects then there must in any case be a scale of relative values, since value is a relation. The problem, on Warner's explanation, is then whether we are able to select one of several determinants (portability, relative scarcity, amount

of labour "consumed" in manufacture) as the final desideratum or determinant. There remain also the problems of what we are to say of the non-transportable objects which have great utility, and the portable objects which, if I interpret Warner properly, have no value. We must, I think, reject Warner's explanation as confused and unsatisfactory as a theory of economic value.

Economic Value is a relation between economic objects. The relation is capable of being measured according to any agreed unit. I know of no unit with any meaning in aboriginal society by which the relation of value, which I admit to be implicitly present in aboriginal economy, can be measured with any precision. No doubt we could, if we tried, impose a unitary measurement upon aboriginal economica. Such a unit of measurement would not, in my opinion, be in any way dependent upon the portability of those economic objects. The absence of effective means of transport would be only one, though a most important one, of the ultimate conditions of value; the absence of a price system, the absence of money, would be two other ultimate contextual conditions, but they would not be determinants. Warner refers also to things which are not "directly used" and are destroyed, probably mainly because they are not portable. But, although such non-portable objects may be destroyed, like grave-posts, this does not meet the case of those which are used but not destroyed (such as canoes, and the Melville Island grave posts),

or those which are used but by their constitution cannot be destroyed (such as water holes, deposits of ochre, food sources). Warner would not, of course, maintain that such objects are not of economic importance, or are not of "value," but he does not tell us by what other criteria they are distinguished from the "valuable" objects, or what place they take in a scale of values determined by portability. His qualification that this he refers only to valuation of objects which will be kept permanently by their owner removes his explanation from serious consideration as a theory of economic value, and perhaps is little more than a statement that the only objects which are kept (that is, transported) by their owner are those which are transportable.⁽¹⁾ It should not be overlooked, also, that other explanations can be given of the destruction of unmoveable objects. A man's property, those articles which (on Warner's explanation) he "values" in life, are often on his death destroyed, not to prevent women from seeing them, for they have already seen them, nor because

(1) Roth's information upon non-portable Australian property is interesting on this point. In Queensland "when a black proposes leaving camp for a few days, and is unwilling to take with him all his belongings, little enough though they are, he will go to some neighbouring and not too much frequented spot, leave his impedimenta there, and on the surface around clear a circular space, upon an extra well-smoothed portion of which he will plant an imprint of his foot: this impress being well known to his mates, he can rest assured that the property will remain intact during his absence." *Aboriginal Tribes of*

N.W. Central Queensland, p.133.

it would be difficult to add them to men's transportable possessions, for men do carry about the same kind of objects, but because it is traditional to do so. If we seek further than this for an explanation, it is probably to be found in relation to the transports of emotion rather than the emotions of transport.

We should note also the limitations of Warner's comment that such objects are not "directly used." On the contrary, like all other economic objects, they are directly used.

The obscurity and incompleteness of Warner's explanation rests in part upon his ambiguous use of the term "value."

We must be more precise than this. We must distinguish with the maximum of clarity between utility, value, wants, the conditions in which these have the meanings we give them, and their determinants.

The sense in which I use the term utility is that of the capacity of objects to satisfy conscious wants, the quality of being wanted. We can^I/think, speak of utility and utilities in the aboriginal economy without ambiguity, though we can hold out no great hopes of precise measurement. All the economic objects of the aborigines, all the material adjuncts of their lives, have in this sense utilities but are not themselves the utilities. They are economic goods and services, part of the tribal resources. Their utility is a matter of observation and inference, capable of being studied empirically.

An adequate description of the utility of the objects found in the aboriginal economy at once leads us into the immensely complicated field of the nature of aboriginal wants, the ends (1) towards which economic social behaviour is directed.

These issues become sharp in relation to the ninymer of which no direct practical economic use is made.

Their true utility is to be seen in their use, as it were, on another level - that of social ostentation, as contrasted with the level of practical economic activities.

The Daly river use of boomerangs, stone spears and pearl shell pubic coverings are cases in point.

In general, we can regroup ninymer into three classes, and for want of better terms call them i. ceremonial ninymer, ii. economic ninymer, and iii. those which serve both uses. The economic ninymer are always the greater in volume in merbok but ceremonial ninymer are substantial in bulk, and are much desired. Apparently no conventional proportion should be observed between them in exchange. The ceremonial articles do not, in fact, feature in all the exchanges; but usually they seem to do.

So far as my data go the absence from an exchange of ceremonial ninymer does not necessarily mean that an exchange is unsatisfactory. But these articles are so much desired that they are in great demand. They are desired because, as

(1) These questions are taken up in the next chapter.

I say, the uses to which they may be put confer upon the owners advantages not, apparently, to be attained in any other way. So far as men's outward behaviour is a guide there are deep satisfactions attainable in this way. Public parade in finery, adorned with a woven public tassel and a pearl-shell, carrying a bundle of stone-tipped spears, the ostentatious display of other possessions, may bring admiration, attention, comments of approval. The known possession of these articles builds or solidifies a man's reputation for economic efficiency, social adequacy, and substance. At least, the situation is one in which admiration, attention, and approval are likely to be won.

The utilities of all the objects entering into the exchange, in fact, of all the material adjuncts of native life, are, as I say, a matter of observation and of relatively simple inference. To consider, when the problem of "value" is raised, only those commodities entering into exchange, or those which men "keep permanently," may be to falsify our representation of native economic attitudes, and the relations which obtain between their economic adjuncts. But, taking for the moment only those which enter into merbok, we can speak of the utility of spears in fighting or hunting; of the utility of hairbelts as against spears in making nirwat payments to namesakes (hairbelts being felt to be more appropriate for this purpose); of the utility of one object as compared with another in providing the "higher" satisfactions

referred to earlier. We can, if we wish, speak of "value" in this sense. Certainly, all these commodities may be said to be "valued" by the aborigines, and valued for these reasons. But it introduces an unnecessary confusion to speak of "value" in this sense. The anthropologist can, however, observe and record as objective data individual preference scales (i.e. valuations) for objects. By comparison of a wide enough set of such subjective preferences he may be able to strike a set of what he can regard as "objective values." The problem is then to discern whether, and if so, to what extent, there are objectively extant ratios arising from or expressing these comparative valuations. It is to be noted that among the aborigines there are such ratios, which ought to be maintained between different kinds of ninymer in acts of exchange.

The description of merbok has brought out on several occasions the aborigines' insistence on adequate reciprocity, proper equivalences, sufficiency, and so on, in the exchanges.

The general problem of value which the merbok sets up for examination is, then, really twofold: (i) why does an objective set of values (or ratios) appear at all and (ii) why these particular ratios?

The first is a problem of general cultural and economic theory. I shall not here attempt to deal with it in any detail. The general explanation, however, may perhaps be as follows. Different resources have different possibilities of use. When they are actually applied to different uses there

has been a choice between resources and between uses, which is an estimate, that is, a measurement, of their utilities. The measurement of economic utilities is in fact inseparable from their use, that is, from social economy. We are confronted in the aborigines with the transfer, preliminary to use, of resources from individuals and groups who may have produced them to individuals and groups who did not produce but may now use them. This is an entirely "new" situation. Resources, before being allocated to their uses, are put through an intermediate stage in which their "use" is deferred to other people. What we have, therefore, in an act of exchange is two discrete measurements, or the source of two discrete measurements, of the utilities of whatever is exchanged and received. If we may at this stage leave the plane of theory and see what occurs in the primitive Australian exchange we see that these discrete measurements are made after, as it were, the exchange as such has taken place, That is to say, there is no haggling, the exchange takes place, the registration of satisfaction or dissatisfaction usually takes place later.⁽¹⁾ To understand the situation clearly we

(1) With their wider experience there has come to the Daly aborigines a development of economic personality. Some are now prepared to, and can, bargain in transactions, not with each other, but with whites. In the traditional and contemporary exchanges between natives bargaining had and has no place, whereas between natives and whites it is becoming very noticeable. But this (for them) new principle of economic conduct has not grown as the simple fruit of wider experience, as the rational application of a lesson learned only by observation of whites. To some degree it has been forced on them

should see it not only in this way but in its historical setting, that is to say, as an act of exchange in a culture which we know has not yet elaborated a medium of unit-measurement. No act of exchange has yet been associated with the dramatic revelation of measurement in precise units either of utility or exchange-value. But, on general theory we can postulate that measurement of utility in subjective terms is independent of, perhaps we can say antedates, measurement of utility or value in exchange, which is more complex and likely to be

(Contd.)

by their personal contacts with whites who, by ranging degrees of reward alongside degrees of effort, by vigorous demands for more in exchanges, by under-payment and over-payment on rules which they themselves or other whites have established, by insistence upon equivalences and ratios more precise than any in native tradition, have helped the aborigines to move beyond comparisons of utility to a point where they are now beginning to quantify and value in turn more clearly than ever before their tradition. Why has no comparable change taken place in native-native economic relations? The explanation is to be sought, of course, in a closer scrutiny of the nature of the changes which have occurred in the elements of aboriginal culture. The notions of "decay" or "decline" are too vague to be useful here. Elements of aboriginal culture have shown a high resistance to the impact of white society. The study of Australian culture-contact must be as much a study of resistances as of changes and disappearances. There are, also, aspects of apparent fusion which are not adequately covered by the notions of decline or decay.

historically later than direct use of resources. We can make more clear the situation in which an objective ratio or ratios develop first by the fact that exchange takes place between persons who want goods for known uses (that is, for measured utilities); second, by the fact that utilities are on both sides already, ex hypothesi, measured; third, by the fact that the exchange leads directly to two discrete but socially related measurements of relative utilities of objective quantities of articles exchanged between partners who are in a stable and lasting association, and who are able to compare over periods of time the degrees of want-satisfying power of those quantities and articles. We are here, as it were, on the threshold of ratios, that is to say, of rudimentary exchange-values.

If we discuss the second problem - why these particular ratios? - against the background of the merbok, we see that the ratios in this exchange have scarcely moved beyond the threshold.

The aborigines do seem capable of forming swift decisions whether the return for any service, apart altogether from merbok, is adequate. This holds true in merbok, too. This bespeaks valuation, though there is no common measure of value. But spears cannot be expressed in a certain volume of red ochre; boomerangs cannot be precisely rated in terms of spears. When one presses aborigines on such points, in an attempt to dig for the implicit valuations, much seems fluid,

and nothing fixed. A check on the physical quantities of ninymer exchanged also reveals a great elasticity of estimate, and for reasons which will later be brought out, we cannot too trustfully accept these empirical ratios as necessarily binding evidence of "objective values." One can readily determine that aridimel, a pearl shell ornament, is worth more than one boomerang, or one spear, or one hairbelt. But it has not been possible for me to determine how many of each an aridimel is worth; although any native will say that aridimel ought to be paid for in exchange much more (one said "double") than other articles; nor the relative values of one spear or one hairbelt in terms of other ninymer. In fact, the context in which the exchanges take place appears to make such computations doubtful. In those individual exchanges which I have seen a bundle of ninymer have been passed over, with deprecation of their insufficiency, against a bundle of ninymer, some of the same articles featuring in both, which is praised by the recipient as being more than adequate. A rough visual impression of these groups of articles is that they all seem more or less equivalent. There are no great disproportions.

But never was any one article in a bundle measured against any one article in another bundle. I am unable to give detailed statements of these ratios, and it is important that they should be collected in areas where it is still possible, but clearly "Value" is a deceptive concept, and one

of doubtful use, to introduce into such a context. We must be perfectly clear what we intend to convey by the term. The only sense in which I should propose to use it would be as a quality capable of measurement. Economic value would be exchange value, that quality of economic objects capable of being measured in terms of a precise unit, either a medium common to both, or in terms of one or the other or both. In our economy, economic value is a quality measured with a certain, but perhaps not a complete, degree of precision by means of a price. Value in this usage thus becomes a quantitative statement of relations between economic objects. If we set out the conditions in which this relation exists and can be measured we find that they have no close resemblance to the conditions which obtain in the aboriginal Australian economy. If this is so, the determining factors of price, that is, of value, e.g. limitations of supply, and elasticity of demand, are not strictly relevant to anything we can set up as a primitive analogue of this situation, however plausible it may appear. The most that we can do, in my opinion, is to note the presence below, as it were, the threshold of the aboriginal economy, of a potential system of pricing, an effort to work out a system of ratios or equivalences between economic objects, in conditions which do not wholly permit of the precise measurement of quantities. What are those "conditions?" Already I have pointed out the absence of a measure of value; the absence of a means of exchange; the

absence of a method of quantification; the absence of all but
an extremely limited system of numbers,⁽¹⁾ the absence of
means of effective transport; the presence of many checks
upon the working of the economic principle;⁽²⁾ and the pressure
of many dispositions towards a static economy. These condi-
tions are, I consider, decisive in the native economy, almost
to the point of paralysis. Consideration of their full work-
ing must be postponed until the next chapter. Their general
upshot for this chapter is that I see no particularly useful
way in which we can here speak of "economic value" in any
quantitative sense. If, however, the term is introduced, it
should be with the clearest discrimination between economic
value and the other possible and legitimate uses of the term,
and between economic value and utility, wants, the determin-
ants of these, and the conditions in which they are true.

There still remains unanswered one aspect of the second
problem. Why these particular ratios?

This is a question which it is impossible to answer in
strict economic terms, or answer by a deduction from general
reasoning. We have to take note of two factors. The
ratios, such as they are, are not susceptible to close dissec-
tion. We can measure the variations which take place in the
ratios of, say, a bundle containing hairbelts, boomerangs,
spears and wax, to a bundle containing pearlshell and red ochre.

(1) v. ~~pp~~ *Ch* iv.

(2) v. Chapter I, p. 37

But we cannot closely and consistently relate the measure of these variations on both sides, in terms of each other, or usefully relate them to other factors, such as the conditions of supply. If we attempt to do the latter we find that a man may accept less in return for a given bundle of ninymer when less is offered, and accepts more when more is offered. Natives accept inability to offer more as a reason for taking less, which is not a characteristic of the economic market. We are able neither systematically to explain variations in the ratios, nor the ratios themselves. Two partial explanations may be offered of the ratios themselves. One is historical, and on this I have no information. The other is to relate them in a general way to aboriginal wants. The nature of these wants is taken up in the next chapter. It may here be pointed out that one of the most desirable bodily decorations known to the native men is aridimel, the pubic pearl shell ornament. The exchange ratio of this to other articles is high, though I have not been able to measure it closely. But I am unable to find other useful illustrations of this movement towards the development of clearer notions of exchange-value.

THE WIDER INFLUENCES OF MERBOK.

There are a number of other aspects of the merbok exchange which might be discussed, but I shall not deal with them in detail here. One or two of the most important may

be referred to very briefly.

The presence of the particular articles in the exchange is to be explained partly, I should think, on historical grounds, and partly by general theory. If we examine the ninymer in merbok we find that it includes weapons, tools, medicaments, cosmetics, implements, decorative articles, narcotics. Some of these are scarce or absent in one locality but not all of them are scarce or absent in any one locality.

A long tradition, and underlying economic necessities, associate certain commodities with certain directions. Thus, bamboo travels to nim berinken, and does not return unless manufactured into spears. The reason for the unilateral movement of the raw material is said to be that there is no bamboo growing in the districts to which it travels from the Daly river. No doubt this is the general explanation of many kinds of specialization. But, though spears with mangrove shafts are occasionally used on the Daly, there is no trade in unfinished shafts of mangrove, though there is in other wooden shafts. On the other hand, a certain massive type of reddish granite spearhead is sent to the Daly from the Nangiomeri country, where the outcrop is said to occur. Every native, in fact, seems to be able to identify merbok specimens as the product of this or that "country" or tribe. On one occasion I saw a Nangiomeri woman, long exiled from her own country by marriage domicile among the Madngella, break

down and weep bitterly when she saw a spear-head of red granite. Dag ngoruma e ! she wailed. My country O.

The merbok exchange thus rectifies some of the local deficiencies of raw materials which face the tribes. This phase of it may be likened to a simple international trade. The long distance trading in pitjuri in Central Australia is probably the most dramatic example. But in spite of this utilitarian core the merbok is perhaps not even mainly utilitarian any longer. Articles which can apparently, readily be duplicated by a tribe from its own resources pass along the merbok paths from tribe to tribe. Articles and commodities of this sort (hair belts, ochre, wax, nets) are readily substitutable one for another; the function of the exchange from this point of view is to bring replacements of these articles. Hence its importance as a source of constant real income.

Such increments to income are the basic gain of traders. The exchange sets in circulation over a wide area a flow of commodities which are continually being added to by tribal production, and continually being reduced by use. The particular commodities in the stream at any moment come to rest in someone's possession until they are used up or discarded. They do not keep passing from native to native until they become worthless. It has been shown how a native can come into possession of ninymer which are his to use, and need not be used in settlement of obligations. Natives have

needs of personal equipment and of materials to repair and to replace this equipment. The exchange provides them with some of these necessities. It is by no means necessary, even when men have unsettled commitments, that on all occasions everything which one partner sends has to be passed on. The practice of "milking" the passing stream of commodities is common and fully sanctioned; in fact, it may be regarded as integrally part of the tribal economy. The ceremonial ninymer are displayed, kept, gossiped about, and sent on, or diverted to other uses; the commodities of practical utility, ochre, wax, string, stone, may in whole or in part be diverted into the system of tribal production, or directly used. Spears continually need rehafting and relashing; shafts need painting; tools break, and need replacement; weapons splinter in the hunt and need replacement; cosmetics and medicaments become exhausted; social activity drains away one's possessions. The stream of durable goods entering into the exchange meets tribal needs of these sorts.

The influence of the trading on tribal technology is very important. Natives always show great interest in variations of technical processes, or in developments of the form of artifacts. As a rule they cling to their own traditional types of implements, but willingly accept in the exchange weapons, implements, and decorative objects of foreign origin. These commonly comprise what I have referred to as ceremonial ninymer. The effect seems to have been to fix local

technological types rather than to make them fluid and ever-changing, and almost certainly to develop at least some production in excess of tribal requirements.⁽¹⁾

The inter-tribal contacts associated with the merbok have been culturally productive over a wide field. It has been shown how partnerships are often also close kin-relationships, which, even in the absence of merbok, bind people together in relations of privilege and obligation, and how even distant partnerships may be also friendships.⁽²⁾ The trading paths are also highroads of inter-tribal cultural influence.⁽³⁾ I have elsewhere briefly referred to the fact that myths, songs, dances, totemic rituals, systems of social organization, new modes of marriage, have spread in North-West Australia along the paths which link the tribes in trade. On another occasion I will deal fully with these. They may be mentioned here in a closing note to this long paragraph to show that merbok is not simply a method of coping with the material scarcities and uncertainties of life in a somewhat harsh environment. Cultural wealth and stimulus of a wider and more varied order than the artifacts of foreign tribes has flowed in with the means of material life.

(1) Roth's material (op. cit.) is strongly suggestive of this result. So also is my own data.

(2) v. W.L. Warner op. cit. p. 244.

(3) v. Oceania Vol. 14. No. 2. p. 172.

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- VIII. CONSUMPTION
IX. CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONSUMPTION.

I.

As the aborigines grow from childhood to maturity they have many conventional opportunities to use all the economic means which are brought into their hands by production, distribution, and exchange. Frequently they are placed in, even seek, situations in which they are obliged to make use of their possessions. For a young girl before puberty, while she is still unmarried, and spends much of her time with other girls of her own age, there are few such occasions, beyond small gifts of food to siblings and playmates, parents, and her closer kin; as yet they have no economic independence. For a boy before puberty there are the same and other opportunities - gifts to nirwat namesakes, to his initiators at the dZaban ceremony of pre-nubile initiation. The dand-Zagaiak and dingiri ceremonies which take place a few years later at the initiations of both girls and boys provide yet further opportunities, but those of boys are probably the greater in volume, certainly make the greater impact on tribal life. There are cross-gifts of awo and mi food between brothers and sisters at the end of a girl's first menstruation, but not because of a boy's puberty. Gifts of ninymer and food to the mamakaloan men and women who take so large a share in his initiation are made nominally on account of a boy, though not actually by him, yet all such transactions represent an

indirect use by him of means which are on this high occasion, traditionally at his disposal; were he to be denied access to such means, were close and more distant kin not to give him valuable articles to give to mamakaloan, it would be the cause of bitter resentment by his people, and would lead to extremely serious trouble.

After puberty, the opportunities for both sexes increase. For a girl the cycle of life quickens. At this stage both are taking important shares in tribal economic life. For a girl, marriage may soon follow puberty; even before puberty she may leave her parents and for periods be looked after by her future husband, and while there contributes materially to his support. This is the period for making personal exchange partners, for commencing love intrigues, for making maturer friendships, for first contributing to (or being drawn upon for) friends and kins⁸folks' economic undertakings. Such developments are all charges upon growing economic competence, and provide opportunities for the profitable use of whatever material means a girl derives in the ways set out in the chapter on Distribution. Growing boys are in much the same situation, except that they assume their full competence many years later than women of the same age. For both boys and girls during this period the nanor economic obligations continue, which commit them to a continuous outlay and use of

time, energies, skill, and material possessions to the advantage of others.

It is marriage, increasing income as well as outlay, which is the really formative influence in the lives of the growing men and women, and is the gateway through which they become mature economic as well as mature social personalities. Yet even at this stage the socially approved uses which can be made of their possessions are relatively few. The major events of the aboriginal seasonal year are the dZaban, dingiri, and yunuana initiations; the nirwat namesake ceremonies; the smaller dandZagalak ceremonies at girls' first menses; the memurn camp festivities; the public duels and fights; the large-scale fishing and hunting parties; the malnin raids for women; the expeditions for raw materials and special foodstuffs. It is, on the one hand, within the limits set by these activities, these high occasions of social life, and the common round of tribal activity on the other, that aboriginal economic means have to be used. In all such activities the ease with which it is possible to build up, on native statements about how such social occasions should go off, a picture of highly rigid custom and of obligatory (and willing) conformity to traditional patterns, shows that the possibility of choice concerning the part a native is to play in such activities is very restricted. To a very large extent choice, in this sense, is taken out of the

hands of aboriginal participants. Tribal life produces its eccentrics, its unorthodoxies, its nonconformists; some of the myths commemorate notable breaches and examples of self-will; but to a very large extent the patterns of life, even of economic life, were fixed in the mipurambina period in the beginning of the world. The ways of life laid down during the tribal altjira period combine for the aborigines the strength of moral, civil and legal rules, and perhaps also an aesthetic quality as well. This period and its decisions are the ultimate referents in most, if not in all, problems of causality and general explanation which one raises with the aborigines. It would seem in an economic discussion that we must add the positive preference, continually expressed and cited by tribal authorities, for the ways of the altjira, as one of the most powerful forces stabilizing tribal economy. It tends to fix and crystallize economic wants; coupled with the constant level of population, the absence of outside stimulus, the poor development of equipment and meagre technical knowledge, the stern limits placed on social mobility by the physical setting of life, it is a heavily stabilizing influence. The apparent absence of aboriginal desire for certain kinds of material progress, as we would perhaps interpret them, is possibly to be linked with the moral and aesthetic aspects of this continual

orientation towards the altjira. So that whatever economic objects the aborigines want, they want for use within the sphere and the conventional limits set by these activities, in which, for all participants, the roles they assume, the material objects they bring and share and handle, the time they devote, are to a very large extent fixed by traditional rules. Thus, the possibilities of social action ranged around economic possessions are limited. The range of economic objects available to the natives is small, as we have seen; the range of choice as to which of these objects may appropriately be used on special occasions, and the ways in which they may be used, are similarly limited; fashion and design change slowly, though they do change, and in some Daly tribes (notably the Wagaman and Nanglomeri) I was able to record interesting details of these processes.

The undercurrent of everyday commonplace tribal life runs continuously between these high occasions, and over such periods men use their possessions, food, equipment, raw materials, and manufactured articles for common daily activities, of which a clear picture should have emerged from the foregoing descriptions. On such occasions we see the articles of productive equipment which men possess being called into use almost every day; whenever leisure offers they draw on their stocks of materials - fibres, ochre, stone, wood, blood, bones, sinews, feathers - and use them to work

up into equipment or decorative articles; food they use in a variety of ways later to be described. As each of the above special occasion intervenes it gives the natives opportunities, and provides some with compulsions, to draw still further upon their possessions, to borrow from others, to go into debt, to scour the countryside for the articles they need, to divert to these uses. We are here in the sphere of consumption.

II.

The notion of the consumption or final use of economic objects is one which needs close examination. In the first place it is necessary to distinguish certain classes of objects which may be consumed according to the type of use made of them. There are those, such as food, which in use are destroyed or greatly altered; there are those, such as tools, implements, utensils, shelters, which in use are not destroyed or greatly altered, though they depreciate and may need renovation or replacement; of this second group there are some, like tools, which are used to produce other goods, and some, like shelters, which are used because they render economic service. We cannot, it seems, progress very far with a description of the consumptive side of aboriginal economy unless descriptions of the social implications of these separate kinds of consumptive uses are given.

Food, for example, is in the end used to satisfy the elemental needs of the body; but it has other intermediate uses, towards which its production is perhaps no less directed. Food, as has been shown earlier, may be handed over as a love-gift leading to a lork kanowork elopement; as a symbol of release from a ban of silence with awen or nirwat; as a mark of the maturity of dingiri; between close kin as the expression of a kinship duty; it may be used as palanurk magic. These are all characteristic. Its social and symbolic uses cannot be separated from its purely nutritive uses without violence to the tribal realities which some of the most rudimentary accounts of Australian tribes have made clear. We can, in other respects, draw effective distinctions between kinds of aboriginal consumption, based in the one case on the effects on the tribal economy, on stocks, and production, and in the other rather more clearly upon the social ends realized in the process of consumption. Intermediate between them are the consumptive activities which come empirically before the anthropologists' notice. It is these which must serve as the main source of our interests. It is obvious, for instance, that the use of food and certain ninymer articles exercises a greater and more immediate directive influence upon tribal economics than the use of productive equipment; it depletes stocks, brings hunger and want again over the horizon, it is often the signal for the vocalization of demand, and energises

a new cycle of productive activity more immediately, more frequently, and with greater compulsive force. It is clear also that the quality of the social ends attained by the use of food, red ochre, pearl-shell, hair-belts, and ninymer of this class, are different from those attained by the use of such equipment. To both sets of activities we can apply the term consumption, if it is with a clear understanding of its varying meaning and implication. The nexus between them is that they are all intermediary to the satisfaction of wants. The fact that there is systematic organization of economic effort, even that it is capable of systematic study, presumes that it is purposive, directed towards ends which are consistent and stable; and from those ends may legitimately be inferred the existence of such wants. These are the operative and directive forces which energise the economic process and guide its course.

The notion of "wants" is, however, ambiguous. Do we refer to the economic objects wanted, to the ends for which they are wanted, or to both? The economist is concerned with the physical appearances of wants, with measurable effective demand; this is a datum for the anthropologist, too; but he is concerned also with the wider social embodiments of wants. Like the economist he needs to know which economic objects are in demand, which are wanted, which lead to decisive economic action to obtain them; but also he needs to know why those

objects are wanted. For this reason the fertility of the inventory is not sufficient. An inventory of economic products, or possessions, and their physical uses permits the simple inference that they are "wants", but it establishes very little concerning the true social demand for them, its elasticity or inelasticity, or its other social characteristics; so too for the anthropologist it is but a first step to the discovery of the full social implications of economic wants. The physical products of production are, therefore, to the anthropologist, indices of wants rather than themselves, the content of wants. They are the economic means to ends not necessarily contained within or closely revealed by them. And such wants are not forces standing out from the social context like lonely geological residuals, and operative in an isolation which is broken only on the side where they direct the economy; they are not merely magnets drawing the yield of the economy towards them and then stopping; to the extent that they are treated by the anthropologist or conceived as such, their conceptual status is in some peril, and objections may be lodged against them as formidable as may be lodged against the doctrine of "needs", which lie, as it were, at the other end of the social process.

The tribes' consumption of their modest volume of goods and services is, as stated, the end to which their labours in production, are the means. Their claims, obligations and

gains in distribution and exchange are intermediary to that end. Consumption in this sense is to be equated with the set of final uses to which economic resources are put. Such final uses are in considerable complexity before the eyes of everyone who observes aboriginal life - in the activities to be seen in the camp, in the mobile phases of economic life, in rituals, in magic. The nature of these uses differs greatly.

A description of the daily social activities of tribal life necessarily embraces a partial description of the uses, the end - activities and the wants which are relevant to their economic life. It is worth noting that it is mainly in this sphere that we encounter the classic difficulty of separating the economic and the "non-economic". There is little possibility of being able to draw, even in simple aboriginal society, effective distinctions of this sort unless we examine the notion of tribal consumption in more detail. In any case, it must be made clear that the antithesis which is implied may be in some ways a false antithesis; for probably all social activities have their economic aspects to the extent to which they use or draw upon ~~their~~ resources, or divert to one set of activities time, labour, and abilities which might be used in other want-satisfying activities, they are economic. Restating this problem of economic v. non-economic, therefore, we might say that it really represents an attempt to establish where social activities are no longer directly dependent on or closely

conditioned by the use of resources. This is clearly a kind of problem on which current anthropology has had very little to say. So that a full statement of consumption or the final uses of resources, if we are not to strip away the contexts which give meaning, involves us in a description of all the social activities in which the uses of economic objects are embedded. Economic consumptive activities are only with some difficulty isolated from their general empirical context which is simply to say that the economic touches nearly all things in tribal life. But not only are the activities in which resources feature of interest to us, though they must take up a great part even of an outline of the economics of consumption. The economic use of food, for example, is heavily influenced by conventional tastes; by aesthetic preferences; by sumptuary rules based on standards derived from a tradition in which the historical factors which have been at work are not clearly revealed to us. If it is of importance in an economic discussion to make clear the limits within which the economic process occurs, or the conventional idioms prescribed for it, then clearly we must take the account of consumption well beyond the activities in which the principles and standards of consumption are revealed.

The most important problems of consumption which have emerged in this brief sketch are these: (1) a classification

must be made of kinds of consumption which are distinguishable in part by the effect they have upon and the guidance they give to production and in part by the activities with which they are embodied; this is in effect also, or should embrace a description, and a statement of the relative importance, of the ends towards the resources are directed in use; (ii) a statement must be given of the various sumptuary rules which govern the conditions under which resources may be used; this will include some reference to the levels (that is, the volume) of consumption of goods and services by representative social groups, in other words, their standard of living, or consumption; (iii) some attempt must be made to elucidate the nature and social operation of the "wants" operative and directive in the social economy, which is not, it need hardly be said, self-energising or self-directing. In addition, since the levels of consumption are closely wrapped up with the participation of men and women in all the contacts, activities, and satisfactions which their tribal life has to offer, a valuable field for study is (iv) the relation of consumption to the development of economic personality. There remain# the general questions concerning the nature of the aboriginal economy as a whole.

III.

Of all our aboriginal record, this is the barest spot in an almost studiously neglected field. There is an element of strangeness in this, for the social activities of consumption are wrapped up with all the daily passages of native life, including those which by their bizarre or dramatic quality have from the earliest days drawn the attention of the student of native society. The literature of Australian anthropology is thus full of information bearing indirectly on this side of aboriginal economic life; it needs only to be drawn together systematically to make a useful commentary upon the economic elements in activities which yield to the aborigines some of the deeply satisfying experiences of their social life, no less in its changing contemporary form than in its traditional form.

The entire sphere of what may be termed consumption, all those activities, decisions and gains, material and non-material, which surround and follow the final use of resources, needs examination if the rationale of aboriginal aims in life ~~are~~^{is} adequately to be understood. A lack of due appreciation of these aspects of their life has given an incorrect emphasis to much current explanation of tribal decline.

For instance, the tribes now often loosely spoken of as "degenerate" or "detrribalized" are, among other things, suffering from a kind of economic depression in a characteristic, if simple, form. Certain hard facts about them stand out so sharply in firm outline that it is surprising how little attention has been paid to them. They throw a good deal of native "policy" into somewhat unfavourable relief. Native real income has obviously shrunkⁿ; many tribes now live nearer the level of bare subsistence than, as far as can be established, they ever did in their traditional life; in possessions they are clearly poverty-stricken; their stocks of food, raw materials, and manufactured articles, always limited, are now in many, if not in all partly civilized tribes, insufficient for all the requirements which still exist in their social life. Cultural wants, wider far than mere needs of subsistence, survive among them, but manifestly are inadequately met. In many tribal camps the poor and barely sufficient food, the restrictions of the new order of life, the unwillingness or inability to return to the old life where new tastes cannot be gratified, the scantiness of reward for work done for whites, the fact that many natives are induced (some compelled) to use most of their time for much of

the year in the service of whites in work which is of low productivity for the aborigines, combine to produce an existence in the camps which yields only a thin and shrunken satisfaction to the depleted tribes; in many senses native standards of living have been reduced}.

If for each use of the term "degenerate" to describe the native way of life under these new conditions we were to write "reduced real incomes"; if for "loss of interest in life" we were to substitute "the material and social effects of depression"; and if to each use of such a term as "depopulation" we were to add "disruption of methods of co-operation in production, loss of personal sources of income, destruction of a large part of tribal and inter-tribal welfare" we should perhaps strike nearer the active source of tribal disintegration. At all events we should show that the reputedly simple "decay" of the tribes in contact with whites is a much more complicated process, and one, moreover, which has greater possibilities of control than inhere in policy based on such concepts as "inevitable decline".

1. This is one only of several objections to be taken to such simplest accounts of Australian culture change. What notion of social process is involved by such descriptions? The ellipses are too many, perhaps, to enable one to be quite certain. They encourage us, however, to think of aboriginal tribes, the intelligent possessors of a culture, "coming" into contact with whites, not actively seeking contact or permitting contact once established to be prolonged. They often represent the tribes as passively receiving blows, vices, diseases, new customs, education, material equipment, higher and lower notions of morality, and so on, from the alien culture, but little comment is offered upon the decisions in which the natives may be involved concerning the new elements of culture

(Continued overleaf)

For the aborigines' resources, as I have shown, have to some extent altered; their systems of production have changed, like their equipment; the volume of their real incomes, the particular commodities which make it up, the sources of this income, have undergone substantial changes; the traditional patterns of exchange have been modified; although an economic process still goes on even in the most disturbed tribes. So far we have been given no really clear account of these changes, or of the resistances to change, nor of the extent to which they might help to clarify the still largely unexplained deteriorations and survivals of

(Continuation of footnote)

to "receive" or "reject", or the principles on which or the forces because of which discrimination is exercised, or, what is perhaps more important, what real concepts of culture, transmission, and change the commentators are working with. The objections to such formulations of culture change and diffusion are not, therefore, wholly to be summed up in the criticism that they imply a mechanical or automatic theory of culture, which, on some ground we consider to be fairly obvious, we assume to be mistaken. If cultural processes are not "mechanical" or "automatic", what is the nature of the processes? We seem to be compelled to take up a more positive view. We may, for instance, adopt the view that the economic process, a part of a greater whole, is a system of activities proceeding from decisions which in turn are (ultimately) based on estimates of cost. I will not attempt to discuss the validity of this view here, but wish to point out that such a theory enables us to transform the sterile assertion, that natives "come" into contact with whites and "decline", into a much more interesting (and perhaps more fertile) hypothesis of the type that e.g. the tribes remain in "parasitic" camps around white settlement because they are there able to maintain life at less "cost" to themselves under current conditions where they are impelled by new wants and where their former efficiency has to some extent changed. This hypothesis may be completely wrong; there is at least some evidence which appears to support it; at least it is worth an attempt at substantiation, and if wrong, it may lead to another more adequate. The underlying problem, in any case, remains. The form of most current explanations throw very little light upon it, as well as making use of a highly dubious theory of social mechanics.

the aboriginal tribes which have made substantial contact with white society. It is a repeated commonplace that the tribes "decay" when they make such contacts; that they "lose" their technology; that much of their interest in life disappears; that they "abandon" their old ways, acquire white vices, and eventually become extinct. The problem of explanation of such changes is not yet fully explored. This phase of native-white relations is usually dealt with by highly general propositions which point to a number of broad and striking correlations - drift to white settlement correlated with loss of technology, development of parasitism, acquisition of vices; loss of interest in traditional ways of life correlated with alienation or disturbance of territorial possessions, repressive measures by settlers and the administrations, mission influence, and the cumulative effects of depopulation; depopulation correlated with disease; poor food, sedentary habits, and loss of vital tone and interest in life.

All such correlations are striking and significant, but it is doubtful whether the continued recital of them really "explains" tribal decline. On occasions some general causal sequences are proffered: e.g. disturbance of native land-holdings leading to decline or loss of totemic ceremonies which are based on land. It can hardly be supposed however

that these have given us an adequate explanation of the characteristic course tribal change has taken in Australia. Alongside such highly general changes (losses) which the tribes have undergone must be placed, as seldom is done, the striking constancies (resistances to change) which the tribes have exhibited. A scientific explanation must attempt to cover both. Here in native economics, and not least in consumption, we have some such constancies and changes. Resources, knowledge, production have all changed; but there remains an orderly disposal of what resources are possessed; the main traditional principles of production, exchange, and consumption remain as before, even when tribal numbers are depleted; the "ends" of economic activity (to be outlined later) remain much as before. But we know singularly little of the details of such economic change. In particular we do not really know how native incomes have behaved under changing conditions in Australia. Rise and decline in the volume of real income are not the only criteria to be noted. The content of income, the proportions of constituents, and the proportionate sources have also changed. That the volume of native income in the semi-civilized tribes is smaller is not open to much doubt. The decline in population has itself affected the total volume of tribal output; on this account alone real income per head is smaller. There have been fewer

people to take part in production; surplus yields have been more than proportionately smaller; and the cumulative decline has proceeded probably at an increasing rate where, as on the Daly river, the economic fortunes of small contiguous tribes are wrapped up one with the other. There is substantial evidence of declining standards of living, in the tribal disturbances attributable and attributed to them; in the cessation of ritual activities; in friction and fights over non-payment of dues; in complaints by old men against the young men, and by creditors against debtors; and in the black mood of spiritual depression which proceeds not, as alleged, from loss in interest in life, but rather from frustration of aims still thought legitimate and possible, from denial or inability to secure the satisfactions which were part of traditional native social life. I was given a dramatic illustration of this in 1932 when the Marithiel tribe, part of whom are farm workers for most of the year and part of whom fluctuate uncertainly between nomadic bush life and prolonged visits to the white centres where their relatives work, were unable adequately to "finance" an initiation ceremony. This was held near one of the river farms; the workers had not yet been paid for their help on the farm; they had treated the visiting tribes very stingily, contrary to all the traditions, and this aroused great resentment and complaint.

There is a substantial body of evidence also on the changing content and balance of such incomes. In the more changed tribes of the Daly river (such as the Ngolok Wanggar) depopulation has ruthlessly cut the important economic services which enter into real income. The attraction of young men away to towns, farms, and cattle stations, the increase of cynicism towards their customs and traditions, the whittling down of elders' authority, have tended to drain away the specific increments of income, to make older people more dependent on their own efforts, and, by losing them kue and warunun and kuyundut, deprived them of a means of income which has an esteem-value as well as a more strictly economic value. These conditions destroy not only income but status, take away the means of prestige as well as the means of material welfare, and compel a readjustment of personality and hopes in life to the more meagre attainments which are possible on a lower level of productivity and income. In the company of kinsfolk and of neighbours whose lives are correspondingly shrunken, and in the context of whites' bleak indifference, in some cases also faced with a degree of active repression, it may be thought surprising that there is so much laughter and high spirits in the camps.

There are other constituent changes as well; there have been wholesale transfers to or substitutions of articles drawn from white sources. It is impressive to note the ways

in which some of these new acquisitions have been directed to traditional purposes. The economic means, but not the social ends, have changed. Tribal foods and food habits show alteration; different articles are in use as productive equipment and as the means of payment. For the four or five months in which natives drawn from many tribes work on the farms they live throughout the working week, and often almost entirely, upon white-flour bread or damper, boiled (unsweetened) rice, weak tea sweetened with sugar, supplemented by whatever foods native non-workers contribute. Mostly these are meagre supplements; a few farmers employ shooting-boys to bring wallaby and kangaroo meat to the camps; small supplies of fish also find their way there; but often there is meat shortage, especially in recent years, when there has been some pressure on the locally-available supply of natural foods. The food is monotonous and to some natives not over-palatable; if it were not for the tea, sugar, and tobacco, and for the prospect of the final pay-off at the end of the season, it would be accepted less equably. For this entire period the tone and texture of the natives' life is changed; they live to a pattern not unlike that of white farm workers; they are given three times daily a meal which is prepared for them; they work under supervision, on some farms throughout the day for a period of about eight hours, on others during the cooler hours

but for much the same total period; they have to conform to certain disciplines (sex segregation, driving by foremen, fixed output) which prove irksome but must be accepted; and only at night and at week-ends (the $5\frac{1}{2}$ -day working week is in force) are they free to do what they please. Night life in the camps during the working period, except in the most broken up tribes, seems to conform almost completely to its traditional forms; but the daily working period is an almost complete breach with tradition. Yet it has not become the dominant pattern in native life; wherever the opportunity offers, at nights, at week-ends, in the portion of the year when the farm workers are released and join the non-workers, they revert to a way of life which is closely constant with tradition, and from this phase of native life the white farmers are entirely excluded. On the other hand, material elements of the white economy have been incorporated within the native economy to a degree which makes them now scarcely separable from it. Tobacco, flour, rice, tea, clothes, steel and iron tools and instruments and implements, wool, thread, cords and lines, knives and razors, are used by the tribes and are in demand throughout the year, whether or not the camp happen to be in active contact with the white settlements. Some of these objects (threads, fibre, wool) are additional or alternative to the native materials of the same order, both being in use; others (such as axes, knives, steel fish-hooks)

represent permanent displacements of the comparable native products, which are now looked on by the natives themselves as inferior, and are no longer used; others (food) are for the most part alternatives rather than substitutes. Tobacco, and less markedly tea, are specific new wants of an imperative, almost an obsessive character. Tobacco is probably the most desirable good to be obtained from whites; to get it natives surrender almost anything; those addicted to it suffer a craving which seriously damages their interests; it serves sub-monetary functions in a wider sense than any other object in native life; it has made a more severe impact on native culture than anything else. Among its effects has been to provide a single means of payment, widely if not universally acceptable, which shows a marked tendency to replace on many occasions the multiple kinds of ninymer traditionally in use. In itself this is not necessarily serious; but the indirect effect on native welfare is cumulative and costly. It tends to slacken the demand for ninymer, cuts down the production of such articles, makes the replenishment of stocks extremely difficult, and directs much native effort and denial of immediate needs to the accumulation of an asset which wastes rapidly and in use confers little if any lasting benefit. Like food in the older tradition, tobacco in the new way of life is sui generis; but their rôles are not comparable. Tobacco is

the only economic good obtained from whites which, drawn into use in the native social economy, has any detrimental effects; the other articles listed above are on the whole new materia economica used to meet established and constant wants. The contents of aboriginal wants has changed, but to a large extent not the pattern of aboriginal consumption.

IV.

We may consider the consumption or final use of four groups of native resources, assuming as given the activities which have brought them to the possession of their final users:

- i. food
- ii. economic services.
- iii. durable goods.
- iv. productive equipment.

1. Food is, as shown earlier, either mi or awo, and this stamps its pattern on consumption; mi food has its special ritual, uses and so too has awo. The preliminary phases of the economy, are also affected by this dichotomy; its relation, for instance, to the sex division of labour, has been discussed. Food is likewise either tyayait or tyayirk, and these divisions connote the eligibility of men and women to eat such foods, and the ritual suitability of other foods for social uses. A wide range of both mi and awo are tyayait to boys at their various initiations, to girls

and women in menstruation, to men during their wives' pregnancy. The ceremonies which render the foods tyayirk again, restore the persons concerned to a position of consumptive equality (except where any other restrictions bear upon them). Such conventional rules for, and restraints upon, the use of food are, in fact, common among the aborigines of the Daly region, as they are among other Australian tribes. We are here in a field of simple sumptuary rules, not merely negative, as are those of the tyayait group, but often becoming by their injunctions positive rules of guidance and prescription. Thus some foods are more appropriate than others, according to tribal tradition, on specified occasions - yams, geese eggs, and wild honey in the kué feasts. On other occasions, the order in which the foods are eaten becomes almost if not just as important as the foods themselves: this is notably so in the way in which individuals are given their release from the 'tween-stages of initiation. Kangaroo must be eaten before opossum is eaten, barramundi before turtle, crocodile eggs before geese eggs. Before full power is won to exercise consumptive equality in these respects, to eat what they wish, young men must wait years, according to strict practice, until they are well into middle manhood. The disqualifications which in Western Europe are the products of unequal command of buying power are here the products of unequal (or, perhaps more accurately, incomplete) ritual status.

Rules of these kinds do not appear, however, so obviously in the ordinary daily consumption of food; here, whatever is available is eaten by perhaps the majority of people, apparently without any marked complication by other conventions. There are, of course, the common requirements of etiquette, the requirements of mannerly habits at meal times when, even if food is scarce and men are hungry, there is sharing; the food is not snatched; there is no outward impatience at the time which may be taken in food preparation and though portions may be flung with apparent carelessness from one to another, the food as often as not falling into the dirt, the conventions are still being adequately observed. One can, on this fairly simple level, set up also a rough seasonal pattern of food consumption. Certain staples - kangaroo, fish, and other awo foods - are consumed throughout the year, with little variation on the whole; other foods - yams, wild honey, eggs, fruit, grass-seeds, tubers, lilies - have peak seasons of ripeness or maturity. In the case of fish, birds, snakes, and marsupials, the aborigines have a clear and general knowledge of the seasons when these objects of the hunt are "fat". The arrival of the peak-seasons galvanizes the drive for each special food. The localities where they are most common are always well known, and it will be an interesting contribution to our

knowledge of Australian tribal life when a close record is made of such seasonal movements in relation to known and plotted food supplies. Native dietary habits; the extent to which food monotony contributes to their mobility; and their taste preferences, are all fields where comparable advances may be made.

For the purpose of this chapter, however, a number of larger issues underlying consumption will be given due attention.

These four groups - food, services, durable articles, equipment - are all economic means. They are not, however, on the same plane in consumption. The social circumstances which in each case surround their consumption are different.

Food is clearly sui generis in the native economy. Its productive period is generally shorter than that of any other economic object. No appreciable stocks of it are carried. Nor is either the production or the consumption of food governed by consideration of the need to accumulate reserves, or the danger of glutting reserves, or the need to conserve reserves. Its consumption period is correspondingly short. In determining, therefore, what the "consumption" of food implies in the aboriginal economy, there are few complications of volume, time-duration, depreciation, maintenance, and so on, to be allowed for.

On a purely physical plane, the importance of food to the aborigines is very great; not simply because they, like other men, need sustenance, but because over long periods the amount of effort necessarily expended upon food production under nomadic conditions of life, with poor and undeveloped equipment, tends to absorb the greater portion of their time and energies, thus leading to a fixed disposition of their economic means.

But mi and awo are more to the aborigines than merely food. Their social rôle enhances their importance, and leads a number of intricate economic problems. The same hard-won food which may nourish a man and his family may be given to parents, to near kinsfolk, to visitors, to special friends, or to the camp in general under wunjurk obligations, and represent much more than the transfer of food between persons who are hungry and desire to eat. Such transfers are mundane to a degree which cloaks a symbol more clearly revealed in the gifts of food to lovers, to paléet relatives, to warunun relatives, to a sister or a nirwat namesake as a release from the ban of warbaitj silence, to the guests who come to a marmurn ceremony, as palwa to the seniors in charge of adult initiations, to the memakaloan men who bring a boy back to mununuk for his public initiation, or as a fee to a wanangal medicine-man. These uses of food are the very stuff of daily camp life, bringing themselves with dramatic emphasis to the

attention of the anthropologist, and offering alluring possibilities for the study of the symbolisms involved.

Economically, they give possibilities no less interesting, particularly because in these and other instances one sees that food in use verges towards and takes on sub-monetary functions.

There is no clear way of estimating to what extent tribal requirements of food for such non-physiological uses lay additional productive burdens upon the economy over and above those which, in any case, are required to maintain native life. Certain obvious facts meet the eye: there is little or no food storage; there is little or no food waste or surplus; the occasions on which neighbour tribes are called in by message-sticks to partake of food abundance are comparatively rare. Evidently such facts may mean that what can crudely be separated off as the "social", as distinct from the "physical" uses of food, facilitate certain independently existing social relations; and do so apparently, without greatly distorting from the patterns which, it might be supposed, would be developed in the absence of those ulterior uses, the process of the economy or the disposition of economic means which it represents. One enters here upon a theory of social and economic determinism; the hypothesis involved is clearly a matter for a stringent field inquiry; but

the importance of the issue ought not to be overlooked. The absence of stocks, the rarity of surplus; the apparent absence of material progress; the common pace which production and consumption appear to keep, leading, where adjustment is necessary, more to the negative adjustment represented by a slowing down of productive effort and idling in camp, rather than to the positive response of developing and exploiting further outlets for surplus - what do these mean? They appear to be really crucial indices of the nature of tribal economy, to which an analysis of consumption provides a key.

There are, of course, frequent small surpluses of food over and above immediate personal capacities, sometimes over and above camp needs of this order; the means for disposing of them are always available in the network of social relationships which (as shown in the chapter on distribution) involve, for almost all the persons concerned in them, obligations to make gifts to other persons. It is to aspects of the uses made of food in this connexion to which I refer by the term "sub-monetary".

It is a small license only to describe the claims which underlie these gifts as debt-claims; but it is serviceable to do so for it makes rather more clear than is otherwise possible

the ways in which food serves, if these claims are regarded as indicative of debts, as the means of payment of those debts. But food is not money, or currency, or purchasing power; in no ways do mi or awo serve as measures of value, though there are gradations in the amounts of food needed for specific services; nor (as was shown in the chapter on exchange) do they serve as a media of exchange in any of the material transfers of native economy; nor are such foods characteristically stores of "wealth", though plentiful food-supplies enable the aborigines to realize some of the social ends which the possession of other forms of wealth brings within the grasp. Food is a means of debt-payments; but so too are ninymer articles, both manufactured and in the raw state; and so, again, are economic and other services. It might even be said that we have in aboriginal food a simple analogue of the circulation capital of a modern economy, though it is perilous to strain the analogy too far. Under the aboriginal system of production food is not used to buy the services of the means of production, even of intermediate productive foods or capital goods (such as raw materials and equipment); but it is used to sustain the human agents of production during the course of a productive undertaking, and the cost which this represents can to some extent be regarded as offset (even recovered) by the stream of

objects and services which the activity liberates.

By comparison with an economy in which money is used we see, in the aboriginal economy, passing the obvious differences of scale and complexity, a narrowing of the gap between effort and the attainment of the means of real income, and a simplification of the process of payment, but no essential difference in the content of real income. Food, durable consumer goods, and services of a varied character are, among the aborigines as among the members of a Western community, the substantial content of income, in the one case largely bought with money, in the other open to more direct access without the intermediacy of a common medium. The stage of development of aboriginal economy is one in which some of the special functions of money still adhere to food, services, and durable consumer goods, which, under aboriginal conditions, lack a common measure and mutual medium.

The power to command economic services depends only secondarily upon the level of income. The primary control is from acknowledged sex, kinship, and ritual privileges. These have already been described. Most of these services are, therefore, not performed for anything in the nature of wages, but are drawn by the pressure of conceded obligations. The reciprocities involved are not well-measured compensations.

For küyüdü and anbüdü there are no return services or payments; from the performance of camp chores, the transport of camp gear, women derive no compensatory gain, though there is a co-operative gain. On the other hand, though a woman's love services are not bought with gifts, they are certainly usually followed by them, as are the services of a medicine-man, and the services of borrowed equipment.

The descriptive details of these manifold activities centering around the consumption of food, and the rendering of services, some of them extremely ceremonialized, have been enlarged upon elsewhere in this essay; the others will be described in another context. At the moment, my main purpose is to state as firmly as possible the general principles which underlie them. Irresistibly, these general issues present themselves, and force us to a stage of exposition beyond that immediately to be attained by the detailed empirical record.

Consumption may be, in a general sense, the final object of economic activities, but the real end of productive economic activities is not merely a further set of activities. We are obliged, as pointed out earlier, to postulate wants, subjective states or drives underlying and independent of the activities, as the final dynamic agencies in the economic process, and as indices of the ends realized by that process; we are forced to embark upon a difficult estimate of the

economic requirements of social personality to render intelligible our account of why men, with alternative possibilities of action, spend their means in the particular ways expressed in those activities. To these general problems many of the recordable details are irrelevant. Those of obvious relevance are given wherever possible in this account.

The various uses of food outlined above comprise one of the constants of the tribal economy, one of the most clearly measurable economic facts, probably the dominant immediate directive economic influence. Constant and persistent in the background from which come, if not all the impulses to effort, then all the traditional forms to effort, they give a daily catalysis to production, while themselves staying unchanged. They, as social formations of wants, have an important place in determining the activities which absorb the greater proportion of the aborigines' time and energies. But although, as was shown earlier, the productive objectives are usually clearly in view, it does not appear that we can speak of proportioned production of food being undertaken, always with one or more of these ends in view. Food is obviously the great daily need; the major economic drive comes from daily bodily needs; and only in a marginal sense, and on special occasions, as when special foods are needed for ritual

purposes or occasions of important ceremonial, can we think of the aboriginal productive process as each day swinging into operation on lines closely determined by the consumptive patterns of native tradition. There are such patterns of consumption; these do represent traditionally fixed choices, decisions between the relative importance of the social ends to which the limited tribal resources may be directed; their general effect is to give a prescriptive bias to the productive tasks, the order of tasks, the kind of product, its occasion and agent of use; but no one who watches the stirring camps on the raw winter and the lazy summer mornings can doubt that the main drive is coming from hunger, and the dominant satisfaction achieved is that of hunger satisfied; the other drives, needs, patterns of effort, and satisfactions are for the most part ancillary. The empirical field situation which confronts the field-worker rarely happens to be one in which they can be effectively separated, except in a few dramatic instances. With a few exceptions (as in the case of the kué feasts, or food prepared specially for palwa) it is rarely possible to quantify the amount of food production undertaken for each such end as those listed above. But it is at this consumptive end of the economics of food that, having established broadly its power to determine so much of economic life, we can most clearly

see its social ramifications. At the productive end there are many aspects of food economics conceptually separable; at the consumptive end, we have, to help us, the visible distinctions of dramatic food ceremonies, of rival claims, of well-formulated penalties for diversion to other ends. Here are traditional fixations covering a dozen aspects of the prime economic issue of how food shall be used once it is produced. Some of the rules of distribution from this point of view fall into place as preliminary prescriptions of the aboriginal theory of consumption.

The conditions which govern the consumption of durable goods and productive equipment may be considered together. Lists of these articles have been given. Their range is limited; their varieties relatively few; there is great rigidity in styles and habits of usage, for both are based upon a tradition of some fixity; but it is to be noted that changes do occur.¹ But there is no common medium of valuation of these objects; their use is not governed by close calculations of reward or share of yield; so that the nature of their "consumption" is not easy to expound except in such terms as period and social range of serviceability, rate of depreciation, and conditions of replacement. It is in any concrete sense impracticable to try to calculate the

1. v. Chapter VII pp. 61.

rate of consumption of equipment by estimating the amount of wear and tear in producing measured amounts of durable consumer goods.

As in the case of food the tendency towards a speedy equilibrium between the production and the consumption of durable economic goods is very marked. Taking the total volume of spears, spear-throwers, red and yellow ochre, and other raw materials and manufactured articles which enter a tribe over a period, as the yield of productive and exchange activities, it is readily seen how great a proportion of them immediately, or within a relatively short period, enter into direct use. Scarcely any remain with the producers, unused, without imputed and not merely potential uses; scarcely any remain as unused stocks, not earmarked for known destinations, with those to whom they are distributed; scarcely any lie in the hands of intermediaries, who may (if raw materials or partly finished articles) have worked on them, awaiting claimants. The precise periods which elapse before produced goods are placed in final use or are consumed is not easy to determine; there are, of course, such intervals - the chapter on exchange will have made this clear. Stocks are accumulated by groups and by individuals who have or expect to have future commitments - kué to make, initiations to provide for, merbok to reciprocate, mima to return, nirwat namesake to pay, and so on. There is, to this extent, saving - abstention from

immediate consumption. The proportion of durable goods so withheld is substantial. The ostensible motive for such saving is not the expectation of material profit, to be won by intelligent opportunism as opportunity arises: rather is it with the intention of meeting due and conceded claims in the expectation of a profit only partly material. It is of great importance to note that the smooth flow of tribal economic life thus depends, in a sense, upon a certain volume of saving being maintained; but the really important matter is the constituent savings which together make up that volume, rather than the total volume itself. In other words, each of the claims and counter-claims which exist as a complex network within a tribal group, as shown in the chapters on exchange and distribution, need to be met. The total volume of durable goods withheld from immediate consumption is adequate if these claims are adequately met. In these circumstances it is somewhat difficult to speak with any clarity of the empirical character of consumption of such durable articles. The speed of their passage from individual to individual within a group, and over wider areas, enables them to be used among a people where there is no tradition of property accumulation for its exclusive use in perpetuity, where there is no substantial tendency towards or apparent desire for material progress, and where distinction and satisfaction are won by use rather than by possession, to

satisfy the wants of a wide range of people. Few such articles stay in the same hands until they are no longer useful. In such circumstances, therefore, consumption is a complicated and expansive process; the idioms of aboriginal final use, the nature of their wants, and the circumstances in which they may be met, are not readily comprehended by a classical definition of consumption.

Native equipment on the whole has not a long life of use. Canoes are still servicesable after a number of years; some are six and seven years old; they are patched with mud and bark; leaks are caulked on each journey, and when they begin to wear; there is no real attempt made to maintain their appearance, or their condition, so long as they remain roughly efficient; they are usually abandoned only when they are so waterlogged, or decayed, that they are useless or dangerous to be afloat in. Even so, a number of those in actual use are rickety and "crazy" (the pidgin term) in steering qualities. Huts are rebuilt seasonally (except the semi-permanent shelters on the white farms). Often the frameworks of poles remain and are utilized again. Camp sites may be used for a number of seasons; deaths, the development of insanitary conditions, and food supply fluctuations, may render the construction of new sites necessary; such productive labours are done jointly by both men and women, the men removing heavy timber, the women clearing the ground. Men keep personal tools, weapons, and

implements often for long periods. Spear-throwers, particularly, are kept in careful preservation; they are a man's most intimate possession - an essential weapon, a decorative object, a tool, a headrest, a prized personal ornament. Care is given to greasing them to keep them waterproof, to rubbing them with blood and red ochre, to keeping the peg well lashed and hafted with gum. Spears, too, are well tended; the tips (iron, stone, wire, and wood) are carefully preserved and fitted to new shafts when the others loosen, warp, or splinter; some spears last intact for years, though re-setting and re-hafting may be done frequently. A spear which strikes an animal is often strained; the stone tips may loosen or be broken off; a spear which misses and strikes the ground or a tree is usually damaged; they may become wet and waterlogged (particularly bamboo spears) in crossing rivers, or in the summer rains, and so need drying, relashing, and repainting. Because of these conditions continual care is given to their maintenance and repair. When not in use they are placed point down in the ground, or leaned lightly against branches so that they will not warp; they are rarely left lying on the ground where they may be walked on. These articles of equipment are all transportable; they are kept with men all day and every day; there are no local stocks of such equipment to be drawn upon at each camp or area visited. But almost every billabong or watercourse where canoes are of service has its one or two canoes; ~~nearly every camp has its~~

~~one or two canoes~~; nearly every camp has its sheets of bark, its grinding stones, and (formerly) some stone tools. These, and local game traps, fish weirs, are perhaps the only articles of fixed equipment used by the natives. The canoes are usually drawn up out of the water, and buried under piles of leaves or branches in the shade when they are to be left for long periods; when they are in fairly frequent use they are left floating, but not in watercourses where the flood-scour is likely to be strong. Traps and weirs not well tended; they are renovated and made efficient when required.

V.

To participate fully in tribal life, to gratify the social ambitions a native may conventionally hold, in the changed conditions of tribal life no less than in its traditional circumstances, the aborigines need a substantial quantity of economic objects, both as income and as savings out of income. Food, raw materials, and manufactured artifacts in a quantity which would be sufficient to maintain life are insufficient to meet the requirements in any tribe we care to take, ^{of} a fully developed native social personality. Experience of any tribe, in fact shows that its material standard of life is far higher than that of subsistence; the normal requirements of a man or woman taking an active share in tribal activities, are correspondingly higher; the cycle of life of men and women, as a sequence ^{of} ceremonies, contacts

and relationships all marked by receipts and payments, shows that the adequate adult personality has to be economically highly competent. It seems to be the genius of the tribal economy that, despite its isolation and with its poor equipment, and its limited resources, with no great stimulus to or opportunity of material progress, without concentrations of economic power in a few hands, without "boosting" the economic process so that it produces accumulations of stocks, it still enables men and women to meet their manifold requirements while the total social economy remains ~~still~~ on a low level of productivity. How is this done? It is achieved by enrichment of mutual relationships through the free and liberal use of a few possessions; by multiplication of the functions of food and other resources, by increasing social contacts rather than by a high level of output; by fluidity and quickness of transfers rather than by parsimonious accumulation for personal use and profit; by an upper limitation of personal ambitions. Personal striving to attain material competence exists, but no instability in the economy results, because great power concentrations do not often occur, and do not often seem to be desired; where to a limited extent they do occur they are not exploited for personal material gain; the tribal economy is the instrument (but not the principal instrument) of social ambition; but the idioms of ambition, the kinds of power and personal gratification which native men and women seek, do not

lead to the economic subordination of groups.

The social life-cycles of men and women are different. The economics of their lives also differ. The shape their lives take in relation to the resources to which they succeed and which they inherit, to the economic commitments they assume, to the possessions they normally acquire, to the economic aspirations it is thought appropriate for them to have, again differ slightly. It is possible, in fact, to lay down a sex pattern of economic life, a predictable conformation, to which men and women are encouraged and educated to, and to which the overwhelming majority do, conform. We can see features in common, but also distinct differences, in the male and female economics of pre-puberty, puberty, adulthood, marriage and parenthood, and old age.

The economic life-cycle of women is less complex; reaches its maturity sooner; provides on the whole fewer occasions for economic transactions; is in a strict economic sense not less important than that of men, (because in essence it is complementary) but is perhaps less important in a wider social sense; and, as I have suggested earlier, on the whole gives women a smaller degree of social and economic control of tribal activities. In this sense, and in this sense only, is there a degree of sex inequality and undeniably it exists, but native women are not drabs, drudges, or lowly-placed inferiors. They own property, land, tools, implements,

utensils, weapons, decorative articles, secret possessions, in the same senses in which men own such property, and possess over such objects strictly comparable rights of use and disposal; they succeed to and inherit rights to land, material and non-material possessions (totems, songs, magical secrets, dances) as men do; they have a series of economic sex functions (described in the chapters on production, distribution and exchange), complementary to and in no sense socially inferior to those of men; they have an autonomous privy life of ritual, magic and sex intrigue, of which men claim to know, and may in fact know, little; in their social and personal contacts with men they claim and uphold conventional rights as persons, rights as women, and rights as women standing to other persons in relationships which connote specific rights. The social rôles of privilege and obligation of sisters, daughters, wives, daughters-in-law, mothers-in-law have already been made clear. They may be (and are) physically abused and browbeaten; they are often compulsorily and against their own wishes made available to men, under the customs of maderma and lorik kanowok and malnin, for sexual purposes; they may be betrothed to men, or forcibly taken in concubinage or marriage by men, to whom they are unwilling to go; yet none of these facts controvert the more basic fact that their traditional rights, conceded and not infrequently upheld by men, and vigorously upheld by women, give them a

social and economic rôle and a social footing in almost all respects the equal of those of native men.

Consumption, in all its wide meaning, and native social personality, are clearly interlocked. The level and constituents of consumption, the standard and content of material welfare, are prime determinants of the kind of life the aborigines may lead, and the gratifications they may derive from it. A falling income affects them much as it affects a European. It restricts their participation in social life. A rising income confers, in general terms, benefits, of the kind that rising incomes bring in our economy; but this side of the analogy must not be strained too far. The upper limits of traditionally serviceable increments to native income are fairly determinate; above a certain level the utility of further real income increases at a sharply diminishing rate, for the traditional ways in which native income can be "spent", that is, the uses which may be made of it, are limited. There is reason to believe that native economy has in some instances been dislocated by large-scale accretions of real wealth, no less than by beggary. That is to say, native economy is probably traditionally adjusted to a rate of flow which has definite upper limits. Once such limits are passed, it is difficult for a tribe or small group to absorb, or to know how to use, great new supplies without seriously upsetting current indebtedness and the general

rythm of life.

VI.

The things which the aborigines traditionally do with their real income are the best index of their wants. They first satisfy the creature wants - for food, weapons, tools, implements, shelter, and for the maintenance of the agents which they use to secure them. But these are the core, not the whole body, of their social life. There are imperative cultural wants - all the requirements of traditional standards of material life, of tribal fashion, of ambition, of personal reputation. Each of these, reflecting what is actually the common way of life, a way it is apparently deeply desired to follow, is linked with a want or a set of wants which lead to economic action. Native institutions express their traditional standards. Fashion, ambition, and reputation supply evidence of themselves every day in every camp. Standards of life, for instance, are to be judged by the need of lavishness in marmurn, of full adequacy in kue, of generous treatment of mamakaloan visitors, not by the minimum needs of the body. By tradition these important ceremonies take place every year; sometimes twice and thrice in the same dry season; they necessitate substantial food preparations; a standard of life on subsistence level could not cope with them. A theory of wants, whether they be the wants of traditional standards, of current fashion, of personal and group ambitions, or of established reputations, is thus a theory of motivation to

action; if the traditions of a tribal economy represent, as we may believe they do, a set of economic constants, of decisions of choice in institutional form, as to the relative importance of the ends to be met in allocating scarce means, a theory of wants is also a theory of social structure, for we are making assertions that there are fixed dispositions, or at least tendencies to fixed dispositions, of economic means. A theory of wants is also in part a theory of personality; for wants not common to groups can be of little economic importance, and wants which are common to groups must in a society where the material aspects of life so dominate the daily round, largely define the social personalities of those who are in common motivated by such wants. All told, such considerations impel attention to the sphere of cultural wants, if we are to have insight into the wants of greatest economic importance - important, that is to say, in their contemporary effect on the disposal of means, in their historical effect on the structure of native society, and in the way they mould or indicate native personality.

Several points must first be recalled. The limited range of aboriginal social opportunity has been stressed, also the narrowed need for the natives to make complicated and difficult choices between different lines of economic action. The altjira period supplies most of the guides to action. The native economy does, in fact, represent a system of fairly

rigid historical choices, to which conformity is now a social virtue; a traditional solution of how to live, given a certain degree of isolation, knowledge and technical equipment, in a sub-tropical environment; a solution which, perhaps because of its adequacy, has become relatively static and ill-disposed to change. A historico-deterministic explanation of the main body of aboriginal wants is also possible along these lines; but satisfying evidence is lacking. But one can see compulsions and expedients, arising from the physical setting of life, revealed clearly enough in the content and body of such wants. For natives, however, as well as for anthropologist, seeing history only as it is revealed in the present, the contemporary situation is one in which there are powerful and honoured (often revered) traditional arrangements prescribing that on such-and-such an occasion it must be these ceremonies, these performers, this ritual, this order of events, this place, these presents obtained from these people. Committed to material obligations, permitted to assert economic privileges, actively encouraged to hold certain economic ambitions, the tribes live in such a prescriptive context. The whole context is constantly clarified by incidents and social activity, few natives going untouched by them; oral tradition, precept, gossip and living example continually bring such rules to attention. This is the kind of tribal background which gives the form and prescribes the content of aboriginal economic wants. The structure of such wants lies in the system of relationships

through which, being expressed, they result in economic action and in the social consequences of this action.

Aboriginal wants, we must conclude, are institutions. At least, they have institutional form. They are not simply individual and personal desires. The flow of economic goods is towards the constant aspects of institutional life where economic utilities are used in known and traditional ways. There is no aboriginal production in speculation of future demand, or in the expectation of a fashion growing, or being induced, for as yet unwanted or insufficiently wanted products; all that is produced has a use; what is produced is used and used fairly rapidly; all economic products in this sense are wanted. Institutions summate these wants & they contain their content, they shape the process of action intended to procure them, they prescribe the use, they regularize the gratification proceeding from use.

Each economic good is, therefore, an index but not a precise index of a want. Where goods are perfect or nearly perfect substitutes (like native vegetable foods) they are both indexes of the same want. Where a good has or can have several uses (like the spear-thrower) it serves several wants. So that for this reason alone no simple inference from an inventory of goods to a corresponding list of wants is possible or desirable. An economic object, in itself meaningless when taken from its context, is only part of the content of the want it serves; and the want, without the means of its

marked off as a "want" or representative of a "want".

Each economic good is, therefore, an index but not a precise index of a want, interpreted in this sense. Where goods are perfect or nearly perfect substitutes (like many articles of native vegetable foods) they are both indexes of the same want. Where a good has or can have several uses (like the spearthrower) it serves several wants. These will be useful principles on which to study many native institutional arrangements, especially where the range of goods is so small and conventional requirements so rigid, as in the Australian tribes; the material substratum of every institutional activity is perhaps their most readily studied feature. But the general point towards which this statement is directed is that no simple inference from an inventory of goods to a corresponding list of "wants" is possible or, if it were, of much value.

Another point to be made is that an economic object, material or nonmaterial, is itself meaningless when removed from its context; so much is obvious; but we should see that an economic object, in the same sense, is only part of the content of the want which it serves, and the want, considered as something apart from the means of its

through which, being expressed, they result in economic action, and in the social consequences of this action.

Aboriginal wants are not "floating" personal desires; they are securely anchored in aboriginal institutions, and are only intelligibly understood as part of such institutions. It may even be said that aboriginal wants are themselves the institutions, at least that they have institutional form. Objectively, because no prices intervene, it is difficult to isolate and fix the power and quantity of aboriginal wants; but we are able to see that, in the smallest tribe, the normal flow of economic goods is towards the constant demands of institutional life where such objects can be used in known and traditional ways. These ^{constants} are the process, the operation, of wants. There is in aboriginal life no production in speculation of a future demand arising, or in the expectation of a fashion growing, or being induced, for as yet unwanted or insufficiently wanted products; all that is produced has a use, finds its channel of consumption down which to flow; what is produced is used and used fairly rapidly; all economic products in this sense are wanted. Aboriginal institutions summate these wants. They prescribe their content, shape the process of economic action intended to procure them, direct the conventional use, regularize the particular gratification proceeding from them. But along this sequence of related events, each of which is the centre of economic and social activities, there is nothing crystallized and intermediary, as prices are, which can be

attainment, or the object of its gratification, is tenuous and colourless. The anthropologist must attempt to establish as full an embodiment of social wants as possible. His general task is sensibly different from that of the modern economist. Usually in economic discussion wants are established as conceptual constants and are explored no farther, partly because in the economy where the doctrine of wants has been established and elaborated market prices are ready at hand; though they convey little information about the nature or quality of economic wants they measure their market power, and it is with this aspect that economists believe themselves to be exclusively concerned. But in the tribal economy, there are no prices, either as history or as contemporary information, as guides to action or as evidence of past judgments. Here the approach has to be wider, and it cannot, unfortunately, be nearly as precise. Hence the acute difficulty of definition, even of location, or primitive wants. Price-history is replaced by much less precise myth, convention, and oral tradition, but these tell the aborigines what they must use rather than what they must pay, and the referents of prices are not the same as the referents of myth, convention, and oral tradition. There is, in fact, little point in following out the analogy, for the chapter on Exchange has shown how little room there is for close comparison of this aspect of tribal economy. The anthropologist, therefore, cannot follow the economist's

limited treatment of wants. What he must do is build up wider empirical definitions as the first step of his approach. This means placing each wanted economic good in the full framework of the verbal traditions which surround it, the myths of its origin, the verbal prescriptions attached to its use; placing it also in the context of the activities and relationships which surround it and are involved by its use; by relating its use to the kind of gratifications which proceed, or are thought to proceed from its use. When these are established the form, content, and structure of the kind of "wanting" linked with each good will be available for the anthropologist to try to determine their further, perhaps their ultimate, meaning. For all the problems connected with wants are not thereby answered. Why this particular form? It is as though ^{we} were to say: granted these goods, made available by these methods, used in these ways, to gratify what appears to be a want formulated in this way, why has the want this character? And what contribution does gratification of this want make to social life? It seems that the emphasis of the problem of wants is continually pressed forward until it reaches some such point as this. The ultimate "why?" of consumption has not yet been answered.

It seems that, having by analysis made possible a clearer meaning and a firmer synthesis of "want" than are possible by intuitive generalization, which must be the resort of economists who do not venture beyond prices, we reach a stage where an

adventure in theory becomes necessary to progress. The hypothesis will spring from whatever theory of society is held. In this case it must be from the theory of social action. We are seeking an explanation of the relation of wants to social action. If we regard social life as a process of activities based on decisions, and these decisions as intelligent choices between alternatives, we can find a place for wants, however complex and however extraordinary, as part of the equipment of knowledge on which decisions are made. We have not explained the "nature" of wants; that is a problem of psychology and history; but we have, it would seem, linked wants and the particular social personality of which aboriginal life must clearly be productive. In aboriginal life the social personalities, in the widest sense, of men and women, are the operative social forces, the true dynamic agents; they are, as it were, the carriers of wants; they determine the nature and the level of consumption, the material way and standard of life. In this sense the problems of consumption, or, rather, the determinants of consumption, are the social personalities of consumers.

On a purely empirical level the anthropologist among the Daly tribes encounters aborigines who by their personalities stand head and shoulders over their fellows, who are admired and respected, who command authority, who are cited as examples. They represent the kind of social attainment which, on their own statements and actions, the aborigines seem most to desire, to want. If aboriginal life is

purposive, as it is; if, as they do, the aborigines seek to obtain what they want, we can see in the economic and social activity of these outstanding men examples of the most influential wants of aboriginal life. By no means all such wants are direct economic wants, but economic competence is a precondition for the satisfaction of most of them.

To generalize from the examples of men such as the Nangiomeri Durmurkam, the Wagaman Belweni, the Ngolok-Wanggar Malamarma, the Maringar Tjungman, all noted men, outstanding among their fellows, the wider social wants of aborigines may be summarized in the following way.

The highest rewards of aboriginal life are in terms of reputation, not of possessions. There are many constituents of reputation. Material possessions, command of real wealth, are not the most important, nor the least important. Reputation is won by men and women who reach old age and have obtained insight into the secrets of ritual; who have the credentials of secret names; who are known as knowledgeable, as having strong heads; who are or have been redoubtable fighters, or lovers of many women of appropriate kinds, or good industrial technicians, superior dancers or singing-men; who have been or are thought to be powerful wanangal or manakpik medicine-men or sorcerers; who have a good share of personal authority over fellows and juniors; who have settled more than adequately a wide range of kinship, ritual, marital, and economic obligations; who have children and close descendants to whom to give their names and totems, and who can support them in

later maturity and in old age. Most of the personal qualities which would obviously be appropriate in small-scale camp life one hears cited as positive virtues. Assertive, bumptious natives are heavily criticized; those who are self-deprecatory, quietly spoken, ready to fall in with the conventions are, when these issues are raised, spoken of with praise; the thrusters and boasters are not admired, at least in the quieter passages of life. Public rows, duels, camp tongue-lashings, are another matter; the wildest and most frenzied displays do not necessarily then harm common repute. A reputation as a seducer or as an adulterer is not necessarily a handicap, but the whisperer of love-secrets, a common source of camp mischief, is not admired. The withholder of food or valuable possessions, the selfish and the stingy in things material is unfavourably commented on; I have actually heard such complaints said very bitterly. It is not a common ambition to amass a great deal of property, or to amass much more than one's immediate kin, or to hold much more than is sufficient to meet current obligations to kin and trading partners. It is not an ambition to raise oneself to authority over one's fellows. To be suspected of pretence to be "a big fellow" is ^{to be} met with ridicule and by-play, and is one of the main sources of trouble in teams working for the white farmers where one native, utterly without formal authority of his own, is placed in charge of other natives by whites. This form of ostentation is

quite out of harmony with native tradition, with the whole context of tribal authority, the circumstances in which and the persons by whom it is exerted. Yet other forms of ostentation give the aborigines some of their greatest personal satisfactions, if outward signs of gratification are our index. A liberal, open hand with possessions; generous gestures with food; conspicuous flaunting of property on big ritual occasions; all seem to give deep satisfaction, to bring distinction. But there are limits on such conduct; jealousies are easily aroused; fights, often bloody, which spring from material as well as sexual jealousy, seem to be accepted without great resentment; so that men flaunt their possessions at their own risk, and there are continual forces at work - regard for convention, dislike of conflict, pressure of commitments, suspicions of sorcery - to keep them on a more or less common mean. But the personal pattern of consumption clearly can be a reputation-maker, and does give opportunities of winning distinction. There can be no doubt that such ultimate moral and conventional influences heavily condition the final uses which men make of their resources.

The "conspicuous consumption" of Veblen is clearly in evidence in the aboriginal camps. The premial quality of display is most influential in native conduct. If we look for the ~~xx~~ ultimates of "wants" we can, no doubt, regard "display" as a want of a most ~~insistent~~ insistent order; so too is

"reputation" in the senses outlined above; so too is modest conformity with modest qualities of personality, which we have seen have a sharply limiting effect on the use of wealth; we have also to include close conformity with the ways set down for all time by the mipurambirina men of old - a deeply conservative and influential "want". This list could, in fact, be extended greatly. Each social virtue, each quality of personality, each observable constancy in conduct, which could be shown to exercise a regular and recurrent influence on the final use of resources, in fact, on any phase of economy, might be elevated to the status of a "want". But for the anthropologist the conclusion from such an attempt must be, in my judgment, a doubt whether he can usefully employ the concept of wants except as a piece of shorthand for the expanded meaning which I have earlier outlined. What I have termed the "full social embodiment of wants" can give a rich empirical content to the use of the term "wants" as symbols in discussion or as labels in description, and the anthropologist should try to embody wants in this way. The search for aboriginal wants thus becomes a search for aboriginal economic constants, in whatever part of the social economy they may be manifest. If a narrower meaning than I have given them is thought necessary, the only possible one, in my opinion, is to designate as wants the fixed habits, the wide-spread preferences, the common standards, the constant and dominant forms of consumption.

VII.

The general nature of aboriginal economy may now be briefly stated by drawing together some of the points which have emerged in this description. Some of these points are merely negative - they record the absence from the tribal economy of features which, taking the economy of Western Europe as a guide, we might expect to find represented in some form even in tribal conditions. At least, we may state them in a negative form, though they are positive characteristics of tribal economy. We noted the absence of money, and of anything legitimately to be called money, either as a medium of exchange or as a measure of value, as a means of payment or as a unitary store of wealth. But we saw that food and other articles used by the aborigines serve satisfactorily as means of payment, while at the same time having other primary uses. It seemed legitimate to call these secondary uses sub-monetary. We saw that, in the historic stage which tribal life has ~~xxxx~~ reached, a common measure of value, a means of exchange, and a unit of wealth, would appear to confer no economic advantage. Even in contact with whites, this still largely holds true.

We noted also the absence of a price-system, but saw that the aborigines possess certain exchange ratios, of a rather obscure and rudimentary order, between some but some only of their material possessions. Their economy has not reached the stage where such ratios have been given sufficient precision for them to take rank as exchange values. These ratios are

such that they are not altered by scarcity. The conventions do not permit economic advantage to be taken of material scarcities; scarcity diminishes the volume of real income per head with a more even incidence than in our economy; it is not the source of sectional gain, or the occasion of enhanced exchange values, so far as these exist.

A formal market, even approximately identifiable with the modern market, is also absent. But the conventional and orderly conduct of the merbok gives it the general character of a proto-market in which groups and individuals come together desiring and able to exchange a limited range of goods under known and mutually advantageous conditions. But the other elements inseparable from merbok - friendships, compulsory exchanges, myths, cultural influences, kinship relations, and so on - make close comparison with modern markets scarcely legitimate.

We noted that highly organized free enterprise and competition, rivalry for the services of agents and factors of production, entrepreneurship, and high degrees of specialization, had no important place in tribal economy. The situation which replaces them is not capable of short summary here.

Especially notable was the absence of individual power-concentrations and of great degrees of economic inequality in access to resources, control of the agents and means of production, and in the yield of economic effort. A strong, positive tendency to the equalization of economic returns replaces them.

We noted the relative unimportance of economic power as an aim of social ambition. Associated with this was the unimportance of monopoly, fraud, and vested authority in the working of the social economy, though some small degree of each seems to exist.

More positive influences on tribal economy are the relatively stable level of population; the high degree of insulation from outside influences and from strong stimuli to change; the poor productive equipment and technical knowledge; the restricted means of transport, leading to strongly limited personal and social mobility, but associated with a high degree of mobility, within the small scale of their life, of the means and agents of production. We must include here too the strong intellectual and emotional preference of the aborigines for a static rather than for a progressive social and economic order, and the high degree of indifference to what would appear to us as material progress, due perhaps to the permanent "set" or orientation of native life towards conformity with an altjira period of the past, rather than towards an increasing standard of material welfare or an ideal state of the future. But we saw that, despite these characteristics, there is social change, and that the aborigines are capable of taking advantage of the chance of material progress. We noted, however, that the economy is ruled by constancies (wants) and habits of consumption which, on the whole, are of a highly rigid character, showing a marked resistance to change and

innovation of form, though not of content, for there is a great readiness to make use of substitutes drawn from alien sources. We saw that there is reason to believe that it has been a cardinal error of interpretations of tribal change that the constancy of these wants has been underappreciated; that constant wants imply structural rigidity; that much of native "betterment" policies (moral change, education, religious instruction) attack these very constancies, and undermine the resistances which have enabled the tribes to survive so long.

A number of prime issues of social and economic theory are raised by this brief summary. Some of them are referred to in the concluding chapter. Perhaps the central issue is to decide how decisive in the economy is each of the characteristics noted above. What light do each of the "absent" factors, for instance, throw on social development and economic efficiency? How decisive for economy is the absence of money and of a price-system? I can only raise the problem, and there leave it.

We may conclude, however, that it is amply proved that the aborigines are not shiftless, are not loosely communistic, careless for the morrow, and have no understanding of provision for future needs. On the contrary they use their limited resources intelligently, on systematic principles, which can be stated. There are some marked and easily misinterpreted idiosyncracies in their economic

behaviour. They do not always, in the ways which we regard as "natural" and as justified, seek under all circumstances to maximize their personal material advantages, in every economic undertaking, but prefer instead the increase of their social reputation. The quality of satisfaction attained by economic behaviour for them is more social than personal, using these terms with due caution. There are also certain exotic intrusions into their economic life - for example, intrusions by magic and totemism, which have few close analogies in a modern economy. It might be mentioned in passing that there are interesting possibilities for the study of the relation between magic and totemism, on the one hand, and the poverty of tribal capital development on the other. A higher degree of serviceability would be possible in the case of many native resources if it were not for the conservative influence of such beliefs. Yet the native economy is efficient; a high degree of serviceability of resources is attained; but the aborigines do not experiment continually to work out more satisfactory (more economic) cost-return combinations; and the changing tribes have not perhaps taken as full an advantage as they might of the greater economic knowledge and more efficient equipment of the white settlers. But they make a keen and insistent demand for knives, axes, razors, wire and iron for spears, matches, and for other manufactured articles which have been seen by the natives

themselves to possess a greater efficiency than their own products. But they have not learned that by a variation of their social techniques of economic life they might reach a greater total output. We must, I think, attribute a good deal of this to the rigidity, the high resistance, of their traditional economic imperatives - the form and structure of their wants.

But, in summary, we cannot have any doubt that aboriginal life is subject to an economic principle. The reputedly bone-lazy aborigine, who prefers leisure to effort when effort seems unnecessary illustrates such a principle no less than the aboriginal trader in merbok who fights, resorts to magic, or protests publicly when the terms of trade are not sufficiently to his advantage. The insistence on reciprocity, the upholding of debts, are further evidence that the aborigines are given to the intelligent computation of outlay and income, and in these spheres of conduct try, as a general rule, to make their material and social gains as large as the conventions permit. But the real problem of the anthropologist studying native economics is not to find every illustration of the working of the economic principle. It is to relate the nature of aboriginal resources, knowledge, and technology to the kind (and where possible) the degree of economy which is achieved.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

I.

I take this outline to prove that if the economics of primitive peoples are to be studied adequately at least three basic requirements must be met.

First, it is necessary to make clear precisely what is meant by "economics". This amounts to stating upon what criteria the economic are to be distinguished from the non-economic aspects of aboriginal culture, for the social life of the aborigines is wider than and includes their economic life. We cannot do this satisfactorily by ^{lists} tests of activities, some economic, some non-economic. We can do it only by reference to a general theory of social economy.

Secondly, it is necessary that the study of primitive economics, the study of an aspect of a greater whole, shall proceed in close touch with the wider study of primitive culture. That is to say, the working theory of the study of primitive economy must be clearly and consistently related to cultural theory as a whole, or to put it in a better way, cultural theory should develop as part of itself a working theory of the primitive social economy. Cultural theory, as it is expounded by anthropologists, it may be pointed out, has not yet reached a point when it can make a claim that it has done so.

A third imperative then appears. That is, to make explicit the common agreement between what might then be called "primitive" and "modern" economics. Whether such a distinction (of "primitive" and "modern" economics) is really justifiable will be examined later, but what I am now concerned to establish is that it is in the highest degree important that there should be as wide as possible an agreement between economists and anthropologists upon initial formulations of economic problems and serviceable deductions of economic theory.

This involves the kind of agreement set out as necessary in the first point mentioned above, that is, what is and what is not "economic", but it goes much beyond it. It amounts to an acceptance by the anthropologist of an obligation to search for precision tools among the developments of economic theory and to state his agreements and disagreements with that body of theory.

II.

These three requirements are, in my opinion, imperative in any really rigorous study. In their absence fieldwork in primitive economics will move in inconsecutive leaps, and its explanations (i.e. its excursions into theory) will be held together by undemonstrated links which will have an uncertain claim on the title of "Science". They are, it is true, in a

sense ideal requirements, and studies of primitive economics are being made and will continue to be made in their absence. The study, some of the results of which this essay outlines, was itself carried out without clear reference at all times to such requirements. It remains true, however, that such expediency is methodologically vulnerable and productively deficient as a technique of study.

Economic ~~Empiricism~~ on such a level must always use blunter tools than are available. In general terms this three-fold deficiency is the explanation of the poor record of primitive economics we now possess. But the need of expediency has been and still is great; and it must be admitted that what most anthropologists who are now interested to study primitive economics are faced with is more ^a ~~on~~ immediate need of an empirical road map than a theoretical Baedaker.

III.

This need has prompted the recent asking of the question: "Can the anthropologist make use of modern economic theory?"

It is important that this question should be asked, particularly at this stage of anthropology. But there is, I believe, some reason to think that all its implications are not fully grasped. This is illustrated by the main positions which are being taken up in response to it.

Those positions are:

- i. economic theory is inapplicable to primitive economics.
- ii. some aspects of economic theory are applicable to primitive economics.
- iii. there are in primitive economics clearly observable sets of phenomena which can be termed "production", "exchange", "distribution", "marginal utility", and so on, and these can be studied by the anthropologist without necessarily drawing to any extent upon formal economic theory.

Now, if the full implications of each of these positions were worked out they would, I believe, lead to a common position, one in which the three requirements I have mentioned earlier would become strikingly obvious.

We cannot, on a priori grounds alone, or because of the obviously greater simplicity of the primitive economy, adjudge economic theory to be inapplicable, any more than we can assume without proof that it is applicable. On the one hand if we conscientiously try to demonstrate that economic theory does not meet our needs, so far as we can speak with any certainty of them, we can do this only by so complete a statement of the relevant cultural differences, that we have already taken the step which, in my opinion, makes possible

a rapprochement between the theories of the modern and the primitive economy - an entirely opposite conclusion. We are at that point much in the position which it would be necessary for us to prove in order to make the second assertion - that some aspects of economic theory are applicable. In each case we are surely called upon to give a rigorous definition of our position and how we reach it. If we do so our demonstrations would stop short of completion if the three requirements I outline were not fulfilled. So far as the position outlined in (iii) immediately above is concerned, it seems to me to be the result of muddled thinking about economic problems. The application of these terms is itself a left-handed resort to economic theory; but the real confusion of the approach is that, by denying theory, by refusing to scrutinize closely, for what it may be worth, the "theory" implicit in the concepts of "production" and "marginal utility" and so on, we do not evade false abstraction, but rather walk away from an illumination which would certainly help us in the ill-lit darkness of primitive economics.

My point is, in summary, that there should be no *surkeing* the issue of theory raised for anthropology by the challenge of economics. There is extant a body of economic theory; there is also, as yet unrelated to it, a body of cultural theory developed by anthropologists who presume to describe and explain primitive cultures; anthropologists now have become aware of the need to describe and to interpret primitive

economics; but ^{the attempt to do so} ~~it~~ should, as I say, be developed as part of, and be closely and rigorously related to, the wider body of cultural theory; it should also, for reasons which are later taken up, be related with as much precision as possible to "modern" economic theory.

IV.

The position that I will uphold in the following pages is, briefly, this.

Economic theory can help the anthropologist to study primitive Australian economics, but only within limits. Economic theory is a methodological tool developed in a particular historical culture to assist in the study of the complex economic activities of that culture. But primitive Australian culture, though itself complex, differs radically from this culture. What are the precise differences have not as yet been stated. But there are known to be broad and deeply significant differences, such as the absence of money, prices, and markets. Economic theory, for the most part, specifically deals with an economy in which these are present. As a practical rule it may be set down that Economic theory can therefore be utilized by the anthropologist only in so far as the elements it postulates are present in the primitive economy, to which it is transferred.

It may well be that the development of the theory of the primitive economy will show that a greater part of "modern" economic theory is applicable to primitive conditions than we are now entitled to assume as probable. That is to say, the absence, e.g. of money from the primitive economy may not make it necessary to reject in its greater part or in its entirety a theory of value which has, at the moment, explicit reference only to an economy in which money is present. But at the present stage of primitive economic studies this cannot be assumed.

V.

Economic theory can be evaluated for the anthropologist's purposes by subjecting it to three queries:

(i) are its fundamental postulates such that the anthropologist can consider them probably applicable to the economic conditions of a primitive people?

(ii) Does the theory derived from those postulates involve other assumptions which the anthropologist cannot agree are applicable to a primitive people?

(iii) Is there full agreement upon the nature of the given conditions which it is necessary to assume at progressive stages in the development (and application) of the theory?

To take (iii) first. The anthropologist is not always in a position to agree that the things which the economist is able to take as given (i.e. the cultural context in which the economic process operates) are comparable in all elements with the relevant primitive context which would need to be assumed as given if any very complicated "use" of economic theory were to be attempted. The anthropologist does not always know what he can regard as constant in the primitive economy. How can he? The Australian economy, for example, is a new field of inquiry. The relation of the aboriginal economic and the aboriginal non-economic have not been demonstrated, in fact, in nearly all cases, they still await study. The anthropologist is not able, to anything like the same extent as the economist, to trust to his knowledge of "the stuff of everyday experience", to make use of "a great multitude of postulates" concerning the primitive comparables to the economist's conditions and operations of markets, the number of parties to an exchange, the state of the law, the minimum changes which lead to economic action, and so on. These are among other things the anthropologist has to discover and formulate. So far as the aborigines are concerned the writer, for one, has yet to equip himself with a full knowledge of which is the "stuff" of everyday life contextually surrounding the tribal economic process.

I would maintain that the prime considerations concerning the anthropologist's use of economic theory are those indicated in (i) and (ii) above. These are concerned with the fundamental postulates of economic theory and the deductions made from these postulates.

It seems possible at once to have a minimum common agreement with economists - an acceptance of a common problem. The writer would agree with a position which is implied in the general enunciation of economic theory - there is no reason to suppose that there should be a primitive "economics" opposed to or distinguished from "modern" economics. There is only "economics". That is to say, the integral problem of the social economy, whatever the society or culture, is everywhere the same. In a phrase, it is and must be this - men in society must choose what they will do with what they have. In other words, men are faced with the problem of allocating their resources, or their means, between various uses or ends. But societies exist in a world in which, as Robbins has said, "not only are the things we want scarce, but their exact occurrence is a matter of doubt and conjecture", so that means themselves are subject to limitations. Men therefore have to practice economy in using these means to satisfy their wants. The sphere of aboriginal economics is therefore defined by the sphere of the activities concerned with the use of aboriginal resources.

VII.

The anthropologist, especially the "functionalist", has no reason to disagree with this general statement. It is, on the contrary, one which the whole of his discipline prompts him to adopt. It might be said to be implied by the assumptions which he makes, which it is necessary for him to make, if he is to persist in the comparative study of cultures. He has to assume the existence of universal comparables in cultures (and men). He has to postulate that the same general situations confront men in society, and that men make common responses to those situations, before he can speak of "needs" and compare "institutions" and "cultures". The fertility of these postulates would now be ceded by all anthropologists. They have enabled a striking ordering of cultural data to be achieved. Empirically their utility (and therefore their presumptive validity) is strongly supported. Now, the proposition of the economist that "there is only economics" rests upon the same assumptions. The anthropologist and the economist therefore meet to this extent on common ground. The agreement could be made more striking and probably more fertile, if the current theories of culture embraced also a clear theory of the social economy. It cannot be said that they do. Yet there seems to be no reason why they should not, since they already make the assumptions upon which the economist is able to base the theory of the modern social economy. Given this basic

agreement, there is therefore no methodological reason why the anthropologist entering, as he indubitably is, a new field of inquiry, should not at the start derive what help he may from the basic formulations of economic theory. He could not fail to gain by doing so.

Anthropologists would have to agree that in their mode of study and in their presentation of data they are constantly assuming it to be true that there are problems common to all societies. There can only be gain, therefore, in stating those problems as closely in the study of primitive economics as they have been, for example, by Malinowski in the sphere of magic, and by Radcliffe Brown in kinship and totemism. The only question which needs to be asked is: can the anthropologist use, without intellectual qualms, the economists' theoretic formulations about the problem of the social economy? In the writer's opinion he can make substantial use of them.

VIII.

Economic theory, it was pointed out above, is based on a set of propositions about a few fundamental concomitant situations in which human society is placed, and on a set of subsidiary propositions which relate to certain "historico-relative".¹ developments of Western European society and

1. Robbins: op.cit. p.

culture.

With the first set of propositions the social anthropologist so far seems able to agree, although he may feel it to be necessary to add to them, or perhaps even to restate them rather differently.

The second set of propositions do not particularly concern him, since they probably refer ~~to~~ only ^{to} a culture in which he is not for the moment interested. Obviously, the anthropologist would be in error to attempt to transfer the entire body of economic theory to the field of primitive culture and there use it as an approach to the study of a primitive economy. The attempt would clearly be absurd, yet the currency of such a question as: "Can the anthropologist make use of modern economic theory?" shows that there could with advantage be greater clarity about what is implied by this question.

In any case nothing can alter the fact that these postulates and the deductions from them have been pronounced largely in factual ignorance of the precise conditions which actually do obtain in primitive economics. The anthropologist who wishes to make a truly scientific study of primitive economy must ask himself whether or not he will agree that such postulates recognizably describe the facts of his primitive experience. If this agreement can be given the anthropologist is then able to look hopefully to the more complicated propositions ultimately derived from these initial

postulates, but not till then.

The anthropologist will agree with von Hayek in regard to these two sets of assumptions when he says ^{that} sometimes ~~that~~ "economists do not seem to be aware that the nature of these (subsidiary) hypotheses is in many respects rather different from the more general assumptions from which the Pure Logic of Choice starts."¹ Professor von Hayek goes on to say ".....the assumptions from which the Pure Logic of Choice starts are facts which we know to be common to all human thought". They may be regarded as "axioms which define or delimit the field within which we are able to reconstruct the processes of thought of other people". They are therefore "universally applicable" and they refer to "a type of human action (what we commonly call rational, or merely conscious, as distinguished from instinctive action) rather than to the particular conditions under which this action is undertaken". But the assumptions or hypotheses "which we have to introduce when we want to explain the social processes, concern the relation of the thought of an individual to the outside world, the question to what extent and how his knowledge corresponds to the external facts".

This explanation helps further to clear the way to a re-statement of the view I have taken in this chapter. I have

1. p.45. op. cit.

suggested that there is no reason why the anthropologist, making common ground with the economist as to the universal applicables, should not do with them for primitive society what the economist seeks to for modern society. As a tool they remain crude and unsharpened until retouched by the subsidiary assumptions. It is these which will give the anthropologist his greatest difficulties, as they have also the economist. But, although the primitive economy is smaller than the modern economy, and manifestly simpler, the anthropologist needs to use some theoretical "tools" upon it, for "it is only by using their tools upon observed facts that economists can build up that working model of the actual world which it is their aim to construct". The anthropologist is, I take it, faced with the same necessity.¹ He has gone through the period in which, without tools, he has plunged into the tangled problems of the real world, armed only with his naked hands, and the consequence has been a science of primitive economics of the status described earlier in this chapter.

The real question for anthropologists is: which of these further assumptions can we use in intellectual comfort, believing them on sound evidence to be true of a primitive community?

1. The Economics of Imperfect Competition, by Joan Robinson, p.1.

It appears that few of them can be so used. Some of the "social processes" of which von Hayek speaks, and to which those assumptions relate, are clearly different; so too, apparently, are some of "the relations of the thought of an individual to the outside world"; undoubtedly we can look for differences in the degree of knowledge held by primitive persons, and in the correspondence between the nature and the course of objective events and primitives' subjective notions about them.

IX.

No anthropologist has any reason to disagree when economists postulate at the start that the material means of social life are limited; that there is uncertainty about the future; that the degree of scarcity of means varies; that different goods offer different possibilities of use; that people can and do prefer one thing to another; that since the means are limited, they must choose to what use they will ~~be~~ put; what means they have; that human action is not aimless, but purposive, and that action taken towards economic means or goods is directed also towards an objective; that from such action one may legitimately infer the existence of valuations, and wants, and make simple propositions about economic organization.

It will be admitted that these highly general postulates seem to be true of all primitive societies which have been studied. Most anthropologists would feel able with certainty to say that these are for the primitive people they know as for

us - not "postulates the existence of whose counterparts in reality admits of extensive dispute once their nature is realized (but) so much the stuff of (our) everyday experience that they have only to be stated to be regarded as obvious".

XI.

Two other questions may be asked at this stage:

(i) What further deductions drawn from these basic postulates can the anthropologist usefully take over to the primitive field?

(ii) What are the precise economic implications of each postulate under primitive conditions.

Neither point can fully be taken up in this chapter, but anthropologists will need to give close attention to them both, if there is to be much formal progress in primitive economics, or if there is to be any substantial justification for raising the question of economic theory at all. There will, no doubt, be a period in which anthropologists who take primitive economics as their field will be hard put to defend the need of "formal progress" (which, put in another way, can be called the need for progress towards a comparative economics) or to defend their theoretic complication of what has so far appeared to be a simple field. Superficially considered, the outward simplicity of the primitive economy does seem at first to give a rather pretentious appearance

to an attempt to raise within it complicated questions of theory. I would, on the contrary, hold that so far as the Australian tribes are concerned, and they are in many respects acknowledged to be among the simplest of living peoples, this surface "simplicity" (that is, the "simple" descriptions which are given of it) are if not a misrepresentation, then at least are an incomplete description of what lies beneath. The importation of "problems of theory" to this field is nothing more than asking about it certain kinds of questions upon which the extant data are insufficient to give an answer. I can here add nothing further to the case I have already made for a comparative economics, in which the data of primitive economies shall have their place. Part at least of this development must be to demonstrate formally for the primitive field how it is that we are able to proceed from initial postulates to problems of production, exchange, and value. This may superficially seem a simple requirement, but it is necessary, and I believe that in ^{the} working out of that demonstration the student of the primitive field will be able to make clear (a) what deductions fertile for his own field he can draw from these postulates and (b) what are their limits and what additional developments or new directions of theory they make necessary. Thus, as I try to show in the chapter on production, the analysis of factors and their relative share

of yield does not seem to have many conspicuous advantages in aboriginal economics. In what additional ways may we approach this problem? The answer to this and to other problems of a like nature may, one hopes, be given some illumination by a careful search for the precise implications of the basic individual postulates which underlie economic theory. This is a slightly different matter from accepting as useful or rejecting as inapplicable certain broad deductions from those postulates - segregating broadly what I later call the "translateable" from the "untranslateable" elements. That is to say, assuming that there is a certain hierarchy in the elements of economic theory, such that if one alters the others are not obliterated but are necessarily altered, some of the more basic elements could be separated for precise study. One of these - e.g. the notion of scarcity, the pivot of a certain type of economic theorizing, gives promise of being a fruitful field. How applicable to primitive conditions in Australia is the characteristic scarcity-analysis? On a somewhat higher level, the supposition that there is a tendency towards equilibrium seems amenable to study under aboriginal conditions. There, technical progress is at a minimum; population change at a minimum under traditional conditions; all problems of scale and quantity are

smaller and perhaps are also more measurable; the time-period of economic processes is briefer.)

(The scope of change, and the forces making for change, are reduced more than proportionately. Unless the absence of money, prices, and a comparable market are quite decisive, and result in an integral change in the nature of the economic problems and not merely a displacement of their points of emphasis, there seems to be no reason why some of the characteristic problems of the modern economy, at least the validity of the central postulates on which they rest, ought not to be posed also for the primitive field. Perhaps the most important problem of them all would be to study the net effect on economic processes of the absence of money, prices, and a formal market. Does their absence remove any precision which is fundamental to efficient economy (apart, that is, from the efficiency they clearly give in dealing with the wants of large economic units)? Leaving aside questions of scale, can we correlate a higher degree of want-satisfaction with the presence of these mechanisms than with their absence?

XII

I see certain immediate difficulties to this course. The procedural position of the anthropologist is very different from that of the economist. His immediate requirements are different. The anthropologist takes as his chosen field the study of cultural process ^{as} on a whole. In so far as he studies

the economic aspects of that wider process he cannot cease to remain an anthropologist. The economist on the other hand takes as given all those aspects of the cultural process which he does not define as economic. Both economist and anthropologist may be supposed to be working towards a comparative economics and a comparative study of culture. The economist has contributed towards the possibility of a comparative economics by stating as clearly as has been done those basic assumptions and postulates at the root of "economic theory" which are regarded as being universally true of all economies. But "economic theory" as it is now formulated remains in permanent orientation towards a particular historical economy. It is ostensibly concerned with the elucidation of the implications of the necessity of choice in various assumed circumstances, but the circumstances which are assumed are always ^{our} ~~in~~ familiar social economy writ small. There is no reason whatever why the anthropologist, aware of the utility of making an analysis on this plane, should not himself attempt to elucidate the implications of needful choice in sets of "primitive" circumstances so conceived that the deductions which might be made would have some degree of relevance to the reality of primitive life. There is no reason why ~~these~~ ^{developed} should not be ^{as} a sub-department of pure theory, a pure theory of the primitive economy; this would not, in fact, entail much more than adding certain others

to the sets of "assumed circumstances" through which the implications of choice are now being followed. It need not be called a theory of primitive economy at all. All that would be necessary would be to state sets of assumed circumstances in which monetary, market, and competitive arrangements of the types which economic theory now envisage had no part. Until this is done we shall not possess a real comparative economics.

The anthropologist may make a small contribution to this end by stating, as I have attempted to do, the extent of his common agreement with the economists' universals, and by presenting what he knows of primitive economic data in a form which will give those data the widest possible comparability. If he were to do nothing else there would be some usefulness in this approach.

XIII.

With the eventual appearance, as we hope there will be, of a branch of economic analysis aimed at facilitating the orderly exposition of the principles underlying primitive economic activities, the data so presented might be of great ^{comparative} ~~comparable~~ value. It is to be noted that the accounts of primitive economics now extant are, with one or two notable exceptions, accounts on a simple descriptive plane; the

elucidation of what lies beneath these data has not yet been attempted. No doubt the anthropologist will before long need to make the attempt. A successful attempt presupposes the development by the anthropologist of a theory and method of analysis which he would be the first to admit he does not now possess, if the kind of "economic" data he presents were not sufficient evidence of the fact. This brings me to the crux of the difference between the economist and the anthropologist who is aware of the need to make a more rigorous study of primitive economy. The anthropologist is, as I have said, a man faced by a really difficult necessity of choice. If he turn economist he cannot cease to be anthropologist at the same time, which forces him to cover a field wider than that which the economist takes as his province. He can assume no givens; he must first find what they are, in order to be able to have in an assimilated form the material of the subsidiary assumptions which he needs to use if he is to follow through the implications of postulates which, like the economist, he must have clearly stated at the base of his analytic theory. He can scarcely postpone the search for understanding of this cultural context when he sees his data disappearing so rapidly. In any case, the two necessities are procedurally inseparable in a field investigation. Any fieldworker, be he economist or anthropologist, would be bombarded by a stream of non-economic as well as economic data which he can sift in

receiving, but the one will be unintelligible without the other. In order to speak with certainty of the economic, the anthropologist needs to be deeply versed in other aspects of the culture. And, unlike the economist, studying the culture in which he is participant as well as student, the anthropologist is unable to levy easy tribute from personal insights into the "non-economics" of his culture, as the economist does, drawing them as implicit subsidiaries into (sometimes confusing them with) the schemes of both formal and concrete analysis. If the anthropologist makes these levies, he must demonstrate and cannot (like the economist) assume their validity. The personal situation, therefore, of the anthropologist who would also show himself in any inadequate sense to be an economist, is that his field and responsibilities become almost too wide for one man to accept. As a programme of inquiry, study of the economics of a primitive people must form part of a wider inquiry. The field of the primitive economist, though in intention primarily the economic phase of a culture, in fact must become the whole of the culture, and a high degree of insight into the second is prerequisite to adequate interpretation of the first. This reverts to the need to relate the theory of economy to the wider body of cultural theory, and adds an empirical imperative to what was there put as a formal requirement of pure theory.

A further difficulty is that a factionalism of economic theory is paralleled by a factionatism of cultural theory.

Amid such complications the pressing need to raise the status of primitive economic studies stands out as imperative.

XIV.

The conclusion which seems to emerge from this discussion is that the anthropologist is able to state the measure of his basic agreement with the economist as to fundamental postulates and, apparently, of some basic ^{deductions} distinctions from them. I have not yet been able to enter into the identity and the range of these deductions, and I will do so at a later stage, but it ought at once clearly to be understood that the limits are so sharply defined that to a great extent "making use of economic theory" is at this stage a presumptuous hope. This is because (1) Agreement upon the given conditions assumed in the more complicated reaches of economic theory is not possible to any serious extent; and (to make a more basic criticism) it is quite uncertain when the economic analyses such as those which e.g. are dependent on and ranged around the ^{nu}~~un~~clear concepts of scarcity and equilibrium, and which in their present formulation are concerned with abstracted and highly "unreal" situations, can fruitfully be applied in any comparable form to aboriginal conditions. These criticisms would be less applicable were there a greater fund of comparative data on primitive social life, not necessarily data of a specifically economic character. But there

is available little material of a synthetic order; of what there is available not a great deal may be said to be at all proximately concerned with comparative economics.

Social anthropology is at a stage in which it understands more about individual primitive cultures than about comparative primitive culture. Malinowski is one anthropologist who has ventured into a comparative theory of culture in his hypothesis that cultures are composed of complicated common responses to individual^(primary) and social^(derived) "needs". As yet, however, there is no really vigorous statement of the assumptions and postulates which are involved in maintaining this fertile theory, no thorough-going attempt to link it logically with the broadest features of any one particular culture, to say nothing of its idioms and peculiarities. The present position is that anthropology, not yet equipped with a commonly accepted and rigorously worked out theory of culture, is engaged documenting a wide range of primitive cultures and formulating some (as yet) fairly simple generalizations about them, to the ultimate end, it is hoped, of establishing the general principles which govern the cultural process in all societies. Immediately, however, there is still a responsibility of courageous generalizing in a narrower field. The necessity of the more rigorous study of individual primitive economics I take to be one of these narrower responsibilities. But if there is any point at all in the foregoing remarks it is that these studies

can only be placed on a methodologically sound basis by relating them in the clearest way on the one hand to economic theory and on the other hand to cultural theory. This is what I intend to convey by the term "theory of the social economy". The given conditions, necessary for the progress of pure theory, the vital links of the economic and the non-economic, will emerge only at a fairly advanced stage of these studies.

XV.

To recapitulate, the position as I see it is that the anthropologist should make an attempt to go further than setting out the nuclear (as I have done) a priori propositions upon which anthropology is in agreement with economics, stating clearly their common acceptance of what they agree to be the economic problem of society, and their agreement upon the assumptions which are relevant to it. They should try to set out with what precision is possible those further implications of the propositions which they can also agree upon. This seems to me to involve a clear realization upon both sides and perhaps, strangely, more on the side of the anthropologist than the economist, that, in a strict sense, there can be no complicated deductions of economic theory into which some cultural and psychological assumptions do not also enter and, therefore, that the translation of aspects of economic theory to the primitive field is valid only if all the conditions involved can be shown to be also true of the

primitive culture.

It is beyond the writer's competence to undertake such an examination here, but I believe that a crude limit may be set to the "translateables" of theory by a statement of the obvious differentiae which are apparent between the economy of the aborigines and the economy of Western Europe.

The anthropologist is dealing in Australia, for example, with a people who do not use and do not understand the use of money; who have nothing which can be regarded in any strict sense as a market; whose economic processes are simple, direct, involve few intermediaries and few stages; who do not seem to be competitive or monopolists; who do not practice a system of free enterprise; who do not calculate prices, and do not have a conscious and articulated cult of the "rational" in the use of resources in their economic life; whose institutional economic organization is organized in relation to a set of "ends" or "wants" which have nowhere been clearly or systematically stated and which may not, for all we know, be in allways comparable with the "ends" ^{or "wants"} characteristic of our own culture.

Those developments of economic theory which are concerned with the implications of all these elements in the form ~~in~~ which they exist in our society are clearly inapplicable in that form to the primitive field. My point is, however, that there is no reason, why the anthrppologist should not at some time proceed to an investigation of the implications of the propositions basic to ~~xxx~~ such complicated theorems in forms

more applicable to a primitive culture, making for this purpose such subsidiary assumptions as may be indicated by his degree of insight into that culture. I doubt whether any anthropologist is yet in a position to do this.

The analagous subsidiary assumptions which the economist makes for market and price economies are, as we have seen, general principles implicitly distilled from his own familiar cultural context. Can the anthropologist who wishes to study primitive economics do this for a primitive community? I believe it not yet possible.

Some sort of study of primitive economics can valuably go on without the attempt but it seems undeniable that, could the anthropologist develop as a tool, in some such way as I have indicated, a "pure" theory of primitive economics, the precision of his practical studies would be greater, the control of his data firmer, and the comparative value of his generalizations enhanced. It seems probable, too, that insofar as he might be able to establish from theory deductions concerning the "pure" or "ideal" economic behaviour of members of a primitive community in given conditions, and then examine on the basis of the problems thus exposed to what extent such ideal economizing is realized in empirically observed economic situations, his degree of insight into the rest of the cultural process would be sharpened. He would need to ask himself what forces, what imperatives, what renunciations explained the gap between the levels of satisfaction ideally possible and

predictable and those demonstrably realized? Would these be stated in terms of the effects of monopoly; the absence or qualification (and, if so, by what means) of a disposition to seek on all occasions the fullest possible serviceability of goods and satisfaction of wants; the pursuit^{uit} of non-material satisfactions; the consequences of coercion^c and exploitation; effects of a non-rational economic rationale, or what?

There are many anthropologists who, though they would deprecate their ability to make systematic pronouncements upon things economic, have intuitively rather than by process of formal study already reached conclusions on some of these points. Many of the extant statements concerning primitive "communism", natives' apparent indifference to their own material advantages, and absence of clear systems of valuation, seem to be intuitive appreciations of the extent to which the manifold "other elements" in primitive life deflect the course of social economy from the pattern ideally predictable by consideration of pure economy. But the rigorous statement and proof of such "intuitive" generalizations is necessary if the status of primitive economic studies is to be raised and an unbroken consistency given to its structure of theory.

XVI.

But, it might be argued, would not the anthropologist be wiser, more imaginatively alert to the possibilities of a new

field, and perhaps be taking up a sounder methodological position, if he were as a discipline to deny himself for the moment the ready aids of economic theory, and try, so far as it may be possible, to let the primitive facts suggest their own classifications? The answer to this, though it will no doubt be made, is not that facts never do speak for themselves, or that they must always speak (i.e. be presented) in terms of some "theory" implicit or explicit. This may be true, in the sense that any statement about experience, to be intelligible, must be an ordered statement and therefore capable of being referred to certain general principles (i.e. to a body of theory); but in the writer's opinion, it is inconclusive. The alternatives which are open are not that one is committed either to taking over the whole or a segment of economic theory, or else be committed to obscure theorizing. The difference is more properly to be sought in the level of generalization which one attempts.

I feel the need and the worth of making as a brief point, before passing on to a consideration of what help may be derived from economic theory, a case for the imaginative exploitation of this new field. The logic of imagination will no doubt continue to operate independently of whatever theoretic conceptions are taken to this field, and generalizations will continue to rise up, unbidden by any specific theory, out of economic material in which the anthropologist immerses

himself. They are likely to flash into view the more readily the greater the discipline over theory. Is it an impossible task to set the researcher? Stated in bald terms it may appear to be so, and a practical solution may be to regard the ^{prim}~~primitive~~ field as a testing ground for the fundamental postulates and the basic deductions of modern economic theory.

It would be an easy matter at this stage to set a corps of anthropologists at work among the native people of Australia and Oceania preaching, as it were, in what should be elementary fact-finding and simple classification, the gospel of more complicated concepts. The history of studies of primitive religion, and to some extent of primitive economics itself, gives us examples of how easy it is to find in new fields illustrations of theoretic preconceptions. "Capital", "interest" and examples of "marginal utility" are likely to be found ^{as} frequently as beliefs in Supreme Beings, primitive "communism", and "money".

Is there not a danger that the field of primitive economics instead of being a testing ground, will more readily become in uncritical hands a source of illustration rather than proof of notions and concepts taken over from current theory?

XVII.

It may also be pointed out that when one presses for precision on such points as these a number of wider problems

come into view.

The attempt to integrate economic theory and cultural theory will prove to be full of stubborn difficulties.

The relations which now exist, for instance, between anthropological theory and practice do not facilitate this integration. The translation from economic theory of concepts of a different stage of theoretic development adds to such difficulties. For instance, it seems to be worthwhile pointing out that much anthropology of the past, and some of the present, in its results if not in its explicit intention, closely resembles static theory in economics.

The guiding notion of economic statics is that of forces in equilibrium. Static analysis attempts to determine the kind of economic adjustments which will take place to given conditions in a situation of equilibrium, that is, when all the forces making for change are equalized in all directions. Most economists depict equilibrium not as a state of rest but as a moving process in equilibrium. It has been pointed out that "the system never really is in equilibrium (moving equilibrium) but its tendency towards such a state is the main feature to be made clear in a scientific description of it."

1. Knight "The Ethics of Competition", p.167

This is purely a device of theory and does not purport in that form to be descriptive of real-life conditions. The pictures of the "admittedly fictitious state of equilibrium"¹ which it assumes for analytic purposes - a market in which no economic changes are induced; economic life having continuity but no growth; production and consumption maintaining over a period a uniformly even volume - do not occur in those forms in the world of social reality. Yet "unreal" as they may be both the notion of equilibrium and the device to establish what adjustments will take place to given conditions under conditions of equilibrium have proved useful; but, as von Hayek has pointed out, "economics ceases to be an exercise in pure logic and becomes an empirical science" only insofar as there is in "real" conditions a tendency towards equilibrium.

Without undue strain it seems we can assert that much recent and some current anthropology is cast almost in the form of pseudo-static propositions. Many anthropologists succeed in representing primitive societies as they might be if they were in a sort of equilibrium. Anthropologists' attempts to state the general rule, the long-run tendency, the fixed norms of institutional behaviour (which empirically

1. p.43. Hayek, op.cit.

has been found to be full of spontaneous deviations and eccentricities) has led to the exposition of a sort of pseudo-statics of primitive culture. The plentitude of statements of the kind that "in primitive society such-and-such happens", "natives say that so-and-so", "this tribe always does this", and even what has been called the "over-determination" of ethnographic data, are evidence of this tendency. Such descriptive generalizations could only be true if a number of forces were constant and not, as we know them to be, variable and perenially intervening to produce deviations from the general rule which is, at best, only isolatable with difficulty and in a form in which it is usually not descriptive of "reality". Some Anthropologists thus seem to bring to the dissection of cultural situations principles of exposition which are not explicit in their general body of theory. It is essential that there should be a high degree of critical awareness of the theory which underlies practical activities.

It is now, of course, freely admitted that such ethnography is seriously deficient; as a reaction from it we find the attempt to give what is termed a more "dynamic" account of primitive life, the attempt to describe the empirical reality of primitive life as it is observable by the fieldworker, to state and describe the deviations as well as the norms, to picture the living flesh as well as the structural bones. But, praiseworthy as this empiricism undoubtedly is, it seems likely

that it may be developing a pseudo-dynamism as a reaction from an incomplete statics.

We cannot yet make a serious pretense of having developed a cultural dynamics. All the phenomena with which the anthropologist is concerned are probably not amenable to dynamic analysis in the only sense in which I find the term acceptable, that is, as the study and measurement of changes brought about by forces or agents of known quantities operating in conditions which are themselves subject to change. We may doubt whether anthropologists will ever be able to develop a dynamics of this type. The size of the cultural unit is too large, the number of variables too bewildering, the conceptual tasks involved appear to be beyond the bounds which common men may hope to reach. This is not to say, however, that dynamic analysis of a partial or local character is not possible. Perhaps the phenomena of kinship are already amenable to dynamics of this order. But we should clearly distinguish dynamics in this sense from those empirical studies, now being undertaken, ^{of} the social or cultural process as a whole, or of partial aspects of it, in which the principal object is to establish the interdependences which exist between elements or groups of elements of the culture. This is the characteristic form of much current social anthropology.

XVIII.

Analyses of this kind are being undertaken with a good deal of precision, and it would seem that only some formal requirements - a clear statement of all the assumptions involved, and the comparative synthesis of the great mass of empirical material now available - need to be met in order for those studies to approach even more closely the dynamic model referred to above.

What would be the relation between dynamic studies of this order and "functional" studies of primitive culture? The position is, I feel, rather obscure, in part because of uncertainties about the precise meanings of the terms "function" and "culture".

Although there ^{have} ~~has~~ been refutations that what I have termed studies of cultural inter-relationships are truly "functional" in the sense in which the term "function" has been recently re-defined by Radcliffe Brown and Malinowski, such studies have so far passed as "functionalism" without serious challenge. Measured by their degree of adherence to the conditions prescribed by these recent definitions there seem to be few field studies which can really claim the title of "functional". How many studies of primitive culture do we possess in which native institutional life is clearly and adequately related to "necessary conditions of existence" on the one hand, or to their "satisfaction of needs" on the other?

But whether or not it is true that they do or do not deserve the title of functionalism, they do not warrant the title of dynamics. None of the conditions of a true dynamics is fulfilled by them, though their implicit objective approximates to the objective which would need to be set before a thoroughgoing dynamics.

What I seek to do, however, is not to try to give these studies status, but to point out that there are possibilities in social anthropology for both a statics and a dynamics which will be formally unobjectionable. We should not simply abandon the sub-statics which has been so far developed in favour of a false dynamics, yet there does seem to be a possibility that we may drift into a position where uncritical fieldwork will make that possible.

In any case it may be pointed out that functionalism as now defined will, if fieldwork is rigorously directed to meeting those requirements, produce data presented in terms of theory quite unlike that which underlies a true dynamic study. The difficulties in the way of doing this in field work in its present stage seem almost insuperable, but it is well that we should be aware of the problems which new developments of theory are creating. We should note, too, that a functionalism of this order would be very sharply marked off from what I have called inter-relationism, which comes much closer to a true dynamics of culture, and could,

in my opinion, with sufficient care, be formally elevated to the status of a true dynamics.

Evolutionism, historicism, diffusionism, and traditional functionalism have not, it is clear, exhausted the possibilities of the study of cultural data. I have tried to suggest that a case can be made out for an attempt to develop both statics and dynamics in cultural theory, the latter apparently distinguishable from the functionalism now being stated. There remains, too, the wide arc of human affairs which can be expressed in the terms development and change. These are separate problems, each in great need of clarification by the development of theory.

XIX.

The theoretical preoccupations of this chapter appear to have some support for the queries they raise. It is doubtful if cultural theory and practice are always proceeding hand in hand. There are still, for instance, some ambiguities in the use of root-concepts.

If "culture" is what men do, make, and possess, in what terms are we to define the relation of men and their culture, and what scientific division of labour are we to observe in dealing with these three elements - men, culture, and the relations between them? Are we to distinguish "culture" and "society" or to identify them? Does social anthropology deal with society, or with culture, or with both, that is to say,

with men and culture and the relations between them? If this is so, are our working concepts of the scope of anthropology and the meaning of culture always sufficiently precise?

On an even more general level, that of the general postulational basis of anthropology, there seems to be something to be gained by an overhaul in the light of problems of the type raised in this chapter.

I am not aware that there is anywhere a really rigorous attempt to state, with the precision which some economists attempt for their field, all the assumptions which are involved in anthropological method, but it is apparent to every anthropologist, as Malinowski has pointed out, that he is continually making use of a number of "blatant a priori assumptions", and that according to their validity ^msuch of his work takes status. It is particularly important since propositions of pure theory lie as much at the root of cultural theory as of economic theory. But they have been much more methodically worked out in relation to the latter than to the former.

Where a certain phase of economic theory has been called the Logic of Pure Choice it might be said that a phase of cultural theory is a Logic of Pure Response, vulnerable in the same ways as pure economic theory was ^{shown} ~~known~~ to be in earlier pages.

For instance, from the fundamental propositions that men living in society have certain basic and imperative bodily needs, Malinowski builds up his theorem that culture is a complex set of "instrumental" responses to those primary needs and to other secondary needs derived from and through them.

Although Professor Malinowski has posed the problem, there has not yet been attempted, as far as I am aware, a methodical working out of the full implications of the pure logic of cultural response, and interesting developments of theory should result from the attempt. So also should there be from any study of the comparative implications of choice and response. Yet a good deal of fieldwork proceeds, amassing a great store of factual information, apparently with no particular relation to these propositions. It is much to be doubted whether the conceptual equipment of many fieldworkers is recognizably the same as the positions ^{outlined} ~~applied~~ by the one or two anthropologists who have attempted to make clear their general theory.

Let us list, for instance, some of the assumptions which anthropologists commonly make. One is the assumption that societies are integrated, that is to say, are systems, that they cohere, that there is an organic relation between their parts, and ^{that} they are therefore not to be defined as the sum only of their constituents. Societies are therefore composed

of men and women in relation with one another. Ordinarily "culture" is used to denote the body of all those relationships. Another assumption is that of social continuum, that is to say, that societies persist and retain their identity through change and through time. It is assumed, too, that societies are universally comparable, and that particular elements of the relationships between members of ^{different} societies are comparable. This is really an assumption of predictability, an assumption that assertions may be made about societies as they were, are, and will be, an assumption that there can be comparisons between one element of one society at one point of time and an element of the same or another society at another point of time. Now, there may perhaps be some doubt whether these prime issues are always clearly in the mind of the anthropologist who asserts that his field is the study of "culture". Is the concept of culture with which most anthropologists work adequate to serve these subtle uses? Some of the difficulties have been well summarized by Bierstedt, who points out that Professor Tylor's definition (of culture) "appears to be clear and distinct. In actual use, however, it has been strained far beyond his original intention. This type of culture cannot, by definition, be developmental nor dynamic. A complex whole of traits has never yet acted nor reacted, nor has it moved through cycles, spirals, or helices of development. It simply is. One may

correctly describe it as social heritage, passed on from generation to generation, and swelled by constant accretions of new materials and customs along the way. The development of individual traits, such as marriage ceremonies ^{or} ~~on~~ bone knives, can possibly be charted according to a pattern, but culture itself ^{as} ~~is~~ a generic, singular term indicating what man has, is a dead mass, a simple collection. To make it the object of an active verb of motion does violence to the meaning of the word. When writers remark that this type of culture may be regarded as a functional dynamic unity, moving through definite phases of development, they illustrate the fallacy of rhetorical reification or philosophical hypothesis^{stasis}. When they insist that culture is more than the sum of the traits which compose it they are not discussing the culture defined by Professor Tylor. With his definition we can do nothing else than equate culture with forms and artifacts and institutions."

Certainly, it would appear that the theory implied in anthropological practice has moved some distance ahead of its formulation by practitioners. Working anthropologists assume that what they term "cultures" may be compared, are divisible into parts, and influence each other, that elements of them can move spatially and be exchanged and rejected or received by other

1. P.208. The Meanings of Culture, by Robert Bierstedt. Philosophy of Science April 1938, Vol.5 No.2.

cultures, that statements may be made about ^a culture by making statements about its parts. They assume that while cultures are divisible into parts, spatially and conceptually separable, cultures are really integrated systems of related parts, the parts operating or functioning interdependently, some of them forming integrally linked sub-systems within systems. They assume that while cultures change in their components over periods, there is a continuum which makes it valid to compare them and their elements as between points of time. Only some anthropologists have as yet explicitly faced the issue whether and in what senses functions and capacities can be ascribed to cultures, and whether the concepts involved have been clearly enough elaborated for this to be done without obscurity. The entire problem of social movement, of social action, the kind of propositions we are to develop concerning social dynamics, rests upon such points as these. With them, too, are involved the problems linked with questions of decision, knowledge, and foresight in society. Anthropologists seem, for instance, to be in a position where to uphold their general theory of culture they would need to assume a certain degree of consistency and compatibility in the acts and decisions of individuals. This is, in part, the point referred to earlier - the imputed predictability of culture. This appears to be very close to an assertion of pattern in culture, of a degree of unity in conduct, and in objective, which enables the course of human affairs to be rendered consistent. To restate this

from a slightly different viewpoint, it is an assumption of the common possession by members of a society of that degree of knowledge which enables their conduct and decisions to be compatible, in fact, to be subject to the generalizations of the scientist. But what degree of knowledge, and what knowledge?

One cannot have much doubt that there will need to be at some stage a rigorous statement of all the postulates which are necessary and sufficient to social anthropology. Certainly, fieldwork will be done with finer tools after this has been competently attempted, and the results submitted to general examination. I make, of course, no pretence here of doing more than offering a few most general observations on one or two only of the many points involved. It seems obvious, however, that any anthropologist who takes the trouble to make himself familiar with the degree of precision reached by economists in regard to the conceptual foundations of their science should turn his thoughts to the problems of a like nature in his own field.