THE CAREER OF F.E. WILLIAMS, GOVERNMENT ANTHROPOLOGIST OF PAPUA, 1922–1943

by

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Canberra March 1977
I certify that this thesis is entirely my own work and that all sources have been acknowledged.

Deidre Griffiths
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<tr>
<td>ANL</td>
<td>National Library of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANZAAS</td>
<td>Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science</td>
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<td>ARM</td>
<td>Assistant Resident Magistrate</td>
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<td>BC</td>
<td>Balliol College, Oxford</td>
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<td>CAO</td>
<td>Commonwealth Archives Office</td>
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<td>CMO</td>
<td>Chief Medical Officer</td>
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<td>CP</td>
<td>Canberra Permanent</td>
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<td>Groves Papers</td>
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<td>LMS</td>
<td>London Missionary Society</td>
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<td>NGAR</td>
<td>New Guinea Annual Report</td>
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<td>Resident Magistrate</td>
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<td>SAD</td>
<td>Seventh Day Adventists</td>
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<td>University of Papua and New Guinea</td>
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<td>WP</td>
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Map showing main places where F.E. Williams carried out field work between 1921 and 1943
Francis Edgar Williams worked for the Government of Papua for almost twenty years, as Assistant Government Anthropologist from 1922 until 1928 and Government Anthropologist from 1928 until 1943. He lived among the people of most parts of Papua and published numerous anthropological works including *Orokaiva Society*, *Papuans of the Trans-Fly* and *Drama of Orokolo*, for which he was awarded respectively the Honours Degree of Master of Arts by Adelaide University and the Bachelor of Science and Doctorate of Science by Oxford University. But beyond the purely anthropological, his job forced him to consider a wide range of administrative questions and, with greatest emphasis of all, questions of 'Native Education'. And both his experiences with Papuan cultures and his deliberations on educational matters frequently brought him into touch with the Christian missions and prompted him to reflect upon the utility of their work and teachings.

This thesis examines Williams's career and the use made of anthropology by the Administration of J.H.P. Murray, Lieutenant-Governor of Papua. Where relevant, it draws comparisons between Williams's situation in Papua and that in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea - and particularly between Williams and E.W.P. Chinnery, the other Territory's Government Anthropologist.\(^1\) Because of Williams's own considerable preoccupation with the subjects and their marked importance in the overall contexts of both Papuan cultures and history - education, the missions and Christianity are discussed at some length.

There are a number of reasons for undertaking such a study. Some knowledge of the nature of the work of any anthropologist in a

\(^1\) The word 'Papua' when used by the present writer refers to the former Australian Territory previously called British New Guinea. The terms 'New Guinea' or 'Mandated Territory' refer to former German New Guinea which became known for many years after 1920, when it was placed under the trusteeship of Australia by the League of Nations, as the Mandated Territory of New Guinea.
particular period and location is interesting and forms a contribution to the history of anthropology. Secondly, I agree with the view, expressed in a discussion of the relationships between anthropology and colonial rule, that it is necessary 'to examine the particularities of a single situation, not least since the extensive literature on the subject of the attempt to apply anthropological knowledge to colonial problems remains at a very general level and has yet to be supported by case studies.' Finally, the study might be expected to throw some further light upon the nature of J.H.P. Murray's Administration, about which much has already been written, and on Papuan history in general.

A number of writers have essayed judgements on Williams's role in Papua incidentally to their own work. It has been asserted that he influenced both education policy and general 'native administration', that Murray relied heavily upon him for advice, and that the Lieutenant-Governor's doubts about the relevance of a particular prominent school of anthropological theory to 'native administration', were influenced by him. It has also been said that Williams worked very well with Murray. The validity of these assertions may be assessed on the basis of a detailed study of Williams's career, and of his relationship with the Papuan Administration and its utilisation of him. For reasons which will emerge in its course, this study is largely one of plans, attitudes and expressed thoughts, rather than actions.

An introductory chapter, including biographical sketches of Williams, Murray, and Chinnery, is followed by one about Williams as


a field-worker and writer. The third chapter deals with Williams's views on the missions, their teachings, their influences on Papuan culture, and his relations with them. Chapters four to seven examine his attitudes towards race and culture, their influence on his work, and his treatment of the vital education question. Chapter eight deals with Williams's standing in relation to the anthropological theory and method of his day, its bearing upon his work, and his and Murray's relations with other anthropologists. Chapters nine and ten include a discussion of Williams's relations with the Administration and his recommendations to it on many highly important subjects. The final chapter looks briefly at Williams's role in Papua during the Second World War, up to the time of his tragic death in May 1943, and concludes with an evaluation of his career and influence.

The major sources on which the work is based are: the F.E. Williams Papers; the official papers of the Lieutenant-Governor and the Government Secretary of Papua; the files of the Australian Government departments which were at various times responsible for Papua and New Guinea; the papers of J.R. Halligan and J.S. McLaren, senior Australian Public Servants connected with Papua and New Guinea; the Murray Family Papers and the Murray Papers; Williams material held by The Trustees, Rhodes House; Williams's published works and those of a number of other anthropologists; and interviews with anthropologists, among them one of Williams's contemporaries, Dr Reo Fortune.

As I am not an anthropologist, my observations on, or criticisms of, anthropological theory or method are derived from critical though lay examinations and comparisons of the writings of anthropologists - both contemporary with the period covered and more recent - and discussions with present-day anthropologists. The thesis does not pretend to be an anthropological exercise. It is, essentially, an historical study of one man's working life and influence.
CHAPTER I

The Government Anthropologist and the Administrator:
F.E. Williams and J.H.P. Murray

FRANCIS Edgar Williams was described after his death as a man of marked candour. His obituarist felt that Williams's attitude to his anthropological work 'was the natural expression of his character', revealing his 'complete frankness both with regard to his opinions, sources of knowledge and limitations'; he was 'found very disconcerting' by 'any who relied at all on bluff, sham or on "striking an attitude"'; he was 'fond of human beings, enjoyed himself whenever opportunity offered and above all had a delightful sense of humour'. All of these, the characteristics 'to be expected of a Rhodes-Scholar', were said to have been reflected in his writing. It is fortunate that another acquaintance, whose life like Williams's was spent in deep involvement with matters of 'native welfare', found the opportunity long before Williams's death to write with less solemnity:

though he's no publicity hunter, he has contributed more in a practical way to the justification of his science than any other man round Australian shores. And a rattling good fellow he is personally: you can't share a man's room and confidences with him as I did with Williams at [the] Honolulu [Conference] without recognising what is in him. 2

Williams, known to his friends and colleagues as 'Frank' or 'F.E.', was an Australian. He was an attractive man of dignified bearing - 'very English' to the eyes of an Australian youth whose father's house he visited. 3 A surviving sketch and photograph portray a man of military appearance bearing a marked resemblance to the suave, moustached characters of David Niven's screen roles. Born on 9 February 1893, the son of a moderately successful architect, he grew up in Adelaide, South Australia, was educated at Kyre College,

1 A.P. Elkin, 'F.E. Williams - Government Anthropologist, Papua (1922-43)', Oceania, XIV, 2, December 1943, pp. 91-103.
2 W.C. Groves to J.R. Halligan, 22 March 1938, CAO CP 136/1-41.
3 Murray Groves, Interview, Hong Kong, 7 March 1976.
a Baptist private school, and graduated from the University of Adelaide in December 1914 with First Class Honours and the Tennyson Medal for Classics. He also won university awards for Latin, psychology and logic. An accomplished footballer and athlete, he was elected a Rhodes Scholar in 1915. But then, like so many others of similar background, he went to war. He served in the A.I.F. in Egypt and France for two years as a Lieutenant, was subsequently chosen for the Dunster Force and served with the rank of Captain, Special Service List, in North-West Persia. He was employed on a special mission early in 1918 and wounded twice, a month before the war ended. Unlike so many, he survived. He served then for a short time in the Persian Civil Service.

Although Williams attained the same military rank as Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon, there the similarity seems to have ended. He was a self-contained character of very even tenor; though not a dull man, he was prone to few flights of imagination. Inspired to write no poetry, he turned quietly back to the calm academic life which he had led before the trenches intervened.

The war apart, however, his Persian experience does seem to have influenced the direction of Williams's career. He subsequently displayed an interest in both anthropology and the Persian language, and there is a possibility that he intended to return one day to work in Persia.

One of six Australians to be awarded Rhodes Scholarships in 1915, Williams was among four of them to survive the war. He took up his scholarship at Oxford, became a member of Balliol College and for two years was tutored by R.R. Marett, 'one of the last of the

5 C.E.W. Bean, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18, Vol. V, pp. 731-743, 763; Elkin, 'F.E. Williams...', p. 100; Wylie, 'Log of Rhodes Scholars...'.
6 'Log of Rhodes Scholars...'.
7 Ibid.
8 'Log of Rhodes Scholars...'.

armchair anthropologists', in his work for the Diploma of Anthropology. He received his diploma with a distinction and went on to write a Bachelor of Science thesis.

But here his level of academic achievement ebbed, and his thesis was rejected by the examiners. Towards the end, Williams explained, he had 'rushed it' and had included some inaccuracies of detail; it was very badly typed; and the style, 'too colloquial'. These circumstances, he felt, 'must have been as wormwood to the soul of Mr Balfour', one of his examiners. But he was offered the opportunity to re-submit the work and it was his intention to do so when he left Oxford late in 1921. He left behind him the impression of a 'pleasant fellow, and quiet. Has more in him than he always showed. Didn't come particularly to the front – but will do good work.'

Williams was now almost twenty-nine years old and in need of a job. He was also keen to carry out field-work but lacked independent financial means. Positions for anthropologists, especially situations accommodating work in the field, were more than scarce in those early days of the discipline's transition into a profession. The few anthropologists of the generation preceding Williams's were firmly entrenched in the existing academic teaching posts. Those of his own age group were competing against one another for a small number of grants which only endured for a year or two and then had to be sought and competed for again. The opportunity to apply for what showed prospects of being a permanent position of any nature could not be overlooked; the offer of one was to be grasped. So it was that, with Marett's help, early in 1922, Williams arrived in Port


10 Williams to Wylie, 1 February 1922, in 'File of F.E. Williams', Office of The Trustees, Rhodes House, Oxford.

11 Ibid. Williams did not re-submit the original thesis but wrote an entirely new one which was accepted by Oxford (Papuans of the Trans-Fly).

12 Wylie, 'Log of Rhodes Scholars...'.

Moresby to take up the recently-vacated position of Assistant Government Anthropologist in the administration of Hubert Murray, Lieutenant-Governor of Papua.

MURRAY had his own reasons for wanting a Government Anthropologist and these were solely related to neither anthropology nor administration. Murray was a man of frustrated ambition. His early career had been marked with academic, athletic and military distinction. An Australian of Irish Catholic ancestry, he was an Oxford graduate of an earlier generation than Williams's, with First Class Honours in Classics. He was also a champion boxer and a Boer War veteran. But as a lawyer, practising in Australia, he was unsuccessful and further, bored and frustrated. It was probably in the hope of relieving this boredom and furthering his ambition that Murray had accepted a judicial position in Papua in 1904. Once there, largely as a result of personal efforts, some of which were probably of a dubious character, he rapidly became Lieutenant-Governor of the Territory.

Murray was an extremely active administrator spending a large part of his time travelling throughout the Territory, both on judicial work and personally extending his Government's influence over Papuans who had previously known little or no European control. He aimed to develop Papua through a 'Dual Mandate' - entailing both European private enterprise and Papuan industry. Not without inward emotions, he hid these behind a civil but stiff façade and had few intimate friends. He wrote frequently to his younger brother,

13 Francis West, Hubert Murray: Australian Pro-Consul, pp. 2-3.
14 West, Hubert Murray..., pp. 4-7, 61-97; West claims that Murray's 'efforts' were merely to perform the work of Acting Administrator as well as possible. On the basis of largely the same evidence, this writer believes that he went further than this, regarding almost any means of achieving his ambition as justifiable. Murray was appointed Acting Administrator of Papua early in 1907 and Lieutenant-Governor in 1909.
Gilbert Murray, the celebrated Greek scholar and humanist whose fame, it may reasonably be thought, he longed to match. Much of Murray's own extensive humaneness and kindness were channelled into the care of the oppressed — in the Papuan context, 'the native'.

One of the central motives of Murray's career became to win recognition as a 'great colonial administrator'. This he attempted to do by publishing a succession of books and papers on his own 'achievements'. But it was not vanity alone that prompted this self-promotion campaign and neither was it direct financial gain. Murray was also afraid of losing his job. To his family he explained, of one publication, 'I do not expect to make anything out of it. However, it will be useful as an argument if they seek to retire me on the ground of old age.' On another occasion with seeming lack of consistency, he told his brother that if the Australian Government refused him permission to publish an account he had just written of his work in Papua, he would resign; but such threats from Murray were common and never went further than his family circle. Anthropology and anthropologists became tools to be harnessed by him in achieving his aim of being considered a paragon of the colonial administrator.

16 West, op. cit, pp. 3-4 and passim; Murray's letters to Gilbert Murray and Gilbert's wife Mary Murray are in the Murray Family Papers, Australian National Library MS Collection 565.

17 In 1912 Murray published his first book on his work in Papua, entitled *Papua or British New Guinea*, (London, 1912). Between 1920 and 1930 he published 'a review of Australian administration in Papua, a second book on the colony and a series of addresses to such bodies as the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, the Pan Pacific Science Congress, the Royal Colonial Institute, the Royal Anthropological Institute and the British Association'. West, *Hubert Murray...*, p. 204.

18 Murray to Mary Murray, 5 May 1926, MFP 565/418.

19 Ibid.

20 Murray to Gilbert Murray, 1 October 1920, MFP 565/396. See, for examples, Murray to Gilbert Murray, 8 December 1931, MFP 565/446 and Murray to Gilbert Murray, 5 May 1934, MFP 565/461.
Murray's administration, as other writers have pointed out, was one of paternalistic compulsion. Village constables and later, in some places, councillors, were claimed to be 'representatives' of Papuans, communicating their views to the Administration. In reality they were merely media through which Government propaganda, often of a benignly paternalistic nature, could be channelled. Native Regulations, some originating in earlier administrations, dictated the Papuan's behaviour in many aspects of everyday life. The courts enforced the regulations. Murray often claimed that 'native custom' was taken into account during trials and in day-to-day 'Native' administration. But custom was not written into law - as it was, for instance, in Fiji. British Justice was the only system considered permissible, Papuan judicial processes being disregarded out of hand.

Although Murray's professed aim was to 'raise' the Papuan in the 'scale of civilisation', education, which was of only the most rudimentary nature, was left entirely to the missions. Murray's concern with 'native welfare' before Williams' arrival was mainly limited to improved health and hygiene and the 'protection' of Papuans from exploitation by European industry. Determined though he was to


22 Ibid.

23 Murray, Papua of To-day, (London 1925); Murray, Indirect Rule in Papua, (Port Moresby 1929).

24 This attitude to 'justice' was perpetuated by most of Murray's successors. See: D. Griffiths, 'Australian Liberal and Labor Parties' Policies for Papua and New Guinea', unpublished B.A. Honours thesis, La Trobe University (1972); and David Fenbury, 'Kot belong mipela', New Guinea, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1965), pp. 61-6.

25 Murray, Papua or British New Guinea, pp. 346 and 367.
preserve the white man's 'superiority', he had no time for the unbridled racism of many European residents of his Territory.\textsuperscript{26}

Murray was first introduced to the 'very fascinating science' of anthropology at the beginning of his Papuan career through the established ethnologists of the time, A.C. Haddon, C.G. Seligman and Williams's tutor of later years, R.R. Marett.\textsuperscript{27} Both Haddon and Seligman had visited Papua with the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits of 1898, six years before Murray's arrival. The expedition was the beginning of a new wave of ventures by British anthropologists out of their armchairs and into the field. Seligman returned to Papua the same year that Murray took up his judicial appointment there. Murray was particularly impressed by the 'vast variety of information' the ethnologists 'seem to have collected'.\textsuperscript{28} And he was occasionally able to accompany Seligman on his 'rounds of investigation in the Port Moresby villages' and to assist with the callipers in the measuring of countless living Papuan skulls.\textsuperscript{29}

These early ethnologists had no intention at this time of offering advice on administrative matters. They were concerned only with gathering data for their academic studies. Murray admired them personally and corresponded with them frequently about ethnology in


\textsuperscript{28} Murray to Mary Murray, 24 October 1904, MFP 565/313.

\textsuperscript{29} Murray, Draft of a book on Papua....
following years. He also read their publications and referred to them in his own, and in his addresses. Privately, however, he did not believe their discipline a sound one; it was 'purely fantastic', the 'alleged facts' being unsupported by evidence and the 'inferences ... forced'. Nevertheless he championed it vociferously in public from the 1920s onwards as a useful aid to administrators. He wondered, too, at the tardiness of other administrators in making use of anthropology, implying that he was the first to do so. This was not entirely true; other colonies, particularly African ones, had used government anthropologists from as early as 1908 and a number of metropolitan powers gave their colonial officers varying degrees of anthropological grounding before sending them to the colonies. It was true however that, overall, 'the direct anthropo-

30 Murray, Diary (kept when travelling in England and Holland, June 1936), Monday, ? June 1936, pp. 9-10, MP A3138-2, Vol. I; Murray to Gilbert Murray, 8 December 1931, MFP 565/446; Murray to Editor, Man, 8 February 1931, copy in CAO CRS G69-16/19. Murray, Draft of a book on Papua..., p. 103. Murray's correspondence with the anthropologists is referred to in: R.R. Marett to Gilbert Murray, 6 March 1940, MFP 565/555; Murray to Gilbert Murray, 2 December 1919, MFP 565/393; Murray to ? (probably Gilbert or Mary Murray, a loose, un-numbered, undated page found inside a letter from Murray to Mary Murray, 30 April 1918, MFP 565/387); Leonard Murray to Williams, 29 October 1931, WP 5/10-85.

31 Murray, Diary, 3 June 1908, p. 60, MP A3139, Vol. 2, 1908-10, Part 2; Murray, Diary, 25 July 1910, ibid; Murray, Draft of a book on Papua..., p. 103.

32 Murray to Gilbert Murray, February 1909, MFP 565/333.

33 See, for example, Murray, Papua of To-day, p. viii; Murray, Anthropology and the Government of Subject Races, (Port Moresby 1930).

34 For details, see: A. Kuper, Anthropologists and Anthropology..., pp. 127-28; Haddon, 'The Practical Value of Anthropology to Administrators', paper read before the Anthropological Section of the British Association at Sydney, 1914, copy in CAO CRS A452 59/4708; A.R. Radcliffe-Brown to J.S. McLaren, 26 February 1931, CAO CRS A518 P806/1/1, Part I.
logical contribution to administration' in these possessions 'was nugatory'.

As a new generation of anthropologists emerged, Murray became wary of them. He encountered Bronislaw Malinowski, the Polish anthropologist who visited Papua and was outspoken about the effects of administration on the people he studied. Murray was repelled by Malinowski's personality, totally intolerant of his views and offended by his audacity in offering them. He did everything within his power to rid his Territory of the anthropologist, and later wrote heated refutations of Malinowski's publications wherever they touched on Papuan administrative matters. Murray had a similar dislike for Captain G.H.L. Pitt-Rivers, an amateur anthropologist who worked in Papua after Malinowski. And when it was suggested that cadets from Papua should train under A.R. Radcliffe-Brown at Sydney University, Murray refused to support the proposal; this, despite both his own earlier efforts to have the discipline introduced to an Australian university, and subsequent praise of the course by senior Papuan

36 Kuper, p. 129. See, in contrast, Talal Asad and others in Talal Asad (ed.), *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, (London and New Jersey, 1975; first published 1973), who claim on the basis of politically biased interpretations of the same and similar evidence, that anthropology was influential upon colonial administration.

37 Murray to Gilbert Murray, 5 October 1914, MFP 565/371; Murray to (Mary or Gilbert Murray?) (un-numbered page inside letter from Murray to Mary Murray, 30 April 1918, MFP 565/387); Department of External Affairs Despatch No. 395 of 23 December 1914, in CAO CRS A1-21/866 and Despatch No. 35 of 4 May 1915, ibid.; B. Malinowski to Murray, 19 June 1929, CAO CRS G69-16/14; Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, (published posthumously 1967), pp. 8-9, 108, 109, 127-28. See also H. Laracy, 'Malinowski at War, 1914-18', (at press), typescript; I am indebted to Dr Laracy for kindly allowing me to read this article before publication.

38 See, for example, Murray to Minister for Home and Territories, 17 December 1927, CAO CRS G69-16/19 and same file, folios 1-11 inclusive; and Murray to Editor, *Man*, July 1930, No. 14.
officers who attended it.\textsuperscript{39} In later years his mistrust of the 'younger' anthropologists increased progressively.\textsuperscript{40}

Despite, or perhaps partly because of these factors, Murray determined to have his own anthropologist; an 'administrative aid' which his public would surely appreciate. Anthropology, he explained to his readers, would help Papuans along the difficult road of civilization.\textsuperscript{41} A further purported reason for employing an anthropologist was to 'encourage' administrative officers to study and employ the discipline in their work.\textsuperscript{42}

Murray was particularly keen to have an Oxford man. The decision made, he set about acquiring his candidate in a frenzy. At first the Great War baulked him; the anthropologists were away fighting.\textsuperscript{43} In desperation he appointed his Chief Medical Officer and a sometime Resident Magistrate, Walter Mersh Strong, to the position in 1920.

\textsuperscript{39} Murray to Minister for Home and Territories, 24 September 1926, CAO CRS G69-7/8; Memorandum by (C.G.?) Garrioch, Home and Territories Department, 23 October 1926, CAO CP 136/1-1; Memorandum by J.S. McLaren, 15 October 1926, ibid; copies of two letters from senior Papuan administrative officers to Radcliffe-Brown, 1931, praising his course, in CAO CRS A518-P806/1/1. One of the officers commented: 'I might mention that nearly seventeen years service has been completed by me amongst the Papuans, and I only wish that the opportunity of taking this Course had been available years ago...'. 'Letter 1', ibid.

\textsuperscript{40} See for example Murray to Prime Minister, 5 April 1932, CAO CRS A518-L840/1/5; for further details see below, Chapter VIII.

\textsuperscript{41} Murray, quoted by Leonard Murray (Official Secretary (O.S.) to Murray), to Chief Clerk Home and Territories Department, 3 August 1923, CAO CRS Al-23/29345; Murray, \textit{Papua of To-day}, p. 242.

\textsuperscript{42} Leonard Murray, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{43} Murray, \textit{Papua of To-day}, p. 246; Murray to (Gilbert or Mary Murray) (... in Murray to Mary Murray, 30 April 1918, MFP 565/387); Murray to Gilbert Murray, 17 July 1919, MFP 565/389; Murray to Gilbert Murray, 2 December 1919, MFP 565/393.
Strong, who has been described as 'benign' though 'absent-minded', had dabbled in ethnology and originally accompanied Seligman to Papua. As he was already working for the Papuan Government, it was hardly necessary to make an official appointment. But Murray craved for a man bearing the title of Government Anthropologist. Strong's work in that capacity was negligible; he continued to spend most of his time on medical and administrative work. His main effort was a call for the collection of data on aspects of Papuan technology by field officers. Although he developed 'lasting and just relationships' with individual Papuans, he considered the Papuan race immeasurably inferior.

In mid-1921 Murray finally acquired a professionally-trained anthropologist and appointed him Strong's assistant. He, and his successor, were paid from the education section of a fund recently established by Murray to raise taxes from the Papuans themselves; it was explicitly stipulated in the terms under which the fund was administered that the anthropologists' work was to be directed towards 'native welfare'. W.E. Armstrong, a quiet, gentlemanly man, a returned soldier and a competent anthropologist, proved in many ways highly


45 The material called for by Strong, including 'Papers re collective anthropological investigations, Papua 1921-22', is in WP 5/2-9-11 and consists mainly of data on fire-making techniques and housing.

46 Nelson, op. cit., p. 70; Strong, in Papua Annual Report 1933-34, p. 15. An impression of the doctor's approach to his new position is conveyed in a message he sent to the Government Secretary: 'I should be glad if from time to time police in Port Moresby were sent to me to question. If new recruits are sent who cannot speak Motuan an interpreter would be a great advantage'; and by the Government Secretary's message to police headquarters, that Dr Strong 'will telephone when he wants any boys to question'. W.M. Strong, Government Anthropologist, to Government Secretary, 11 November 1921, WP 5/2-10; Government Secretary to (Chief of Police?), 10 December 1921, ibid.
satisfactory. Despite partial lameness resulting from war wounds, Armstrong carried out field-work in two regions, wrote detailed reports and offered a few suggestions which might have been useful to administrative officers. In particular he condemned missionary interference in the social life of the Suau-Tawala and suggested that control be exerted over evangelists. He criticised the hostile attitude of missionaries to mortuary feasts, pointing out the feasts' value as 'an excellent vehicle for expression of grief and respect for the dead person'. On the specific question of the danger to health of fasting taboos entailed in the Soi ceremonial system—a danger about which the Administration was concerned—he recommended that measures be taken to reduce the period of fasting to its acceptable minimum, rather than ban it. Armstrong's was the first real attempt in Papua to make practical administrative recommendations on the basis of trained anthropological observation.

But his suggestions were ignored. Murray wanted an anthropologist who would amass ethnological data from throughout the Territory and, very occasionally, perhaps investigate and report on a specific 'problem', not one who would give him administrative advice. Any interpretation of the data, or 'application' of anthropology, the Lieutenant-Governor would do himself. Typically, Murray thought he had a 'sound scheme' but one which he expected, like most he instituted, would be 'dropped' when he left Papua.

47 'Testimonial of Employment of Wallace Edwin Armstrong', CAO CRS A1 23/29353; Armstrong was initially engaged for three months to collect anthropological information in the Eastern Division on 7 February 1921. He was appointed Assistant Government Anthropologist (temporary appointment) 7 May 1921 and resigned 23 April 1922; Murray to Gilbert Murray, 23 April 1922, MFP 565/405; Reo Fortune, Interview, Cambridge, 8 August 1976.


49 Armstrong, The Suau-Tawala, pp. 30-31, 32.

50 Ibid.

51 Murray to Gilbert Murray, 7 November 1922, MFP 565/408.
Perhaps because of the negative reaction to the suggestions of his first report, Armstrong's second was more in the census style of the traditional ethnological survey of India and, later, Africa. It was not long before he left Murray for an academic position at Cambridge.\(^52\)

This time Murray was not to be abandoned in the wilderness for long without a professional anthropologist. Marett was able to help him by sending Williams to Papua - an Oxford man at last!\(^53\)

And by the end of Williams's first year Murray felt his new Assistant Government Anthropologist had proved himself. 'I think [he] will do very well', he told Gilbert Murray. Williams, he observed with approval, was 'quite indifferent to discomforts' having 'just put in six months' in the 'hideous' Purari Delta among what Murray considered to be its highly unsavoury population.\(^54\)

Murray was also confident by this stage that Williams had understood and accepted what was and was not expected of him. 'Our danger', he told his brother, as he had probably also indicated to Williams, 'is that we may be lost in the mazes of anthropological science and forget that our chief aim is its application to practical administration. However Williams realises this.'\(^55\) This was not a wholly accurate statement of Murray's real expectations of his Government Anthropologists; these had not altered since Armstrong's departure. It was well calculated, however, to impress those who heard or read it. Williams, when he arrived, was no more expected to advise on administrative matters than his predecessor had been. But although Williams apparently knew his place, he was not to become a '"yes" man'. A year later Murray observed: 'he is a very good man, though I do not agree with him in all points'.\(^56\)

\(^52\) Murray to Gilbert Murray, 23 April 1922, MFP 565/405; Murray, \textit{Papua of To-day}, p. 246; Kuper, p. 127.

\(^53\) Murray to Gilbert Murray, 23 April 1922, MFP 565/405.

\(^54\) Murray to Gilbert Murray, 7 November 1922, MFP 565/408.

\(^55\) Ibid.

\(^56\) Murray to Gilbert Murray, 17 November 1923, MFP 565/413.
WILLIAMS found Port Moresby 'the ugliest of towns in the most beautiful surroundings' and missed 'solid, cool white buildings of stone'; in their stead he was confronted by unprepossessing tropical houses 'of wood and corrugated iron'. He was substantially isolated there from the rest of the anthropological world though he corresponded with a number of its members. His letters left regularly on 'our monthly mail boat' after 'the last bag of copra [was] on board' and the whistle blown; and his replies came with her return.

As an employee of the Administration, resident for half the year in the predominantly European-populated capital of a colonial dependency, his lot was notably different from that of his contemporary, 'independent' anthropological colleagues. Williams mixed extensively with other European residents in the normal course of social events. An enthusiastic golfer, he spent much of his leisure time while in Port Moresby at the local golf club. And as a returned soldier, some of it was passed with others of the same ilk. On Anzac Day, though he did not march, he drank with his fellow veterans. In 1938, for example, 'the Returned Soldiers had a binge [in Port Moresby] at which H.E. was present'; 'a pleasant little show' distinguished by 'beer and song'.

Williams made many European friends in Papua, including a number of members of the magisterial and administrative field-services, among them Leo Austen, A.C. Rentoul, R.A. Vivien, C.T.J. Adamson and Ivan Champion, who were interested in their work from an amateur anthropological viewpoint. As they were seldom in Port Moresby he usually corresponded and came into contact with them in the field. There were also missionaries, notable among them being Sister Constance Fairhall, the L.M.S. medical missionary. And, especially when he was in the field, there were a number of planters and traders with whom he dined and talked. It seems probable that

57 Williams to Wylie, 17 May 1925, Williams's Rhodes Scholar file.
58 Williams to Wylie, 16 April 1925, ibid.
59 Williams to Ivan Champion, 2 May 1938, WP 5/6-56; Williams, 'Caddie's Day in Papua', London Illustrated News, 11 March 1933; carbon typescript in WP 5/1-1.
with the European social base of Port Moresby to depart from and return to, Williams was bound to approach his sojourns in the field in a somewhat different frame of mind from those of 'visiting' anthropologists.

In addition to corresponding with individual anthropologists, he kept in touch with the subject's academic bases by contributing papers to ANZAAS Conferences. Seldom, however, was he able to attend meetings and his contributions were usually read on his behalf. He often expressed wistfully to the conveners a 'wish to be there'.

In 1938 he was invited to be President of the Anthropological Section of the following year's Conference and he determined to attend the meeting. But at the last minute the Administration told him he must choose between the Conference and an important field-trip. Government transport to his field could only be made inexpensively available at the time of the Conference. Williams chose the field-trip and sent his apologies and, as usual, a paper to be read on his behalf.

He did, however, manage to escape twice to the academic world, once on leave and again on a Rockefeller travelling scholarship to England; and to attend Malinowski's celebrated seminars at the London School of Economics and spend brief periods with Marett at Oxford and Haddon at Cambridge.

His personal life was touched with worry and sadness. Finances were always a problem. In December 1926, in Vancouver, he married Constance Laura Akeroyd Denness, a Canadian girl trained as

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60 Williams to R. Firth, Honorary Secretary to ANZAAS Anthropological Section, 22 July 1932, WP 5/1-5; S.R. Mitchell, Honorary Secretary, ANZAAS Anthropological Section, to Williams, 20 December 1934, ibid.

61 Williams to A.P. Elkin, Honorary Secretary Section F. - ANZAAS, 8 September 1938, WP 5/1-5; Williams to Dr A.B. Walkom, Honorary General Secretary of ANZAAS, 4 October 1938, ibid; R.A. Bronowski to Williams, 19 June 1939, ibid; G.S. to Williams, 24 August 1938, WP 5/6-56; Williams to G.S., n.d., ibid; A.W.M. for G.S. to Williams, 30 August 1938, ibid; Williams to G.S., 30 August 1938, ibid.

62 Williams, 'Account of 1934 Visit to England', extract from draft of Papua Annual Report, 1933-34, in CAO CRS A452-59/5972.
a kindergarten teacher, who, according to one acquaintance, was emotionally unstable. If this were in fact so, their match was perhaps an instance of the proverbial attraction of opposites; his low-keyed temperament to her tumultuous one. But it would seem, regardless of this, that Constance Williams was a woman of some character. Nonetheless, soon after their return to Papua Williams was sending his new wife home to her family in Vancouver for a six-month visit. His hope that 'next time... we shall be able to make a home in Papua' was fulfilled, however, and they built a house at Ela Beach, to one side of Port Moresby. Constance was with Williams for part of the time in the early years of their marriage and worked as his assistant in the office, and occasionally in later years, in the field. But in December 1927 they had a son, their only child, who was born substantially blind. Following years entailed numerous trips to England for the sake of the boy's health and special education, and to enable Constance — and very occasionally Williams — to visit him.

WILLIAMS had what might be expected to constitute a neighbouring counterpart in E.W.P. Chinnery, Government Anthropologist of New Guinea. Although such an expectation does not prove entirely justified, the other anthropologist provides an illuminating case for comparison with Williams on a number of different points.

Chinnery, an Australian of great personal charm, was appointed Government Anthropologist of New Guinea a little over two

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63 Memorandum by 'McP.' for Dr C.K. Allen, Warden of Rhodes House (successor to Sir Francis Wylie), 25 August 1943, Williams's file, Rhodes House; B. Bradnach, Headmaster of Worcester College for the Blind, to Warden of Rhodes House, 23 September 1943, ibid; Bradnach to Warden, 29 January 1945, ibid.

64 Williams to Wylie, 1 May 1927, Williams's file, Rhodes House.

65 Williams to Wylie, 17 June 1930, Williams's file, Rhodes House.

66 File of John Francis B. ('Jackie') Williams, in Records of the Royal National Institute for the Blind, United Kingdom.
years after Williams took up his post in Papua. But unlike the fledgling Williams, Chinnery was a veteran of administrative service. He had worked for Murray in Papua as an administrative officer and only after the Great War, when he served as a Lieutenant in the Australian Flying Corps, had he taken up the formal study of anthropology for a short time under Haddon and W.H.R. Rivers at Cambridge. Chinnery too applied for the job of Government Anthropologist in Papua, but Murray did not want him. Privately Murray told Gilbert Murray that Chinnery would be quite unsuitable as he would 'say anything' for effect and was an inaccurate observer. There is apparently little foundation for these claims. Haddon believed that Chinnery was a proficient anthropologist, and Chinnery's own work, though in places superficial, compares favourably with that of later anthropologists working in the same areas, as far as accuracy of observation is concerned. It is probable that Murray did not want a seasoned administrator as his Government Anthropologist and envisaged with apprehension Chinnery brazenly offering him suggestions on the basis of his recently acquired 'scientific' training.

Instead, Chinnery worked for the Bootless copper-mining company in Papua between leaving Cambridge and beginning his New Guinea job. He was responsible there for the care and control of hundreds of Papuan mine labourers and found it a unique and useful opportunity to 'experiment' in the 'application' of anthropology. As Government Anthropologist of New Guinea he was much involved in administrative matters, spending a moderate amount of time travelling

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68 Haddon to J.A. Carrodus, Home and Territories Department, 22 August 1927, CAO CRS A518-M806/1/3; R.M. Fleming, in Man, November 1930, p. 211 (referring to Haddon's public praise of Chinnery).

on swiftly-conducted patrols through the Territory; these were of very much the same nature as those made by the normal administrative officer. Chinnery spent little time in any one place and his reports took the same general form and style as those of patrol officers, with the addition of further ethnological data and extensive census material. He expected intensive anthropological investigations to be carried out by visiting anthropologists, and gave them every encouragement and assistance in their arrangements. But by far Chinnery's most important task consisted of visiting the League of Nations and assisting with reports compiled in what incidentally proved a substantially futile effort to convince the League that Australia was administering the Mandated Territory to its satisfaction.

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70 See for example, Chinnery: 'Notes on the Natives of New Britain visited during the voyage of the Government Steam Yacht "Franklin", January-March 1925', Territory of New Guinea Anthropological Report No. 1, and 'Notes on the Natives of East Mira and St. Matthias', Territory... Report No. 2, annotated copies of drafts in CAO CRS A518-N806/1/3, published jointly Canberra 1927; 'Certain Natives in South New Britain and Dampier Straits', Territory... Report No. 3, 1928; 'Natives of the Waria, Williams and Bialolo water-sheds', Territory... Report No. 4, 1931; 'Notes on the Natives of South Bougainville and Mortlocks (Taku)', Territory... Report No. 5, 1931, annotated copy of draft in CAO CRS A518-0.806/1/3; 'Studies of the Native Population of the East Coast of New Ireland', Territory... Report No. 6, 1931, annotated copy of draft at ibid. Reports Nos. 4-6 published Canberra.

71 Chinnery, 'Applied Anthropology...', pp. 168, 171 and 173; Margaret Mead, Blackberry Winter: My Earlier Years, (New York 1972); Reo Fortune, Interview; extract from personal note from Chinnery to Halligan, 1 June 1931, in CAO CRS A518-806/1/5 (introducing Reo Fortune and Margaret Mead); Halligan to Fortune, 13 October 1931, CAO CRS ibid.

72 T. Griffiths, Administrator of New Guinea, to Prime Minister, (telegram), 26 January 1934, CAO CRS A518-D806/1/1; Chinnery to Mr Starling, Prime Minister's Department, 28 June 1934, CAO CRS A518-0(A)806/1/3; Memorandum by officer of Home and Territories Department, on 'Examination of Annual Report on Administration of New Guinea by Permanent Mandates Commission of League of Nations', 1 February 1935, CAO CRS A518-D806/1/1; Fortune Interview.
In 1928 Chinnery was appointed Commissioner for Native Affairs of New Guinea while nominally retaining his position as Government Anthropologist. In this new capacity he spent much of his time reviewing European requests for land purchases, as well as continuing to be extensively involved in general 'native administration'. His transition from one position to the other proved extremely easy to negotiate, for the difference between the work required of him in the two posts was barely discernible. Unlike Williams he was never expected to deal with educational matters, these being the province of another section of the Administration.

Chinnery and Williams seldom met. The administrations of their respective territories rarely overlapped; and, as Williams remarked, communication between Papua and Australia was far more frequent and accessible than that between Papua and the Mandated Territory. Chinnery was encouraged by the Australian Government department in charge of New Guinea to 'peruse' Williams's reports, and did so. The two corresponded occasionally on ethnological matters and sometimes referred others in search of information to one another. They were on amicable though probably distant terms and on a very few occasions attended the same conferences. The distinctions between Chinnery's tasks and his approach to his work and those of Williams show that Williams's Papuan career proved very different from Chinnery's New Guinea one.

73 Chinnery to Currudos, 20 February 1928, CAO CRS A518-N806/1/3; Rabaul Times, 2 March 1928.
74 Williams to Wylie, n.d., Rhodes House.
75 See Home and Territories Department Memorandum, 31 October 1923, CAO A1 23/29345.
Map of part of Territory of Papua
Map showing Territory of Western Elema and adjacent tribes.
CHAPTER II

The Anthropologist at Work:

'I write to the accompaniment of a singing and drumming...'

And no matter how long one managed to stay in the field, managed to piece together meals of local foods and scarce canned food, and managed to outlast the heat and fatigue... there never was any guarantee that one would in the end see the ceremony that might provide the key to an understanding of the culture. Perhaps in the whole of a field trip one would see no major ceremony, no important man would die, there would be no dramatic clash that would suddenly illuminate the plot of people's lives.

Margaret Mead

He is a South Australian Rhodes Scholar... He is quite indifferent to discomforts, and just put in six months in the Purari Delta - a hideous wilderness of mud, inhabited by ex cannibals of villainous appearance and poor physique, but anthropologically interesting.

J.H.P. Murray

WORK kept Williams in a Port Moresby office for part of each year. Here he wrote his official reports and ethnological papers, articles and books. In an adjoining room hung twenty-seven shrunken heads from the Fly River, which with other specimens constituted the Papuan Government's ethnological museum, for which he was responsible. Constance Williams rendered his field-notes and manuscripts into neat typescript, and a clerk and a messenger were at his disposal. Occasionally the calm of office routine was interrupted by the arrival of a group of tourists, usually Americans, from one of the

2 Hubert Murray to Gilbert Murray, 7 November 1922, MFP 565/408.
3 Williams, 'Native Welfare in Papua', (article written in 1934 for Australian Rhodes Scholars Periodical), copy in CAO CRS G69-16/36.
cruise ships that called at the port, keen to examine and be informed about the museum's collection; on one of these occasions Lord Moyne and his party spent some time attempting to persuade Constance to certify, against all her protestations to the contrary, that the parrot feathers which they had acquired in western Papua had been worn as homicidal insignia by their previous owners.  

But between a quarter and half of his time Williams spent in the field, and it was during these months that he performed the work for which he felt himself best equipped and that he most enjoyed. Some impression of his first two field-trips, each of a rather different nature from the other, is valuable, for it was on these that he found his feet as an anthropological field-worker and established the working patterns which he was generally to pursue on future trips. His initiation into fieldwork was a visit to Gaile, a few miles east of Port Moresby in the Central Division, which he reached by canoe. There he spent some time with the Resident Magistrate of the Division, J.T. O'Malley, and had the opportunity of observing at first hand an administrative officer's 'guidance' of Papuan lives, when O'Malley ordered a youth to stop hurting another

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4 Williams, 'Report on a Visit to the Keveri Valley', typescript in WP 5/14-133.

5 Over nineteen years, Williams spent an annual average of approximately three months and one week in the field; in five of those years he spent five or more months there. (The last year and a half of his life, preceding the Pacific War, during which Williams was otherwise occupied, and one year spent on leave, are omitted from these calculations.) The two longest total periods, consisting of a number of separate sojourns, that he spent in particular areas, consisted of more than twenty-one months spread over fourteen years among the Orokolo and neighbouring people in the Gulf and Delta Divisions (Western Division) along the south-west coast of Papua; and fourteen months divided into two stays spread over three years (in the Orokaiva district, Northern Division). Williams's longest unbroken stay in one area was of eight months, between July 1924 and March 1925, in the latter district. During his time in Papua, he worked in eight major fields for fairly extensive periods and in more than twelve minor ones for shorter times.

6 Williams to F. Wylie, 1 February 1929, Williams's file, Rhodes House.
in the process of a game. Williams seems to have been somewhat overawed by his initial field experience. Taken by a group of villagers to see their gardens, he 'was completely lost' and found it 'astonishing... how [my guides] named the owner of each plot as we came to it. In many cases the boundaries were so imperfect as to escape my notice altogether'. On the brief Gaile trip his investigations were purely ethnographical, but later in the same year he was dispatched upon a more practical mission, to investigate his first 'problem' for the Administration.

Williams's task was to study the cargo cult known as the 'Vailala Madness' which had broken out three years before his arrival in Papua, in the Gulf and Delta Divisions. But even with a specific problem to investigate, he gave priority to a general ethnological examination of the society concerned such as he had briefly made at Gaile. 'An enquiry upon any particular question', he believed, 'cannot be regarded as complete from the anthropological point of view without a [full] investigation of the general culture of the people'. And it was with the aim of achieving this end that he claimed to enter the field.

The Vailala Madness involved the teaching by its leaders that old customs were to be done away with and the prophecy that spirits of the dead would return, some appearing as whitemen, bearing gifts in a steamer. Thieving and adultery were declaimed against, and cleanliness and the equality of women insisted upon. The leaders received messages from the spirits through 'flag poles'. Preparations were made for their arrival including the accumulation of food and in some places the laying of tables with knives, forks and floral

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7 Williams, FN (Field-notes), Gaile, 19 March 1922, WP 5/14-122.
8 Williams, FN, Tupuselei, Gaile, 14 March 1922; and Gaile, 17-20 March 1922, WP (Williams Papers) 5/14-122.
9 Williams, 'The Hornbill Feather in the Abau District', (1935), unpublished report, typescript in WP 5/14-129. (An abridged version of the same report was published as 'The hornbill feather movement in the Abau district', in Papua Annual Report, 1935-36, pp. 19-20.)
decorations. The traditional masks and bull-roarers were cast out of the men's houses and burnt and mass hysteria swept over the population.\(^{10}\) Starting in 1919, the cult had spread rapidly through most of the Gulf district. By 1921, when Williams encountered it, it had subsided to a point where only its leaders were still either in, or capable of entering the state of extreme excitement which had typified the cult at its height.

As Williams moved from one village to another questioning the people about the 'Madness' and its origins, he found that 'in general [they seemed] to have accepted the new kavakava [Madness] cult holu bolus... they were quite in earnest about it... the [cultists] appeared to be held in some considerable respect.'\(^{11}\) He tried to elicit the views of villagers on the old cult, which had preceded and been displaced by the 'Madness', but no one ventured to speak on behalf of it. Critically conscious of his own inexperience, Williams surmised that this was perhaps because he had spoken to groups rather than to individuals.\(^{12}\) A degree of something akin to conspiracy suggested itself to him in the behaviour of the people of one village. Here he noticed that a number of old men 'were in [on] the joke and seemed as much in earnest as the younger men'. As he 'sat with a group talking on a veranda' these villagers too expressed 'no regrets... for the loss of the old culture'. It was 'the Head-i-go-Round men', he was often told, who were responsible for its demise; they had convinced the people that they 'must give up the old things'. When Williams asked the villagers if they wanted to revive their old ceremonial cycle, Sevase (or Hevehe) some answered, uncertainly, that

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10 Williams, The Vailala Madness and the Destruction of Native Ceremonies in the Gulf Division, Papua Anthropology Report No. 4, (1923), passim; Williams, 'The Vailala Madness in Retrospect', in E.E. Evans-Pritchard and others (eds.) Essays Presented to C.G. Seligman, (1934), pp. 369-79, passim.

11 Williams, FN, Maipua, Apiope (to the west along the coast from Orokolo Bay), 5 December 1922, WP 5/10-82. Kavakava is a Motu word meaning madness.

12 Ibid.
they did not know: 'Perhaps, perhaps not.' But a few told him they would 'be making the Sevese, etc. again'. He noticed that his informants usually expected him to be pleased to hear they had given up their Sevese: 'at the beginning of talk about the subject they always declare that they do not want it'. One Village Constable told him that the people, 'when under the influence of Kava-Kava [the Madness] had said "Take 'em away, bloody New Guinea thing"... meaning they should destroy the sacred objects'. This, he noticed in many villages, had been thoroughly achieved; traditional buildings and decorations were nowhere in sight. And when he asked one informant whether there were, in fact, Seveses (the mythical characters who danced at the ceremonies) in the bush and sea, where according to myth they dwelt, he was told: 'No good me lie... I tell you true... No he stop bush... No he stop water... Man he make 'em.'

Williams was often dubious about his informants on this early trip. At the village of Nomi a cultist related 'the story of the creation' to him. This consisted largely of the recitation of a list of objects that had been 'heaved up'. After some time the informant's 'enthusiasm had not abated a scrap... Heave-ups were going on ad lib', and Williams 'stopped him at last, the final thing 'heaved up' being the Government Post of Kairuku.' Of two of the 'Head-i-go-round' men questioned at the village of Moviavi, Williams noted: 'both I should think were schemers', and one 'especially so'; while another informant, a Village Constable who claimed the

13 **Hevehe** or **Sevese** (depending upon the dialect) is pronounced with the accent on the first syllable, though when a speaker desires to be emphatic he will shift it to the second.

14 Williams, FN, Karama (a Vailala village), 31 January 1923, WP 5/10-82.

15 Williams, Conversation at Moviavi (inland village, south-east of Orokolo Bay), 31 January 1923, WP 5/10-82.

16 Williams, FN, Silo (village, Orokolo Bay region), 31 January 1923, WP 5/10-82.

17 Williams, FN, Nomi (village), Orokolo District, 9 December 1922, WP 5/10-82. Kairuku was in the south-western corner of the Central Division, in the Mekeo District.
missionaries had said the 'old ways were no good', struck him as 'a misery and a Holy Joe'. And at Lese, after interviewing another Village Constable who 'said he had been the first to introduce the madness', he recorded that his informant was 'a bad looking little bastard'.

His source of information about the Vailala cult was not restricted to villagers. Williams spoke also to Europeans who had been residents of the Gulf coast in the early days of the 'Madness'. It was during this visit to Orokolo Bay that he made his first European friends in Papua, Mr and Mrs Harry Coghill, who 'carried on the hard life of traders on the beach' and to whom, with a number of their fellows encountered in following years, he incurred 'a debt of gratitude for their hospitality and good company'. He dined sometimes with the planters; one, Fred Burke, lent him a table for his camp; and two others accompanied him on a hasty dash along the beach one evening to view a ceremonial event. The planters and traders willingly reminisced for him. A Mr McDonald told him he thought that one particular cult leader had had 'very little to do with white men'. From Mrs Coghill he heard that another cultist had instigated the 'Madness'. And the missionaries were equally informative.

Williams was relieved to find that not every village had been completely gripped by the cult. In 'Orokolo Village' the traditional buildings and ceremonial masks of the Hevehe cycle had been preserved. Here nine hundred people lived, scattered along a mile of coastline in seven separate communities; and he found the boys passing through the seclusion stage of their initiation process

18 Williams, FN, Orokolo District, 1923, WP 5/10-82.
19 Williams, FN, Lese (village), Vailala, February 1923, WP 5/10-82.
21 F.W. Burke to Williams, 1937, WP 5/10-83; Williams, FN, Orokolo, November 1931, WP 5/11-90.
23 Williams, FN, Orokolo Bay, 1922, ibid., p. 28.
during which they were meant to remain, hidden from adult and particularly female eyes, in a special enclosure. Williams was not surprised, however, to find that the boys sometimes left their refuge to go strolling in the bush; and 'on one [such] occasion the lads brought me some Paw Paws to my house'. Theory and practice in "native life", as most anthropologists have quickly discovered, and as Malinowski in particular frequently stressed, were often at variance.

Hevehe, Williams found, was far more than an isolated ceremonial event; it was a series of steps in a great cycle which sometimes stretched over twenty-five years, embracing many aspects of social life, including the initiation of young men. It entailed the construction of an immense, elaborate building - the era\textsuperscript{vo} - by the men of the particular social group performing it, and the gradual and painstaking manufacture of towering, magnificently woven and decorated dancing-masks, each of a unique appearance, symbolizing the spirits believed to live in the surrounding land and sea. The masks were never seen by the womenfolk, their materials being taken secretly into the ceremonial house where the Orokolo artists and craftsmen worked upon them. Feasts and dances, requiring hard preparatory work by all, each of more importance than its predecessor, marked various points of the cycle; but it might have to be halted frequently in deference to a death or some other disruptive event. Hevehe reached its climax with the long-awaited appearance of the dancing, masked spirits and the most exciting ritual performances and lavish feast of the entire cycle, attended by thousands of guests, which ensued; and it gently died away with the dismantling - once again in secret - of the masks, and the burning of their components. It was, to Williams, both a tremendous aesthetic and community achievement, 'a finer thing than I imagined any Papuans could do'.

\begin{itemize}
\item[24] Williams, FN, Orokolo Village, 27 December 1922, WP 5/10-82.
\item[25] See, for example, B. Malinowski, Argonauts of the Western Pacific, (London 1922), pp. 13, 17, 24-25.
\item[26] Williams, Drama of Orokolo, passim.
\item[27] Ibid., p. xiii.
\end{itemize}
Struck by the difference he observed between the few villages where the old culture still survived, and the majority of others where the new cult held sway, Williams determined to return at some future date, to study the culture, see more of the elaborate ceremonial masks and buildings, and witness the dances for which they had been constructed. The unpleasant impressions he gained on this field-trip from the destruction of culture he saw around him remained with him throughout his career. He became increasingly disturbed by the destruction and determined to pinpoint its causes and, if possible, arrest it.28

From the Vailala district he travelled back along the coast towards Port Moresby, visiting on his way the Motu Motu people of the Central Division. The 'Madness' had reached here, too, because of the trading relations between the Motu and the Gulf villages; and since its advent was more recent, Williams was able to observe at first hand more of its manifestations than he had seen in the cult's original stronghold. He 'heard one man shouting and yelling about the village at night' in an 'invented' language. But his investigations would seem to have been somewhat handicapped as one of the Motu Motu 'Head-i-go-round' men 'of some importance' acted as an interpreter. Williams observed too an unusual building, similar to one constructed at Vailala as part of the cult. It was referred to by Motu cultists as 'the office'. His interpreter, obviously anxious that his own village's version of the 'Madness' should be as authentic as possible, asked him 'if it were true that there were special houses of this nature in Vailala, and what they were like'.29

Williams rapidly recognized that his presence affected the 'normal' course of village proceedings. A 'service' was held each night by the Motu cultists and he noticed that there was a 'large attendance, possibly larger because it was known that I proposed to


29 Williams, FN, Motu Motu (Central Division village near Port Moresby), February 1923, WP 5/10-82.
look on'. And again he perceived that practice and theory in 'native' life were not always synonymous: according to his Motu informants, there was a nine o'clock curfew, when 'a bell is struck and everyone is supposed to go to bed... the policeman alone patrol[ling] the village'. This, Williams noted, was 'the theory'. But no one had a watch and he did not hear any bell struck during his stay. His informants 'appeared to think the curfew a fine thing... showing how orderly they were'.

Leaving the Motu, he returned to his office to write the first of many reports to the Administration on his findings in the field. In succeeding years he returned to the field frequently, very occasionally to investigate specific problems for the Administration as he had done at Vailala and Motu Motu, but more often to compile ethnographies of various Papuan groups, as at Gaile.

USUALLY Williams's time in the field was fragmented, partly by force of circumstances - in particular the supposed need for his presence as much as possible at the seat of government where his services would be easily accessible - but partly also, he admitted, because of his 'sheer dislike of long isolation'. In anticipation of criticism of this method from other anthropologists he asserted that, although 'this may seem like attacking the work piecemeal... the disadvantages of interruption... are perhaps countered by the value of the time perspective'.

Reaching the field often involved a long and rugged journey. Usually he accomplished this by sea, or on foot through difficult Papuan terrain. But occasionally another means of transport

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30 Ibid.; Williams later learnt from a European living in the area that the curfew was an old Government law, repealed, only to be readopted by the cultists.
31 For a discussion of his explanations of the 'Vailala Madness' see below, Chapters IX, X and XI.
33 Ibid.
34 Williams to F. Wylie, 22 July 1922; ibid., 21 September 1924; and ibid., 17 May 1925, in Williams's file, Rhodes House.
suggested itself. He reached his Southern Highlands field of Lake Kutubu, for example, by sea-plane.  

But air travel was a luxury of the later years of his career and even when it came it was not always readily available to him because of its expense.

He occasionally accompanied Government Patrols. From Kutubu, for example, he travelled to the Northern Augu Valley with a patrol officer, making notes on the people they encountered. But more often he spent his time in and around groups of villages. Having once arrived, his normal course was to establish a camp close to, sometimes within, the confines of one of the villages he was to work in. In most areas it became his practice to make camp for longer or shorter periods in the Government rest-houses erected for the convenience of administrative officers on patrol. Chinnery too made his camp, though always a far briefer one than Williams's, in rest-houses, but for other anthropologists houses were usually built by Papuans or New Guineans. Government rest-houses were generally situated in the more important villages, and actually within the limits of the settlement, enabling Williams 'week in and week out to follow the course of village life as it went on around my habitation'. But this, he admitted, was something which 'every ethnographer expects to be able to do'.

Not all of his camps could have been described as comfortable. On his Keveri Valley trip, in 1940, he spent a few weeks in 'an

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35 Williams, Natives of Lake Kutubu, Papua, The Oceania Monographs, No. 6, p. 3 (first published in Oceania in 1941).
36 British New Guinea Trading Co. to Williams, August 1938, WP 5/6-56 (concerning chartering of sea-plane); G.S. to Williams, 24 August 1938, ibid.
37 Williams to G.S., (from Lake Kutubu), 10 December 1938, WP 5/6-56.
39 Interview with Reo Fortune, Cambridge, 8 August 1976.
ancient rest-house... in some respects like the tower of Pisa, in others like an aviary; but by dint of buttressing and patching [made] habitable'. And although he had 'quite a good time among the great forests and rivers of the Purari Delta', life in and around the 'government house' at Kaimare, in the Delta itself, was pretty uncomfortable: 'It is raining heavily outside', he wrote to a friend, 'and the boys are arranging my furniture so as to dodge the water dripping through the roof.'

"Government House" stands somewhat unsafely on a set of piles and one has to be very careful with pencils, slippers and other small articles, as they are likely to fall thro' the gaps in the flooring and be carried off by the tide. At low water the landscape is a little depressing - broad acres of mud constantly churned up by the activities of village pigs. Walking abroad means stepping gingerly along rickety gangways, or else taking the pleasant but lazy way of a dug-out canoe.

In contrast, Lake Kutubu, where Williams was attached 'as a sort of supernumary' to the Police Camp, from which he made sorties, proved 'a pleasant change' from his usual conditions, making it the 'most pleasant [trip] of its kind'. At Orokolo, his most frequent camp, he stayed at the Government rest-house; and there, in anticipation of Constance Williams's first visit to the district, one of his 'magisterial friends' planted bananas and sweet potatoes around the building. Williams's jotted description of one facet of daily routine, soon after his arrival in a village, conveys some impression of his life in camp.

Children looked wide eyed, then burst into delighted laughter and scamper away a few feet to turn and gaze again, suddenly become solemn.

41 Williams, Eruru, Kwato settlement in the Keveri Valley, Eastern Division, 'Report of a Visit...', op. cit.
42 Williams to F. Wylie, 22 July 1922, Williams's file, Rhodes House.
43 Williams, Natives of Lake Kutubu..., p. 3.
44 Williams, Drama..., p. xiv.
Greatly impressed by the lighting of a power lamp and intrigued by my measures to ensure a private bath - tent draped over the end of my shelter, splashing away I felt as if all eyes could penetrate - am sure some of them found the holes to look through.

His labours in the field often fell into an enjoyable pattern. At Orokaiva a day's work usually consisted of 'a good walk to one's destination; a few hours' work; an *al fresco* lunch spread out on a banana-leaf table-cloth, and beguiled by some reading (always, I confess, far removed from anthropology and Papua); then a second session; and finally a good walk home'. Such, Williams reflected, 'was the routine of those little excursions which have always been the pleasant part of field-work, as I have attempted to carry it out'. The cameo he provided forms a notable contrast with the more turbulent approaches to their work taken by some of his 'free-lance' contemporaries, such as Malinowski and Reo Fortune, bringing to mind the rather leisurely regularity of a gentleman banker's daily visits to his Threadneedle Street office.

There was also time to relax after working hours in the field and Williams often sought recreation then in walking. He enjoyed the variety of natural beauty his numerous fields offered. Near Keveri, 'in the centre of the grasslands is a peak with [a] round knob head called Baoru'. He 'climbed there [one] Sunday morning' and took a 'delightful walk along ridge tops'.

There was loneliness too and a longing for the company of fellow-Europeans which many other anthropologists have felt. This

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45 Williams, FN, Bam, (village), Abau District, December 1935, WP 5/14-129.
46 Williams, *Orokaiva Society*, p. vi.
48 Williams, FN, Eruru, Keveri Valley, February 1940, WP 5/14-134.
49 See, for examples, Malinowski, *A Diary...*, passim; and Mead, *Blackberry Winter...*, passim.
was relieved on one particular occasion, inadvertently to Williams's
great amusement.

I spent my Xmas on a small island called Suau. Not
in entire solitude, for the skipper of a passing boat
called in during the evening. We had not met before.
Early in the conversation he let fall a small swear­
word; immediately corrected himself and apologised.
I thought: "What an unusually nice-mannered sailor,
almost dainty!" A moment or two afterwards he said,
"How do you like life here, padre?" I then under­
stood the first incident.

This, Williams noted, 'is not the first time I have been taken for
a missionary. After that we drank a number of healths... not in
water...'.

Some fields and their populations proved easier to study
than others. Williams found his investigation of the Keraki people
of the Trans-Fly the 'most difficult piece of work' he ever
attempted. They were few and scattered, and to 'get into close
touch' with them he had to camp in one of their small settlements,
separated 'by unprofitable miles' from its neighbours, at the risk
of 'outstaying one's welcome'. The same region presented 'a sad
picture of cultural confusion', its inhabitants being 'socially or
collectively in rather low spirits'. Altogether he found that there
was 'little doing', 'all largely as a result of past constant
harassment by northern neighbours, the Tugeri'. Nonetheless,
there were some redeeming features to the Trans-Fly. It proved 'an
easier task for the ethnographer' than some others, having been
little affected by European contact. And although the work was
difficult it was also interesting. In the Keveri Valley on a later
trip, on the other hand, Williams found himself thoroughly bored;
he described it as the worst field-trip he had ever experienced.

50 Williams to F. Wylie, 7 February 1926, Williams's file,
Rhodes House; my emphasis.
52 Ibid., p. vi and pp. vii-viii.
53 Ibid.
54 For the explanation of this see below, Chapter IV.
Other fields more closely approximated to what he considered 'the ideal situation'. Such was 'a populous district, with a conveniently homogeneous population, and one that is active and thriving'. Parts of the Orokolo district in the Gulf Division, and the plains of the Northern Division, came closer to his requirements. In the latter, where he studied the Orokaiva people, 'working conditions were comparatively favourable, especially by reason of the general accessibility of the country, and the distribution of the inhabitants'. Here he found 'the plains... well-populated and this by tribes who were more or less homogeneous in language and culture'. From one of his base-camps on this trip Williams discovered 'fifteen villages within easy reach - so easy that, visiting the most distant of them I could spend several hours at work there and return to my camp in the afternoon'. This frequent visiting of numerous villages carried 'several distinct advantages'. It meant that he was likely to 'get wind of the social happenings of the district, near or far'; could gather 'various views on every new subject that crop[ped] up'; and, finally, his welcome did not 'grow stale'.

Although he thought it possible that a Government Anthropologist might 'labour under certain difficulties', Williams believed these were outweighed by compensatory advantages. Indeed, before he even reached the field, his position enabled him to solicit apparently preferential treatment over other anthropologists in obtaining permission to work in new areas of Papua. Hearing that an Oxford Exploration Club party wished to be the first to enter the uncontrolled area of the recently discovered Southern Highlands, around Lake Kutubu, Williams wrote to the Administration forestalling the group's request for permission. He was successful, although it was also unlikely that such a party would have been granted access.

55 Williams, Papians..., p. vi.
56 Williams, Orokaiva Society, p. vi.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., p. vii.
60 Williams to G.S., 3 November 1936, WP 5/6-56.
to an uncontrolled area in any case; and it was 'arranged that I
should be the first anthropologist to work in the... area'. And
again, when an anthropologist named Bonington requested permission
to work in the same general region, Williams suggested to the
Government Secretary that he might find the Aroma district 'a very
profitable one to work in' instead. Referring to Bonington's
desire to work on 'ground which has been untouched', Williams comment­
ed: 'I presume he refers to the gentle touch of the anthropologist
only, not to that of the European in general'. It seems probable,
however, that in requesting access to the Highlands, Bonington was
asking permission to work in an area that Europeans had not yet
greatly influenced; it seems equally likely that Williams, as a
fellow anthropologist, would have gathered this impression. Instead
he made a point of sending the other anthropologist elsewhere,
informing the Administration as he did so that 'I should myself like
to be the first anthropologist to go to see the new people discovered
by Mr Hides'. When an official party visited the New Guinea side
of the area in 1936, Williams accompanied it, and late in 1938 his
Kutubu trip made him the first anthropologist to work in the Southern
or Papuan Highlands.

Williams found one of his 'compensatory advantages' once
embarked upon a trip, in addition to a cook and one or two local
interpreters, the company of an Armed Constable as an escort. The
value of such a man, he considered, lay not in the element of
protection, but in the fact that he 'usually proves to be a fellow
of very good company, and makes himself useful in a variety of ways,
even rising to the occasion as a cook'. However, the policeman's

61 Williams, *Natives of Lake Kutubu...*, p. 3.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Williams, 'Aerial Reconnaissance of the Hides-0'Malley
    Area', Report submitted to Papuan Government 1 March 1936,
    copy in WP 5/16-153; Williams to G.S. (from Lake Kutubu),
    10 December 1938, copy in WP 5/6-56.
principal duty on such journeys, as Williams saw it, was 'to wear his uniform, and thus to stamp one's retinue... as one of Government importance'. The policeman's presence made 'a world of difference too in the matter of transport', preventing Williams on occasions from being left 'in the air', and it also did 'much to ensure a welcome' in areas which had been successfully brought under Government control. That the possibility of being deserted by one's party was a real one was shown by the experience of Margaret Mead and Reo Fortune during an attempt to reach the Aitape district of northwestern New Guinea in 1931-32. For good reasons of their own, their carriers downed all cargo and returned home, leaving the two anthropologists stranded.

His arrival at a village accompanied by a policeman almost certainly branded Williams a very different species from the 'unofficial' anthropologist. But although 'there are some things which the native is apt to conceal from the Government' - a claim, incidentally, which other anthropologists made on a number of occasions - he believed villagers quickly came 'to realise that one is a Government officer with a difference; that one is not equipped with any authority; and that one has no intention of playing the spy'. On the whole he felt that once he had been at work in each field for a short time, information ceased to be 'intentionally withheld because of his connexion with the Government'.

Yet Williams's field experiences indicate that, at least to some extent, his official position did make a difference. At times he appears to have inadvertently been careless about preserving the distinction between anthropologist and employee of the Papuan Government, in the eyes of the villagers. Once, while waiting for some Christianized people to gather for a church service, feeling -

67 Ibid., p. viii.
68 Margaret Mead, Blackberry Winter....; R. Fortune, Interview.
69 Williams, Orokaiva Society, p. viii; see also Fortune to Murray, 29 December 1927, copy in CAO CRS A518-A806/1/5; Pitt-Rivers to Editor, Man, November 1930, pp. 211-12.
70 Williams, Orokaiva Society, p. viii.
he believed with the Papuan evangelist - that they were dawdling, Williams 'jokingly' commented that he would get the people out of their houses with the point of his walking stick. Taking him at his word, the evangelist transmitted the message to the other villagers who rapidly took their places. Williams 'had to explain, at the top of my voice that I was only trying to be funny'. 71 His own field-notes reveal that on some occasions the people themselves saw him as a Government- or possibly even a mission-representative, the distinction between the two not always being clear to them. At Orokolo, when a burial was imminent, the anthropologist entered the house of mourning; as he did so, 'the sago and axes and coconuts were quickly removed, because the women mourners thought I might scold them!' 72

At times Williams was unable to prevent himself from seeing Papuans and their actions through the eyes of a government officer. At one Orokolo village, during the Depression when the world copra price had plummeted, the people lamented that they had no money with which to pay the 'Native Tax' and would consequently be sent to gaol. They spoke to the Government Anthropologist 'in despair or indignation or with a long suffering air'. 73 What he said to them about the matter Williams did not record, but privately he observed that 'they should be springing off their tails and going out to make copra, instead of lounging in the eravo'. 74 It seems possible that, even unspoken, these sentiments might have communicated themselves.

One disadvantage to which Williams did admit, involved the time factor. He was bound to utilize whatever form of transport the Administration could provide, which was usually being employed for some other administrative purpose, and only incidentally made available to him. Where his Kutubu trip was concerned, 'the opportunity for

71 Williams, Eruru, Keveri Valley, 1940, 'Report on a Visit to the Keveri Valley', copy in WP 5/14-133; Williams, FN, Eruru, February 1940, WP 5/14-134.
72 Williams, FN, Orokolo, February 1935, WP 5/10-85.
73 Williams, FN, Avavu Ravi, Orokolo, March 1932, WP 5/11-88.
74 Ibid.; eravo was the men's 'club house'.
getting there easily and inexpensively' arrived when the annual
delivery of provisions to the Government post was made.75 Williams
had hoped to travel to that particular field at a different time and
stay for a period other than that which he was eventually obliged to
do; and it was on this occasion that he had to cancel his long-
standing ANZAAS arrangements in order to go at all.76 He admitted
that the time factor might adversely affect his work. Wishing to
discover what he could about the use of a particular type of building
in the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, when he 'had occasion to make a
flying trip through', he questioned the people 'over a day or so'.
Although he left with 'little doubt in my own mind [of] the primary
purpose of those rather strange buildings', Williams was forced to
admit that 'it is possible... in [the short time] I was able to give
to this question I might have failed to win confidence-and confession
... it must be admitted that a deeper enquiry might elicit something
further'.77

One of Williams's preliminary steps when entering a new
field, often performed before he did so, was to acquire interpreters.
In this way, at least in theory, he differed markedly from most of
his colleagues who as their first task set about learning the local
language. To do otherwise was severely frowned upon.78 It was
believed, as Pitt-Rivers put it, that 'an efficient and sympathetic
understanding of native customs' was 'dependent on an understanding
of the native vernacular'.79 But Williams, 'instead of making a
determined attack on the language from the beginning', preferred to
'spend my time adding to my ethnographical notes'; and he publicly

75 Williams, Natives of Lake Kutubu..., p. 3.
76 Williams to Dr A.B. Walkom, Honorary General Secretary
ANZAAS, 4 October 1938, copy in WP 5/1-5.
77 Williams, 'Bwara Awana Houses on Normanby Island', submitted
78 A.S.C. Ross, 'Memorandum on the Advisability of Encouraging
the Study of the Languages of British New Guinea and Papua',
copy in CAO CRS C69-16/15.
admitted that he was not a good linguist. 80 In New Guinea, Chinnery claimed to work in the vernacular in certain areas and did acquire a degree of competence in some of these; but it is probable that the majority of his material was gained through interpreters or in 'pidgin English'. 81 In contrast, Malinowski, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and most other contemporary anthropologists studied the languages of the people they worked with, claimed to do most of their own questioning in the vernacular and stressed the necessity for their students to do so. In particular, Reo Fortune was considered to be 'a man of quite distinct ability in the field of... linguistics'. 82 Fortune himself considered his linguistic ability to be 'adequate'. 83

Williams however professed himself reluctant to believe that field-work done through interpreters was 'as useless as some who have worked in the vernacular maintain it is', although he admitted that the advantages of direct communication in the native tongue were obvious. 84 Of his Trans-Fly work he stressed that, 'with regard to the time at my disposal and the recognition of my own powers as a linguist, I felt that I should achieve more by making use of interpretation'. And he often reiterated his belief that results gained by this method were 'as likely to be reliable as those obtained through an indifferent and hastily acquired knowledge of the vernacular'. 85 Williams probably suspected that some of his fellows learnt little more of local languages than he believed himself

80 Williams, Drama..., p. xi.
81 L.J. Foenander, Home and Territories Department Memorandum, 28 July 1921, CAO CRS G69-16/15; Fortune, interview.
82 A.P. Elkin to J.R. Halligan, 31 October 1945, CAO CRS A518, A806/1/5; Elkin to Halligan, 3 December 1945, ibid. The publication of some of Fortune's linguistic writings by the American Ethnological Society under the editorship of the leading American anthropologist and linguist, Franz Boas, was cited as 'a hall-mark of [their] value'.
83 Reo Fortune, interview.
84 Williams, Papuans of the Trans-Fly, p. v.
85 Ibid., pp. v-vi; see also Williams, Drama..., p. xi and Williams, Orokaiva Society, pp. v-vi.
capable of doing. And it is likely that in at least some cases he was correct. 86

He was also defensive about his occasional use of a *lingua franca*. Explaining his utilization of Police Motuan, the Papuan *lingua franca*, at Lake Kutubu, he made 'no apologies... Considering the shortness of the time which I intended to devote to this region it seemed advisable to adopt the medium which offered itself'. 87 It had, he declared, proved 'remarkably effective... But within three or four months I could not have expected to go very far in the study of the language'. He was fully convinced that 'had I attempted to work through Kutuban the results of the four months' work would have been a mere fraction of what they are in quantity and probably worse in quality'. 88 Even accepting the time factor, however, it is difficult to explain why, in areas where he spent numerous, lengthy periods at work, Williams did not make more of a point of learning the language.

Sometimes he was amazingly fortunate in the available interpretation. At one village, where he was trying to find out about sorcery incantations, both the Papuan mission teacher and the Village Constable 'knew the incantations, which they dictated to my interpreter, Jack, who wrote them down'. 89 Perhaps fortunately, such instances as this, when Williams could leave the work to his interpreters and informants, were rare. On some other occasions his interpreters were illiterate but had learnt to speak English in the mission schools or in European employment. But usually they spoke the language of the people he was studying and Police Motuan; and Williams recorded and translated for himself from the latter into English. 90

86 Reo Fortune, interview; Murray to Minister for Home and Territories, 17 December 1927, CAO CRS G69-16/19 (where Murray alleges that Pitt-Rivers was unable to communicate with most Papuans).

87 Williams, *Natives of Lake Kutubu...*, p. 4.

88 Ibid., p. 4.

89 Williams, FN, Sisiani (village), Normanby Island, D'Entrecasteaux Group, n.d. (probably July 1929), WP 5/15-140.

90 Williams, *Papuans...*, pp. v-vi.
Probably the only field-trip on which he ever set out to learn the local language was that which he made, as an adjunct to his Kutubu one, to the neighbouring Grasslands. 'Among the Grasslanders' he found 'the situation was entirely different: no means of communication was available there, and I made it the principle object of my stay to discover one, viz. by learning the language from scratch'.

But even then, he could not 'pretend, at the end of six weeks, to have been in a position to record anything but superficialities' about the people. Nonetheless, in the view of the local administrative officer he had 'given us a very good start in the vocabulary and grammar of the grassland natives'.

Williams's aim in each new field was to gain 'a composite picture derived from many informants' and from observation, of the society and culture; on some occasions he believed he had come close to achieving this and found that his informants 'agree[d] to a remarkable extent'. He employed a number of methods in the process. One that he found 'wholly unsatisfactory', but to which he resorted occasionally, was to use his interpreters 'directly as informants'. During his stay at Augu, when he had 'three very good interpreters' placed at his disposal by the local administrative officer, he found it 'very useful to run through my notes again with my interpreters afterwards'. He also went right through his Kutubu material 'with these men and one or two others' and found that 'they did a great deal to correct and amplify it'.

Largely because of a belief he early developed in the hyper-suggestibility of Papuans, Williams was usually careful to note

92 Williams, Natives..., p. 4.
93 Officer-in-Charge, Lake Kutubu, to G.S., quoted in Minute, G.S. to Williams, 16 May 1939, WP 5/6-56.
95 Williams, Natives..., p. 4.
whether he had possibly prompted his informants in any way.\textsuperscript{96} At Bebedeben in the Trans-Fly for instance, when a villager had given him information about the structure of the local clan system, he noted: 'this information was given in response to leading questions'.\textsuperscript{97}

Another 'highly unsatisfactory' method which he was sometimes forced to employ entailed an attempt to 'reconstruct' a culture which no longer existed. This constituted one of the greatest problems Williams encountered in the field. At Keveri, where the previous way of life had been substantially obliterated, it could 'now only be pictured by a process of reconstruction'. He found that his attempts to piece together an idea of the past ceremonial and social life there, were futile; and he believed that reconstructions of ceremonies from verbal accounts were 'usually as unreliable as they are troublesome to get'.\textsuperscript{98}

Sometimes he expected external influences, such as mission presence, to make his task easier. At Keveri he 'hoped that with reformed characters for informants I might expect some candid revelations'. In this case he was disappointed; his informants proved generally as secretive as any he had encountered in non-missionized areas, and in at least one case he believed a Christian informant to be lying.\textsuperscript{99} Often he used bribery in his attempts to obtain information, a technique which, in the Papuan situation where gift exchange was widely institutionalised, proved particularly effective. Before leaving Orokolo one December to spend Christmas in Port Moresby, Williams 'gave a bag of wheatmeal to [an] eravo [men's club based upon a social group]... as I wanted to get on the good side of them'.\textsuperscript{100} The particular eravo was preparing for a major event of the Hevehe which he was eager to witness. In this instance,

\textsuperscript{96} For a discussion of Williams's views on Papuan intellect, see below, chapter V.

\textsuperscript{97} Williams, FN, Beb[edeben](village),Trans-Fly, June 1927, WP 5/4-42.

\textsuperscript{98} Williams, 'Report on a Visit...'; an explanation of the obliteration of Keveri culture is given below in chapter IV.

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{100} Williams, FN, Waiea Ravi, Orokolo, December 1936, WP 5/11-88.
however, his action almost proved abortive. When he returned to the field early the following year, one of the leading men in the eravo, who was an important source of information, told Williams that 'he had been huffed b[ecause] the wheatmeal had all been eaten in his absence'. Another technique Williams found 'very useful' was to win over important villagers with a little flattery and by 'showing deference' without being 'too patronizing'.

He found the attitude of villagers to his interrogations generally consistent. Most demonstrated a 'readiness to reveal and explain things about themselves - they do not resent enquiries (in fact they probably appreciate them)'. And only occasionally, he felt, did they 'grow weary of the laborious methods which an ethnographer has so often to adopt'. From time to time he was disconcerted by his informants, most often by missionized villagers; 'once, when sitting down for an ordinary talk on a house veranda in Eruru', a Kwato-influenced Keveri village,

they prayed, simply and affectingly, that their minds should be cleared to understand my questions and answer them. I felt so abashed on this last occasion that I hardly knew where to begin.

Sometimes, too, to Williams's obvious pleasure, informants chose to take him into their confidence. When one of his Trans-Fly informants told him not only the 'general' but the 'secret' name of a clan ancestor, the anthropologist noted with satisfaction that it was 'a great favour to make this revelation'.

On previous trips I had not got into [the] confidence of [that clan's] informants sufficiently... It was always implied that the myths were s[ecret] myths, from which the [particular clan's members] were excluded... But it is evident that [they] also have their secrets.
But informants also introduced confusion into questioning sessions from time to time. In some instances, as a result of having adopted certain false European notions, they incorrectly told Williams that particular practices were actually traditional customs or had specific meanings. Such cases, he readily attributed to 'the Papuan's hyper-suggestibility'; he did not seem to suspect that Europeans might share this trait. Some of his younger Nemea informants in the Abau district, for example, claimed that the wearing of cassowary plumes was restricted to their use as homicidal emblems. 'Quite apart from its sheer implausibility', Williams observed, 'this idea collapsed under the weight of well-informed opinion among the older men'. But 'its origin was clear'; it had arisen from a past magistrate's order that all plumes and weapons in the district be destroyed.

After that, the notion got around that cassowary plumes belonged to the man-killing complex instead of being a fundamental part of the [people's] full dress; and certain of the younger generation were actually prepared to call them homicidal emblems - a plain case of European misconception being swallowed by the too-suggestive native. 106 Europeans 'misconceived'; Papuans were hyper-suggestible.

In a similar vein, Williams found his informants prone to make rash generalizations. A man at Amau in the Keveri Valley insisted that he preferred to wear calico because a bark sīhī took too long to make, despite Williams's protestation that many hours of work for a European planter were necessary in order to purchase the cloth.107 He found the incident 'in keeping with the general native habit of blurting out thoughtless generalisations'.108 And he reported to the Administration that such comments were typical of

106 Williams, 'Report on a Visit...'; Williams, 'The Hornbill Feather...'.

107 Williams's attitude in this instance stems from his views on 'Europeanisation' which are discussed below in this chapter and in Chapter V.

108 Williams, FN, Amau (Kwato Settlement in the Keveri Valley), February 1940, in 'Eastern Division Miscellaneous Notes', WP 5/14-134.
the 'sophistry' to which a 'native might descend in order to justify what is really an unthinking holus-bolus disapproval of the past'.

It was usually frustration at what he found the illogicality or 'unthinking' manner of his informants, rather than any suspected deceit, that prompted Williams to occasionally commit severe words about Papuans to paper. That he did so at all does not differentiate him from other anthropologists. Malinowski, in particular, poured out his disenchantment with informants into diaries used as escape valves for the assorted frustrations of life in the field. When inquiring into depopulation on Suau Island, Williams was told that the decrease was due to sorcery. To himself he commented: 'every b. fool says this and every b. fool says that sorcery existed before... hence where does the decrease come in?... (It always comes back to the same old thing)'. And at a Nemea hill village, where the people were in the midst of contemplating a move to flatter land he remarked, with little sympathy, that 'the stupid buggers... are undecided'.

But there were greater problems affecting field-work than 'native stupidity' or 'foolishness'. Quite often, and usually to his great though publicly controlled annoyance, Williams was deliberately thwarted by Papuans in his efforts to record the details of their lives. At Orokolo, when he was attempting to observe every step of the preparations for the departure and return of the Bevaia, the local sailing-trading expedition, its leader 'was determined I should not hear the Maho [magical incantations] before they sailed. The buggers promised to let me know in time, but did not. I did not see the loading.', And on the return of the voyagers a few weeks later and the occasion of the feast which followed, he recorded that the

109 Williams, 'Report on a Visit...'.
110 See Malinowski, A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term, (London 1967), passim; A. Kuper, Anthropologists and Anthropology..., p. 27.
111 Williams, FN, Poairu, a Suau Island village, December 1925, WP 5/15-138.
113 Williams, FN, Orokolo, February 1933, WP 5/9-80.
leader 'has tried to balk me at every turn about his b. bevaia. [He] said he had no magic... it had no name... there would be no ivaiva etc. Declared the food w[ould] be eaten in the Eravo'; it was not.\textsuperscript{114}

Again, in his investigations of the Hevehe ceremonial cycle, Williams was often obstructed or misled. When, as part of the cycle, a party of men visited a neighbouring village to dance and 'bring back food', he complained: 'I was not told of their going, and waited till late for the warning that was to come but did not.'\textsuperscript{115}

In fact the Government Anthropologist spent quite a substantial amount of time pursuing the subjects of his study, who seem to have successfully eluded him whenever they seriously wished to. One night at Orokolo he was having dinner with some of his planter friends, the Sinclairs, when, at 'about 8 pm [they] heard yells up the beach [towards] Herekera'. Williams thought he 'had missed the bus' and so 'hurried up the beach [with] Sinclair and Coghill'. They found the Makaikara, an important event of the ceremonial cycle, in full swing.

We came upon a band of excited jubilant young men... They gave us a very stormy greeting as if we were the initiates... More men arrived... The initiates are huddled together, near the end of [a] canoe. Standing on [the] canoe almost above them I could see one man with arms tight clasped about another's neck. \textsuperscript{116}

Excited dancing ensued and Williams watched and recorded until he suddenly became aware that 'the initiates had gone on ahead. I thought they were in the midst of the party'. So he 'hurried on and entered the eravo. Found them cowering at the end of the b[uilding]'.

They did their best to hide from my lamp... and altogether they looked very frightened and miserable... The noise now stopped with startling suddenness and there was dead silence. Quite thrilling! \textsuperscript{117}

If the Papuans Williams studied were not quite as thrilled by his seemingly rather gauche attendance at their ceremonies as he was by

\textsuperscript{114} Williams, FN, Orokolo, March 1933, ibid.

\textsuperscript{115} Williams, FN, Orokolo, November 1931, WP 5/11-90.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
those events, or indeed if his antics bothered them at all, they were quick to forgive and when they disappointed him, console. As Williams noted after he had 'missed out' on one ceremonial dance: 'however, the Vailala people demonstrated in front of the R[est] House [where I lived] for my edification'.

What he considered to be 'problem interpreters' often constituted further difficulties; and certain instances of these also reveal both Williams's own attitude towards the people he studied, and theirs to him. One interpreter at Kutubu proved 'too young and irresponsible to be a complete success'.

He was fidgety to a degree; his alert young mind was distracted by every noise and movement, and in the midst of our sober enquiries he was perpetually fiddling with his knife; drawing pictures on the ground, or searching for lice in his belt.

It had been, he told the Administration, 'impossible to discipline him; he broke his engagements and turned up just as he wished... Finally he just faded out and went off on a journey'. Williams was apparently oblivious to his own paternalistic attitude towards his interpreters. On another occasion a former Armed Constable at Keveri, 'a cunning rascal', grew tired of 'assisting' at a particularly long interview. Finally he 'went off and got a "trumpet" blown to summon people to pray'. In this case, to Williams's good fortune, the attempt to create a diversion failed and 'while the other villagers responded, my group of informants remained faithful to the sterner cause of anthropology and we carried on simultaneously'.

Entire groups of informants, too, were sometimes unwittingly difficult. On returning from a short trip into the hills behind Port Moresby in 1929, Williams wrote to a friend that 'the people are the

118 Williams, FN, Orokolo, November 1931, WP 5/11-90.
119 Williams, Natives..., p. 6.
120 Ibid.
121 Ibid.
122 Williams, 'Report on a Visit...'.
123 Ibid.
duddest lot of informants I have ever had the misfortune to deal with'. 124 But in a number of instances he did perceive the boredom which he sometimes generated, both in his trumpet-blowing and fidgeting interpreters and in his informants, and he usually viewed it sympathetically. Of his relationship with one of his older informants, Williams reported, 'we soon grew bored with one another'. And in retrospect he was able to describe as 'amusing' a 'demonstration of the [old man's] feelings one day when I landed on the island of Wasemi', although it had probably irked him at the time.

He was lying in the open, stretched out on a mat... but as soon as he saw me approaching he rose and hobbled off in the opposite direction shouting 'tasit i bu hasibu wae' which means, 'I refuse to talk'. 125 It was because of such incidents that the intruder preferred populous fields where '[one] does not have to pester the same people continually'; and where, as a result, boredom formed a 'less serious... obstacle to his progress'. 126

Informants caused Williams further frustration when, on some occasions, they either refused to comply with his wishes or to answer his questions. Some instances of this nature seem to be indicative also of a certain lack of sensitivity in the Government Anthropologist's approach. At Keveri he 'tried to induce some men to put on feather headdresses so that I could make a picture'. After 'much trouble', the Village Constable consented to wear one, but he 'funked it at the last minute'. He told Williams that he 'feared sickness' because the mission to which he belonged (Kwato) disapproved of such garb. Finally, the 'discharged A[rmed] C[onstable] whom I was paying as assistant, was the only man game to put on a headdress'. 127 On another occasion, at Orokolo, 'after an unsuccessful morn[ing] at [the village of] Herekera, [Williams] thought to start the [afternoon's] talk on a straightforward question'. Accordingly, he asked

124 Williams to L. Austen, 15 November 1929, WP 5/1-4.
125 Williams, Natives..., p. 6.
126 Ibid.
127 Williams, 'Report on a Visit...'. 
two villagers to enumerate 'the real Hevēhe', the mythical characters upon whom the Orokolo ceremonies centred, who supposedly inhabited the Gulf coast. But the informants 'were quite dumb' and 'I finally left in disgust'.  

Some time afterwards, he learnt, but apparently did not find it a matter for self-reproach, that 'they were organizing a Bevaiya [trading voyage]' and that, consequently, it would have been 'dangerous to name the Hevēhe]. It would [have] anger[ed] them and lead to disaster at sea'.  

People did in fact believe, in some instances, that their talks with Williams had supernatural repercussions. After interviewing a man about the legend of the origin of Hevēhe, he learnt that 'rough weather on [the] following day [was] attrib[uted] to my conversation with inf[orman]t'.

On another occasion, at the Trans-Fly village of Tami Williams found 'an apparent reluctance to describe the method of fire-making', one of the points which he 'wished to settle in the course of a short visit'. His informants, or 'witnesses', as he referred to them with exasperation in this instance, 'simply refused to understand my questions'. The 'usual subterfuges of the questioner', he recorded, 'were for a long time without avail. How do you make fire? "We have our fires burning already." But if your fire went out? "We should go elsewhere and borrow a lighted brand." But say, for instance, you were on a hunting expedition, and dropped your fire sticks into the water? "We should send a man back to get fire from the village". It was 'in the face of such side-stepping' as this, Williams recorded in his personal notes, that

I was on one occasion driven to a pass that I have never reached before or since, viz, that of rapping my informant over the knuckles with a stick. His answers flowed after that assault, however unpardonable, but naturally there was no vouching for their truth. So stupid, however, did my informants seem that I

128 Williams, FN, Orokolo, February 1932, WP 5/9-80.
129 Ibid.
130 Williams, FN, Orokolo, December 1936, WP 5/11-88.
131 Williams, 'Notes on fire-making', in 'Trans-Fly Notes, 1926–30', WP 5/4-41.
finally concluded their stupidity was wilful, though I could not elicit any reason for silence on this particular question.

This was another highly unorthodox technique of which the Papuan Government Anthropologist's professional fellows, had it ever reached their ears, would hardly have approved. Being quite out of keeping with Williams's usual placid temperament however, it was probably - as he indicated - a unique occurrence. It seems far from surprising that if in this case fire-making 'has any ritual implications, I was unable to discover them'. 133 It could be speculated that Williams's own impatience, stemming from his shortage of time, and being communicated to informants, precipitated the situation.

Despite the instances when he suspected informants of purposely withholding information, Williams believed that the ethnographer's most serious obstacle was neither deliberate concealment nor 'the native's difficulty in explaining his meaning'. Rather it was simply that 'it does not occur to him to tell'. 134 At a Trans-Fly village, when he was told there was a different structure to the local clan system from the one he had previously gathered to exist, he commented: 'why the hell didn't they tell me this long ago?... "Because they had not thought of doing so".' 135 But in this particular case, on reflection, Williams decided there was 'a fair excuse', as new clan names and a slightly altered structure had 'more or less replaced' the traditional ones in recent years. 136 He found, however, that informants in areas where 'mission influence and a stricter mode of government' existed, were far more likely to 'deliberately keep things from [him]'. In regions of limited European influence, such as Lake Kutubu and the Mubi, on the other hand, they

132 Williams, draft of section on 'Fire-making' for Trans-Fly book, in 'Trans-Fly Notes, 1926-30', WP 5/4-41.
133 Ibid.
134 Williams, Orokaiva Society, p. viii.
135 Williams, FN, Gubam (village), Trans-Fly, n.d. (late 1926 or early 1927), WP 5/4-42.
136 Ibid.
were 'free from the inhibition' observed in some of the people he studied.  

Often sceptical, as he had been on his first field-trips, about the information he received, Williams noted suspected lies with some sarcasm tempered by amusement. At Sogeri, where the people denied the existence of adultery, he commented to himself that 'the Sogeri are really too perfect... Soon after this denial the informants were giving me cases of law-breaking and several of adultery cropped up'. And again, when one informant was telling him about local marriage customs, he noted that the man 'gave his usual highly coloured version... prob[ably] more particular than general... The bride's people... attempt to drag her away... formerly in pre-Gov[ernment] times sticks were used. But now, of course the people are perfect'. If he ever suspected that such 'deviations' from the truth as these might have been made with deference to his position as a government employee, he did not record the fact. On another occasion, attempting to elicit information about mourning ceremonies, he was less amused; he found his informants 'difficult here... on the whole a lying, leg-pulling, secretive, suspicious lot of bastards'.  

Williams was particularly interested in the individual personalities of the Papuans he interviewed, a characteristic of his approach to anthropology which is further discussed in a succeeding chapter with relation to his theoretical stance. He sometimes recorded Papuan characters with admiration. One young villager he described as 'amazingly proficient' in Police Motu and 'irrespective

137 Williams, Natives..., p. 6.
138 Williams, FN, Sogeri (behind Port Moresby, Central Division), n.d. (probably April 1929), WP 5/13-115.
139 Williams, FN, Vailala (Gulf Division), February 1933, WP 5/11-88.
140 See below, Chapter IX; see also Williams, Papuans of the Trans-Fly, p. ix.
of race, one of the brightest boys I have ever had dealings with'.

But in most cases when he bothered to record impressions of informants, they were far from complimentary. He described a Trans-Fly villager who was unsure of his own totems as 'a stupid fool'. In cases such as these, when he was reporting to the Administration, Williams often readily gave the name of the person referred to; though this is not to deny the possibility of occasions when he may have decided it inadvisable, in the interests of some of his informants, to do so.

ONE of the greatest problems Williams, like all male anthropologists, faced in the field, was that of gaining an idea of women's life and culture. As Marett commented: 'Mr Williams dared not sin against etiquette so far as to gossip with a hard working but uncomplaining sex'. And as Williams himself lamented over his Trans-Fly work, probably its greatest obvious lack resulted from this inability.

On some occasions, however, as with Seligman, Fortune, Gregory Bateson and a number of other anthropologists, the assistance of a wife helped to counteract this problem to an extent. Although she was

141 Williams, Natives..., p. 6. A second man he considered 'very intelligent... and a good informant'. Williams, 'Report on a Visit...'. And another, 'a highly intelligent man who did a great deal for me at Eruru... and, further, had... a clear notion that I was after the true facts; a most helpful person altogether'. Ibid.

142 Williams, 'Notes on Gudeman and Warupi People', Trans-Fly, n.d. (late 1926 or early 1927), WP 5/4-42. Similarly, at Keveri he recorded his 'personal impression' that one of his informants was 'most cunning' and 'a liar'. Williams, 'Report on a Visit...'. And one Waiea Ravi man, in mourning for a kinsman, he described unsympathetically as 'a miserable fool, looking doubly miserable and foolish in his complete coating of black'. Williams, FN, Waiea Ravi, Orokolo, February 1937, WP 5/11-88.

143 R.R. Marett, Review of Papuans of the Trans-Fly, in Times Literary Supplement, 8 February 1936, p. 112; see also Marett to Williams, 2 February 1936, WP 5/2-8.

144 Williams, Papuans..., p. viii.

145 Bateson, a biologist turned anthropologist, was one of Haddon's students. He worked in the Sepik district of New Guinea and wrote the important work, Naven, (Cambridge 1936). Kuper, pp. 95-8, 117, 121, 165, 242-43n.
unable to accompany her husband to the Trans-Fly and to many of his other fields, Constance Williams did spend some time in the Gulf district with him, where Williams 'contrive[d] to keep her moderately busy'. He found her assistance 'not only at the office table but on the windy beach at Orokolo' extremely valuable. There Constance conducted a census, recording the individuals of each household, their sex, present whereabouts and various other details. She accompanied Williams on excursions, recording what passed as they went. Although, unlike Margaret Mead, who accompanied both Fortune and Bateson, she was not a trained anthropologist, she was an interested and perceptive observer. On one excursion she recorded both village life and the part that she and her husband played in it.

We are given a fowl. We singe and clean it and remove to our camp... After lunch by the Vailala... old men talk... We talk 1½ hours... We return to village to see young boys and little ones playing with inflated [pigs'] bladders... Our fowl, dressed, hangs from our house front. 148

She observed, too, 'the squalor of the opposite house where 17 people, male and young, sit and eat and talk together... There is all the feeling of a successful party'. And she made notes on individual characters, though these were strongly influenced by her own culture's attitudes and values. Her record of the material wealth in bracelets and other adornments of a village policeman, for instance, was accompanied by the view that he was 'very selfish and bad mannered'. 150

But her subjectivity aside, Constance Williams's field-notes were most valuable. She attended and recorded a description of a betrothal ceremony at one village, saw the 'formal present to [the] girl being made by [the] man... They wrangle over shells,

146 Williams to Murray, 13 March 1937, (from Orokolo), CAO CRS G69-16/14.
147 Williams, Drama..., p. xiv.
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
etc. they will give, and we wait...'. On another occasion she witnessed and described in gory, graphic detail a pig-killing ceremony. And at the close of the Kovave festival, a part of the Orokolo ceremonial cycle, she recorded her observations in a vivid, highly readable manner which indicates the extent of her own interest in the proceedings, while leaving the reader with the impression of having actually been present at the event.

The pig screams on. His feet are tied round a pole placed between his legs and he is laid thus trussed screaming continually... One Kovave [the masked dancer] waits and waits. No pupuri [the participant who is to present him with a ceremonial 'flag',] comes. He moves continually - waiting - finally goes back [without a] flag... [A] woman strokes and fondles [a pig] 'til he is trussed. He responds by standing still... Food in quantity is being prepared by women, cooking pots in long rows. A man strolls by in a ragged and [holey] pyjama top carrying a pineapple-wood club....

She described too, and sketched, articles and methods of village technology including tools, implements and utensils, fishing, fire-making, weaving and plaiting techniques. But, most importantly from the viewpoint of her husband's work, Constance Williams spent a great deal of time with the women of the village, observing and questioning: 'I saw [the] wife of [the] house I sat in bring [the other] women food [b]ecause they sit in her house'. She studied cooking techniques, observed the times of day that meals were prepared, how they were served and what was eaten. She was shown methods of preserving food, such as the manner in which fish were smoked and learnt the local names for each ingredient. For her benefit the women explained and demonstrated their methods of hair-cutting, 'skirt'-making and dyeing and she recorded a list of the tasks she saw performed under the heading 'Women's Work'. And when the women went to the gardens to work she accompanied them and noted what they did.

151 Ibid.
152 Ibid.
153 Ibid.
She attempted to find out about not only the material trappings and menial tasks of the women's lives, but their thoughts and feelings too. 'They say they like the... work of feasts - very hard work for [a] month getting ready sago and gardens. [They] like Kovave and Sevese [or Hevehe, the major ceremonies] evidently very much... They like the fun of all festivals regardless of labour'. And she managed to gain some idea of the women's attitudes towards husbands, marriage, marital discipline, children, childbirth and infant mortality. The women would not, however, tell her everything she wanted to know. Enquiring about the goods given as part of a marriage settlement, 'I ask if they will get these back. They won't say'. Nonetheless, in the space of a few months Constance Williams managed to obtain far more information from the female population of Orokolo than her husband would ever have succeeded in doing.

JUST as his wife's perception of Papuan life was culture-bound, so, if in a rather different way, Williams's own attitudes and values influenced his view of Papuans met in the field. There was one thing in particular that he noticed time and time again and came to dislike with increasing intensity as the years passed. This was 'Europeanisation'. As Williams's attitude to the phenomenon is discussed in a later chapter, it is enough to look briefly here at his observation of, and reaction to it, in the field. At Orokolo he noted 'unpleasantly conspicuous here and there... a few Council­lors who think it part of their business to go clothed in dirty European clothes'. On the return of an Orokolo sailing expedition from Port Moresby he observed that its leader 'looks dreadful in khaki cap and singlet and trousers. A contrast[t] to his fine naked blackened body when they left Orokolo'.

154 Ibid.
155 Ibid.
156 See below, Chapter V.
157 Williams, FN, Orokolo, November 1931, WP 5/11-90.
158 Williams, FN, Orokolo, March 1933, WP 5/9-80.
where he saw modern tattooing being executed on a man, he was told that 'the mission condemns the old fashion of tattooing but allows the common practice of doing the name on arm, chest, etc.' He asked himself despairingly, 'is in better taste... the beautiful scrolls and patterns or the ill-spelt, ill-scrawled name?' He had a similar reaction to 'European' innovations in Papuan art. When he saw a craftsman decorating an axe-handle with European paint, but was told by the people that 'they preferred the proper N[ew]G[uinea] colours', he commented to himself that 'well they might'. In the centre of the decoration he observed with his customary horror at such things, 'a figure of a man... like a sugar mannekin... tout ensemble b. awful'. It is difficult to believe that Williams's attitude to 'Europeanisation' did not in any way influence his approach to those informants in whom it was manifested, and perhaps even his interpretation of the evidence which they provided.

A further factor which probably affected his field observations was his personal sensitivity to cruelty and his own concept of what was cruel. He was 'shocked' by the jeers of villagers 'deliberately putting [an adulteress] to shame'. He was upset when Nemea hunters insisted on removing a chick from a nest, despite their assurance that the mother would never return. Physical cruelty affected him most of all. O'Malley had told him, on his first field-trip to Gaile, that Papuans were cruel, and Williams noted further examples of this alleged characteristic throughout his career. He was appalled, for example, to find in one deserted Abau district village a half-dead pigeon dangling by a rope tied to its leg.

159 Williams, FN, Sapauri (village), Suau Island, December 1925, WP 5/15-138.
160 Ibid.
162 Williams, FN, Orokolo, March 1937, WP 5/11-88.
164 Williams, FN, Tupuselei, Gaile, 14 March 1922, WP 5/14-122.
165 Williams, 'The Hornbill Feather...'. 
Complementary to 'interviewing', was the method of 'direct observation'. Williams attended numerous ceremonies and funerals, most frequently at Orokolo. On Suau Island he was invited to a small feast held in honour of a child who had been slighted by a villager. And at another village on the same island he was a spectator at the slaughtering of a pig. When he was living with the Nemea people in the Abau district, he visited a sago-making camp with a group of them, having first to negotiate 'a hell of a climb down' from their village.

Observation was frequently a far from passive task and one instance provides a particularly illuminating picture of the Government Anthropologist at work in the field. At an Orokolo mortuary ceremony he found 'individuals running up and down, reeling, dodging marvellously, panting... One fool... swirling round knocks the book flying from my hand and falls flop as he does so, rolling over a couple of times. Then up again and off, to fall later on his bum on a sack of copra. I go down to get photos,... [the people dance and chant]... I chase about trying to get a photo and nearly collide with Mekavakore who takes no notice of me.'

Williams often participated directly too in the ordinary tasks of daily village life. He assisted at a 'fencing bee' in the garden of one of his Suau Island informants, finding the work 'devilish hot in the open'. He accompanied a group of Suau men

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166 Williams, *Papuans...*, p. v.
167 Williams, *Drama...*, *passim*; Williams, FN, Orokolo, November 1931, WP 5/11-90; Williams, FN, Keveri Valley, 1940, WP 5/14-134.
169 Williams, FN, the village of Mataginugibu, Suau Island, December 1925, WP 5/15-138.
170 Williams, FN, Bam (village), Abau district, December 1935, WP 5/14-137.
171 Williams, FN, Orokolo, November 1936, WP 5/11-88. Mekavakore was an elderly man leading the ceremony.
172 Williams, FN, the village of Suau, Suau Island, December 1925, WP 5/15-138.
on a pig hunt, but after two unsuccessful attempts at the kill he 'left them... heard finally that they had caught a village pig on a subsequent attempt'. Near Dauan Island he went to sea in a dinghy and recorded with poignancy the capture of a turtle, its struggle and finally, its death. With the men of the Trans-Fly village of Babiri[?] he hunted wallaby and himself shot one of the four beasts killed with a bow and arrow. And in the Abau district, where he went to study the use of the Hornbill feather as a homicidal emblem, he joined the men of the village of Uaiha in a hunt for the bird.

Williams quickly recognized that an anthropologist would not long remain an objective observer but would almost inevitably become involved in the lives of the people amongst whom he lived and worked. On his first trip to Orokaiva, in the Northern Division, when he was supposedly observing the funerary preparations of villagers in anticipation of a death, he found himself interfering to save a life. Judging that a sick child was being prematurely mourned, he provided it with medication on the basis of his own diagnosis and it recovered. At a Keveri village funeral he observed that all the grave-diggers were 'very energetic and cheerful', except for 'the young son of the [dead man], a nice young man called Dine. He looked v[ery] disconsolate. Stood near his father's corpse, wh[ich] was wrapped in pandanus matting w[ith] face exposed. He was switching flies off [the] dead face.' Williams, who could hardly have failed to be moved by the scene, attempted to cheer the

173 Ibid.
174 Williams, FN, Dauan Island (actually in Australian waters in Torres Strait, just outside the Western Division), 2 November 1928, WP 5/3-38.
175 Williams, FN, Babiri[?], a Trans-Fly village, July 1926, WP 5/4-43.
177 Williams, FN, Orokaiva, n.d. (1923 or 1924), WP 5/15-149.
178 Williams, FN, a Keveri village, n.d. (February or March 1940), WP 5/14-134.
bereaved boy after the burial with 'a h[andkerchief]f and a red sihi'. At Orokolo, when a violent fight over the use of a sago-track erupted between two men, Williams helped other villagers to settle the dispute. The incident, he observed, was 'very bloody, both had axes. We had difficulty in getting them apart.' But the following day 'they came to get back their axes. They are friendly again.' And when an adultery case was being heard 'in a V.C.'s court' with 'tempers obviously running high', Williams played an active part in the surrounding events. 'Right in front of my eyes [the wronged husband] rushes in and gives the sitting woman a terrible bang on the side of the head w ith his fist'.

I rise and chase him off, but he eludes me. He quietens down and proves rather a decent sort. Though I promise to send him to Kerema [the Government station] (with a private recommendation for mercy), [the co-respondent], who is a quiet gentlemanly looking chap, is scared stiff. He appeals for protection, asking to wait in my boy house before setting off.

During the day a kinsman of [the adulteress] (I think) climbed on to the veranda and threatened him with an axe. I sent him over the fence with a cut across the arse.

On some occasions to his great embarrassment he felt reluctant to oblige when asked to intervene in village problems. Once, for example, he was privately requested to hale a 'doctor' before a magistrate for his inability or refusal to effect a cure.

But most often Williams affected proceedings unintentionally, as he had done at Motu Motu when the congregation swelled because of his attendance; his mere presence altered the normal

179 Ibid.
180 Williams, FN, Orokolo, March 1937, WP 5/11-88.
181 'Court' in this context meant an informal, preliminary 'hearing' without any powers of adjudication.
183 Ibid.
184 Williams, *Orokaiva Society*, p. x.
course of events. At Keveri he attended a Kwato prayer meeting at which, he was told, prayers were usually spoken in the vernacular. On this occasion, however, 'such prayers as I actually listened to happened to be mostly in Motuan, but the reason for this was probably the mere fact of my presence... it was probably a natural courtesy to use a language they considered I would understand'. 185 At an Orokolo mourning ceremony a bow-twanging ritual about which he had recently talked with informants was conducted. It was, the villagers later told him, quite a usual procedure; but he believed 'they were lying... it was a previous fashion given up... I don't think that it would have been done [except] that we were discussing these old fashions just before the burial'. 186 And on the beach at the village of Uaripi, Williams sat feigning oblivion while a man was 'rowing [with his] wife... He is cutting out a canoe... she sits nearby, about 20 yards [from me. They are] shouting speeches at one another. Finally he comes and stoops over her, holding a large lump of wood in hand. Only my proximity prevents him from giving her a belting.' 187

Sometimes, as an 'outsider' to the society with which he was living, as in the case of the adulterer, Williams was used as a source of refuge. When an unmarried Orokolo girl became pregnant, the boy, 'greatly ashamed' but not wishing to marry her because she was 'older than himself, and should marry among her own age class... attached himself' to Williams and accompanied him to the district's administrative station, before 'going to live in [another village] where he had relatives'. 188 Similarly, when a girl was beaten by a member of her family, she fled to Williams and his wife until the furore passed. 189

185 Williams, 'Report on a Visit...'.
186 Williams, FN, Orokolo, February 1935, WP 5/10-85.
188 Williams, FN, Orokolo, March 1932, WP 5/11-92.
189 Constance Williams, FN, 'Notebook', Orokolo, n.d. (probably some time in 1937), WP 5/10-83.
It might be thought that the anthropologist takes much in the form of information from those he studies, while giving little in return. But this would not be entirely true. Williams's 'exploitive' relationship with villagers was by no means one-sided. In addition to their utilization of him as a sanctuary, there were other ways in which individuals or groups derived a little reimbursement for his use of them in the course of his field-work. Informants sometimes used him for purposes of amusement. One group of Keveri villagers tantalized him with tales of ancient stones bearing markings left by previous inhabitants. After 'two hours walk, w[ith] very stiff climbing', they led him to the place, only to find nothing resembling the stones they had described. 'A wild goose chase', Williams commented to himself; and as for the special stones, 'Balls ... All I got was exercise, and a fine view down towards the East'.

But for all their 'exploitation', teasing, evasiveness, and their boredom with him, many Papuans apparently liked F.E. Williams; another anthropologist who talked many years later to Papuans who had known him, gained this impression. They recalled the Government Anthropologist, in tones of some endearment, as 'Effie'.

190 Williams, FN, 'Visit to Kodi from Keveri', n.d. (February or March 1940), WP 5/14-134.

191 Williams, FN, the village of Sisiani, Normanby Island, D'Entrecasteaux Group, n.d. (some time in mid-1929), in 'D'Entrecasteaux Islands Notes', WP 5/15-140.

192 Dr Epeli Hau'ofa and Mrs Barbara Hau'ofa gained this impression.
FROM Williams's field-work came his reports, articles and books. As a writer he was seldom exciting. To a large extent he lacked Malinowski's marked ability to transport the reader into a human, living, day-to-day society. Here he was not wholly wanting, however; as one of his critics wrote: Williams displayed in Drama of Orokolo 'a lightness of touch, not a common thing in books of this kind... His Papuans are human beings of diverse character, capable of enjoying and arousing the sense of humour, and his own narrative style (though he never forces the picturesque or the comic) is easy and natural.

He usually offered most of his extensive field data, with little selection, professing a wish for readers—be they anthropologists, missionaries or administrators—to make their own interpretations and draw their own conclusions from a personal reading and assessment. In part, at least, this was almost certainly a reaction to Murray's dislike of having opinions or advice proffered to him. As a result, Williams's reports and books sometimes demanded patient and persistent reading. Their material was usually divided into chapters and sub-sections grouping data under traditional headings such as 'kinship', 'marriage', 'initiation' and other aspects of social anthropology; ceremonial life, discussed both from its social and aesthetic viewpoints; and technological methods and implements. Physical anthropology Williams designated irrelevant. He did not neglect the 'functionalist' technique of many of his colleagues, discussed further in a later chapter, of examining each aspect in the light of its purpose in, and relative importance to, the overall social system, but he was not particularly preoccupied with doing so; and the structure of his writings often

193 See, for example, Malinowski's Coral Gardens and Their Magic, (London 1935), passim and, in particular, Malinowski's statement of the form anthropological writing should take, in ibid., Vol. 1, The Description of Gardening, p. 4.


195 Williams, Papuans..., pp. ix-x.
varied noticeably from that of the 'functionalists' who frequently centred their discussions around a specific social or cultural phenomenon. One notable exception to this was his book on the magnificent Orokolo ceremonial cycle.

Among Williams's reports stemming from particular 'problems' facing the Administration were those on the 'Vailala Madness' cult and depopulation. Most however were general, intensive studies of the social and cultural lives of particular groups, such as the Keraki of the Trans-Fly, the people of Lake Kutubu and the Orokaiva of the Northern Division.

Although theorizing was not of major concern to him, when he engaged in it he usually presented his theory in a separate section from descriptive material. Where his writings did include theoretical speculation, or attempts to examine a problem in search of a solution or deduce an explanation of a situation, they were characterized by rigorous, step-by-step logic. Every possible explanation, no matter how seemingly unlikely, was successively stated, closely scrutinized and sometimes finally accepted - in part or in full - or rejected with stated due reasons. Williams's 'logical' approach to the construction of his writings was on one occasion considered to have been used a trifle, though perhaps un-wittingly, dishonestly. In criticizing the Functionalist school, it was alleged that he had purposely set up an 'Aunt Sally' in order to knock it down. There was some truth in this particular instance and the hint of similar 'contrived' arguments, enabling him to reach or at least imply his own conclusions, occasionally appeared in his reports to the administration.

196 The Functionalists and their theory are discussed further below, in Chapter VIII.

197 Williams's anthropological theories are examined below, in Chapter VIII.

Out of consideration for his readers, Williams frequently informed them in advance of especially 'heavy' sections or ones dealing with side-aspects of the central subject of a report or book, which might only be of marked interest to a particular kind of specialist — for example, to another anthropologist rather than to a missionary, or to an administrator rather than an anthropologist.\(^{199}\)

Williams's strong emotional involvement with the threatened Orokolo ceremonial cycle which is further discussed in succeeding chapters, was one of the few factors ever to jolt him momentarily out of his typical attempts at strict objectivity. Indeed it sometimes prompted him to wax almost poetical; he expressed 'the hope, however idealistic, that things like *Hevehe* will elsewhere be given a better chance; that the new order will show a readier disposition to compromise with the old; and that the highest products of a not ignoble past may more often live on into the future.'\(^{200}\)


\(^{200}\) Williams, *Drama...*, p. 446.
Eharo mask sketched by F.E. Williams

One of the plain variety, i.e. without totemic model. For the dance it is trimmed round the edges with feathers.
CHAPTER III

Anthropologist, Missionary, Christianity and Culture: 'In the names of altruism and tolerance'

The missions with their widely trained staff and far-reaching organizations introduce new social and religious ideas which strike killing blows at the very root of native culture, and in almost every district where missions have become firmly established, the old customs are rapidly disappearing, whether all the people have been converted to Christianity or not.

E.W.P. Chinnery

To those who carry on the missionary cause to-day I would, besides remembering their kindness, wish all true success in the names of altruism and tolerance.

F.E. Williams

IN the Papua of Williams's time, the missionaries wielded more influence over the people and their futures than any other individuals or institutions. Their denominations promised all the variety of the Tower of Babel, including as they did the London Missionary Society, Methodists, Anglicans, the Roman Catholic Sacred Heart Mission, Kwato Industrial Mission and the Seventh Day Adventists. It was inevitable that an anthropologist working with the Administration on matters of 'native affairs' should often come into contact with at least some of them. Indeed, Hubert Murray told his public that he expected

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2 Drama of Orokolo, p. xiv.

3 The histories and characteristics of these missions are related in the following works: R.W. Abel, Charles W. Abel of Kwato, (New York, 1934); J.W. Burton, Our Task in Papua, (London, 1926); A.K. Chignell, Twenty-one Years in Papua: A History of

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from the anthropologist, working with the missionary, no less a result than the bridging of the gulf which separates the Stone Age from the twentieth century, and the passage of which has cost so much suffering to primitive races'.

Williams accordingly explained to an audience in Hawaii, that the Papuan Government 'has always worked hand in glove' with the missionaries and 'attaches the highest value to their co-operation'. He had by then spent fourteen years as Government Anthropologist. For his own part, 'while I reserve the right to criticise and do so in a manner which may sometimes annoy them, I have always given them my support for what it was worth - and this although I have no religious axes to grind, no personal interest in evangelism as such'. At least the latter part of this claim was true; perhaps in reaction to his Baptist education, Williams was a rationalist. He claimed however to have 'no prejudice against

3 [contd from previous page]


5 Williams, 'Address to the Pan Pacific Union', Honolulu, August 1936, WP 5/1-2.

6 Ibid.

Christianity'. His view was that his rationalism made him an ideal critic of Christianity and that it was completely impossible for a Christian to perform the task. Similarly, a Christian was precluded from passing meaningful judgments on questions of education because of his inescapable bias. The 'slightest tincture of Christian zeal' was 'likely to falsify judgment'. Devout Christians, by placing Christ before all else, had shown themselves 'unable to assume the entirely critical attitude which is necessary' to the solution of problems.

One of the missions in the Territory, the S.D.A., purported to respect religious freedom; Williams commented that a religious freedom which claimed the right to convert or proselytize could not be regarded as 'absolute' and added that it was at least hypothetically possible it could lead to the sudden emergence of a new religion, possibly entailing life-sacrifice of some kind. But quite apart from this, he declared, "religious freedom", much as we are attached to the principle, cannot be taken as ultimate justification for any and every kind of religious teaching on the part of any and every religious body.

From the first, Williams was concerned with the question of the suitability of Christianity for Papuans. He held that the Papuan's main interest lay in the ritual, not the doctrine of any religion; and he doubted whether 'the native has reached that stage when he can digest any but the simplest elements of Christian teaching'. On mission opposition to traditional ceremonies, Williams argued that 'to bid [the people] do away with all the rites to which they ... have been accustomed ... and to thrive on

8 Williams, 'Address to the Anthropological Society, Adelaide', 28 April 1930, WP 5/1-2.
9 Williams, 'Impressions Gained from the Conference on Education in Pacific Countries, Honolulu, 1936', pp. 30-31. There is a reproduced typescript copy of this paper in the Papers of the United Church, The Library, U.P.N.G. (The United Church is the product of a recent amalgamation of Protestant missions in Papua New Guinea).
10 Williams to G.S., 9 January 1940, WP 5/11-91.
11 Williams, The Vailala Madness ..., p.59.
the Holy Creed and the Ten Commandments, is simply to ask the impossible. It is to snatch away the baby's milk-bottle and offer it a pound of steak. The Christianity which would 'succeed among the natives' was 'one with a minimum of perplexing doctrine, but full of sacrifice, communion feasts, baptism by immersion, processions, pageants, fastings, flagellations and the like'. It might be speculated that the rich ceremonial aspects of Roman Catholicism satisfied him as a 'substitute' for traditional ceremonial life; although Pitt-Rivers, who spent longer than Williams in the Mekeo district, where the Catholics operated, was highly critical of their interference with the people's lives. If, as he apparently intended, Williams had ever written about the Mekeo, he would probably also have recorded his views on the relative value of Catholicism to Papuans.

Although the question of substituting Christianity for heathenism was 'a difficult one', Williams told an audience of anthropologists on another occasion, 'No one could hesitate to regard Christianity as immensely better than any form of native religion in Papua'. He outlined what he thought Christianity should do to make itself acceptable there in a report to the Administration on the Orokaiva. 'A new native religion, like the old' he felt, 'should possess an attractive and engrossing ceremonial, and it should not despise the mere dressing-up, dancing and feasting, but should actually incorporate them'. Williams stressed that the main argument for

12 Ibid., p. 60.
13 Williams, The Vailala Madness ..., pp. 61-62.
15 Williams visited the Mekeo District, north-west of Port Moresby, and made extensive field-notes; but he did not live to incorporate them in a publication. See 'Mekeo Notes, 1929-1941', WP 5/14-125.
16 Williams, 'Address to the Anthropological Society, Adelaide'.
17 Williams, Orokaiva Magic London, (1928) (initially presented to the Papuan Government as Anthropology Reports Nos. 6, 7 and 8), p. 85.
religion as far as its value to 'natives' was concerned, was the essential emotional satisfaction it provided. Some of the stricter or 'more repressive' forms of religion, he believed, failed to meet this requirement. He was specifically opposed to 'such puritanical religions as would ban social festivities and ceremonial'; and to varying extents every one of the Papuan missions fitted this description. He stressed too that the forms of Christianity offered to Papuans 'must be of a most plastic, adaptable kind'.18 With rather less timidity than that which had marked his initial suggestions he later declared that if Christianity could not 'condescend to employ such methods, if it cannot adapt itself so that the Christianity of the native is part and parcel of his life, in which he takes really spontaneous interest and pleasure, then in my opinion Christianity is not suitable for him'.19 His almost obsessive admiration for the aesthetic aspects of Papuan ceremonial life, combined with his belief in its considerable social importance, confirmed him increasingly in the conviction that 'it might be better if [the] Papuan, while becoming religiously a Christian ... should remain artistically a heathen'.20

WILLIAMS'S attitude to Christianity for the Papuan was bound up with that which he adopted to sorcery. He viewed magic as 'a deadening, stultifying influence, the negation of intellectual progress', which must certainly be eliminated from Papuan culture.21 And he asserted that the Papuan himself regarded sorcery - magic of the type devoted to harmful or anti-social ends - as 'a crime', but was bound under the curse of it because of his general belief in magic as a whole. It was 'one of Christianity's good marks', he believed, that 'it has


19 Williams, Orokaiva Magic, p.85.

20 Ibid.

21 Williams, The Blending of Cultures ..., p. 16.
helped to throw the sorcerer, the general poisoner of goodwill, out of his job*. A belief in a beneficent God would probably provide both a more satisfying intellectual explanation of the supernatural, and a better basis for 'comfort' than the Papuan had ever known.\(^\text{22}\)

Such authoritative statements as these, incidentally, provided useful ammunition for Murray on a number of occasions in justification of his suppression of sorcery against attacks from outside anthropologists.\(^\text{23}\)

To those who would describe themselves as 'scientific determinists' and like himself would regard a condition entirely without religion as the ideal, Williams explained that Papuans, if they were not to 'go to pieces altogether', must have some religion to replace magic.\(^\text{24}\) Without passing any opinion on 'its ultimate truth or merit' he believed that Christianity was the most appropriate 'substitute' for magic and 'for the present and the long future the best available kind of spiritual diet we can offer to the primitive peoples'.\(^\text{25}\) In a mood of pragmatism, perhaps slightly tinged with resignation, he added the qualification that 'At any rate, if administration is to continue its very fruitful co-operation with the missions it must be prepared to regard conversion to Christianity as part of the general programme of native administration'.\(^\text{26}\)

Personally he did his best to ensure this co-operation, was on excellent terms with many missionaries and actually suggested in two cases that areas he had worked in might benefit from the

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22 Ibid., pp 28-29.
23 See for examples Murray, 'Manuscript of a book on Papua', MP A3138-2 Vol.1, p. 141, and Murray, Papua of To-day.
24 Williams, The Blending of Cultures ..., pp. 16-17; see also Archbishop Wand, (Queensland), 'Missions and the State: Urgent Claims of Advancing Civilization', Brisbane Courier-Mail, Saturday 25 January 1936.
26 Ibid., p. 26; See also Williams, 'Impressions Gained from the Conference on Education in Pacific Countries ...', p. 28.
establishment of a mission.27

In the same mood of pragmatism he reviewed Christian rites, concluding that confession might provide the medium for a subtle kind of self-display, as did preaching; and that prayer was the most valuable. 'We may be sure', he commented, 'that the people who pray are heartening themselves, ridding themselves of fears and uncertainties, gaining something in peace of mind - all of which must surely be of great benefit'.28 Clearly he found it easier to accept or admit the beneficence of prayer because of a strong parallel he found between it and 'white magic'. Like the latter, it provided a psychological backing for practical effort in the form of confidence, and 'in that way contributes to success and satisfaction in general'.29 'It is generally expected of anthropologists', he observed, 'that they will look with a friendly eye on such things as white magic, though they are sometimes thought to be cranks because of it'. Any anthropologist who did so should, to be consistent, look with the same kindly eye upon prayer, 'though here the question of being a crank is not so likely to arise'.30

OF all Papuan missions, Williams's initial views of Kwato, the industrial

27 Williams, Papuans of the Trans-Fly (Oxford, 1936), p. vii; Williams, 'The Hornbill Feather in the Abau District', report submitted to the Government of Papua late 1935 or early 1936, MS in WP 5/14-129; Paul [Constance Fairhall?] to Williams, 29 November 1940, WP 5/13-108; Williams to Paul, 4 December 1940, Ibid. ('Paul' was apparently a nickname used by Williams for Constance Fairhall the L.M.S. medical missionary, perhaps to distinguish her from Constance Williams in conversations between the three); Williams to Fr. Ross, 22 September 1939, WP 5/6-56.

28 Williams, 'Report on Visit to the Keveri Valley', submitted to Papuan Government, 7 August 1940, typescript in WP 5/14-133. This report was published posthumously as 'Mission Influence Amongst the Keveri of South-East Papua', in Oceania, Vol. XV, No.2, 1944, pp.89-141.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.
mission established by the Reverend Charles W. Abel who broke away from the L.M.S., were seemingly the most favourable. In addition to the useful work it did by spreading propaganda against abortion — and thus possibly aiding the Administration's attempts to combat depopulation — and its active promotion of Papuan arts and crafts, Williams was apparently impressed by both Kwato's general 'substitutions' for disappearing custom and its stated attitude towards Papuan Culture. Early in his career Williams inadvertently provoked Abel to defend Kwato against criticisms directed by the anthropologist at Papuan missions in general. Abel felt unjustly maligned by Williams's observations concerning missionary influence on the destruction of 'native ceremonials', published in his 'Vailala Madness' report. He challenged Williams's theories on cultural destruction, in his organisation's magazine, asserting that Kwato did not contribute to the process and that his mission, even if no other, provided highly adequate 'substitutes' for any cultural elements which did decline or disappear.

For many years after this, Williams gave what was at least the public appearance of being convinced by the Kwato missionary's protestations. Consequently, the news that Kwato had moved into the Abau district might have been expected to please him. By this time Charles Abel's son's Russell and Cecil, had succeeded their father, who died in 1930, but the policies Kwato claimed to pursue — while receiving some additions from the Oxford Group Movement — remained substantially unchanged. Williams commented

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32 C.W. Abel, New Guinea Tidings, (New York), 6-8 January 1925, cited in Wetherell, 'Christian Missions ...', p. 370. For discussion of Williams's theories regarding cultural destruction, see below, Chapters IV and VIII.

33 The adoption of the Oxford Group methods of 'Sharing' and 'Quiet Time' by Kwato, in 1931, is explained by Wetherell, 'Monument to a Missionary ...', p. 36.
on a report from the local administrative officer that 'Kwato seems to have made a hit' at Abau, that 'if it is filling a large gap in the lives of the people as Mr Lambden says, then it is performing a great service'. Because, in his view, the previous forms of diversion of the people of Abau had been 'very objectionable' and their culture 'a very poor one', Williams concluded that Christianity 'which they appear to be welcoming with open arms, must be of all the greater value to them'. He praised too the Abels' practical schemes, including one for the introduction of cattle.

But it seemed to Williams inevitable that these missions, besides giving something, must take something away. I think it possible that in some cases they might even take away more than they give. But happily it seems that the case of Kwato in the Abau District is not of this kind.

He assured the Administration that Mr Abel 'realises the danger of cultural impoverishment as the result of interference by missions, and ... he is anxious to avoid it.' There was no likelihood that Abel 'or any of his European colleagues will interfere too drastically with harmless existent customs or attempt to suppress them'. Continued vigilance however was still necessary because of the strong possibility 'if I can judge by the parallels', that 'some of his local converts may attempt to do so later on'. In the same instance Williams suggested to the Administration that just as villagers who were opposed to the work of the missions were warned not to interfere with it, so might over-zealous converts be warned, 'with equal justice', not to interfere with established customs. 'If the converts are entitled to persuade people to join their services, is not the


35 Williams to Champion, (G.S.), 24 January 1938, Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.
conservative faction entitled to persuade them otherwise?' But this was only a theoretically raised point, for he 'imagined the matter ... pretty safe in the hands of Mr Abel and one so hard-headed as [the local administrative officer] Mr Lambden'.

Within three years, Williams's forebodings about Kwato's Papuan evangelists had been realised, though in a different geographical area; and he also found himself with cause to modify his opinion of the mission's European representatives. A mixture of chance and the circumstances of pre-war disorganisation resulting in a last-minute decision, brought him early in 1940 to the Keveri Valley in the Eastern Division. After abandoning plans for a longer field-trip to a different area, he had selected the Keveri alternative because it provided another example of what he considered to be 'the curious system by which children are affiliated to the groups of their parents according to their sex' - males to fathers, females to mothers - which he had studied elsewhere. The system fascinated him. He found it 'quite anomalous, [and] of much theoretical interest' and had high hopes that the Keveri would throw further light on it. Although he had never visited the area before, he had spent a few days in 1927 'among people "related" to these' on the Mori River, and so thought he had some idea of what to expect.

But disappointment awaited him on what was to prove his last field-trip. Williams spent six weeks in the Valley - and it is

38 Ibid.
39 Williams, 'Report on Visit to the Keveri Valley', submitted to the Government of Papua 7 August 1940, typescript in WP 5/14-133; Williams's earlier ethnological observations on the subject of sex affiliation were published for his scientific readers in 'Sex Affiliation and its Implications', Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. LXII, January-June 1932. His intention to write further on the subject on the basis of his Keveri investigations was never fulfilled.
40 Williams, 'Report on Visit to the Keveri Valley'; see also J.B. McKenna, Patrol Officer, Northern Division, 'Report on Kwato Mission Influence in the North Eastern Division and Keveri Valley', submitted to Papuan Government April 1938, CAO CRS G69-13/11.
incidental that during his absence Murray died. The trip proved 'uneventful and extraordinarily dull', indeed 'the most interesting thing about [it] was its lack of interest'. In eighteen years of 'anthropologising', Williams confessed 'I have never been so bored'. The customs and social organisation of the Keveri had been considerably 'broken up', largely he believed through the influence of the Kwato evangelists; so instead of his projected study, he had to resign himself to compiling his usual detailed ethnography, placing extra emphasis on homicidal emblems, sorcery of the 'vada' type and, inevitably, a study of the new religion, which he described in great detail.\footnote{Williams, 'Report on Visit to the Keveri Valley'; Williams's previous observations on homicidal emblems were recorded in 'The Hornbill Feather in the Abau District', unpublished report submitted to Papuan Government late 1935 or early 1936, MS in WP 5/14-129. His views on 'vada' sorcery were presented in 'Report on the Vada men's "killing" of the dog at Government House on Saturday September 12th 1931', unpublished report submitted to Murray 15 September 1931, a copy at WP 5/14-126.}

His Keveri report constituted Williams's most severe attack on any mission and probably on any influence at all that was brought to bear on Papuans during his career as Government Anthropologist; possibly Murray's disappearance from the scene made him feel able to speak more freely on the subject than he might otherwise have done. 'I had', he told the Administration, which was now under the temporary oversight of the former Government Secretary H.W. Champion, 'no intention of spying on the Oxford Group movement in the district, in fact I was not aware that it had really taken hold there'.

But from the moment of my arrival I realised that it was very firmly established, and I found that many of the more entertaining features of native life which gave interest to anthropological work were simply not there to be seen. There remained therefore little to study except the new religious movement.\footnote{Williams, 'Report on Visit to the Keveri Valley'.}

Williams was swift to add that he found the movement 'of course most interesting in itself', but he had to confess to 'a slight feeling of boredom at the constant repetition of performance and theory'.
And because the previous way of life of the Keveri had been 'to some large extent obliterated', he was forced to employ the undesirable method of 'reconstruction' to obtain a picture of the past society.  

But it was his greatest dismay that Williams found in the Keveri Valley one of the worst instances he had ever encountered of his bugbear - 'Europeanisation'. He found the Kwato-taught custom of hand-shaking thoroughly obnoxious. 'One often observes affectation among other Christianised natives, similar in principle to this though seldom so gross' he remarked, and he did not believe himself alone in his repulsion. There was 'no doubt at all that the Keveri murderer with his perineal band and his ornaments, his weapons and his fantastic pigtails, at any rate looked a finer creature than the Keveri Christian in his rags'. The bark pigtails (aya) of the Keveri had been abolished because they were one of the minor features of Keveri custom 'which not only the mission but even the Government (as represented by an earlier magistrate) thought fit to condemn'. Where, incidentally, the mission had seen the aya as trappings of paganism, it seems likely that the magistrate had either considered them health hazards, or deprecated their presumed connection with 'homicidal dress'.

That the benefits bestowed by Kwato on the Keveri 'should be coupled with a most consistent and resolute blotting out of the past' was, Williams observed with some slight understatement of his personal feelings, 'a pity'. 'We are', he told the Government, 'at liberty to form our various opinions as to what it good or bad, right or wrong, in Keveri culture as it existed - the only thing to bear in mind is that forming such opinions is at least risky'.

No reasonable or educated person would go so far as to say that the old Keveri culture was all bad. Yet that, categorically stated, was what I heard time and again from Natives in the Keveri district'.

Also condemned were the possession of weapons, even for ceremonial

43 Ibid.

44 Williams, 'Report on Visit to the Keveri Valley'. My emphasis.

45 Williams, "Report on Visit ...".
purposes; garden magic; ornamentation; the keeping of pigs in villages; feasting and ceremonies. Heathen observances such as the mortuary ceremony, he noted, were an old \textit{bete noire} of Kwato's. Their disappearance at Keveri left quite a gap, 'for the succession of feasts involved meant far-ahead preparations, and gave the people something to work for'.\footnote{Ibid.} But it was the effect on aesthetics rather than social life that Williams most lamented. Most of the elaborate ornaments and feather head-dresses, traditionally worn only on ritual occasions, had been disposed of to buyers among the labourers of the Abau District plantations. And about Keveri dances he could say nothing 'except that they used to perform them; and but little more regarding their ceremonies'.\footnote{Ibid.}

Underlying and supposedly justifying the insistence on abandonment of 'old ways', Williams observed, was the claim that they would keep the Keveri's mind in heathen channels, thus preventing redemption by faith which was supposedly manifested in the life after death. But the intricacies of this casual chain, he believed, were sometimes lost in transmission from European missionary to Papuan evangelist to villager; and though many recognised that the threatened 'death' was a spiritual one, the doctrine emerged and was accepted by others in the simplified form: continued adherence to the old ways would result in death or at least illness.\footnote{Ibid.}

Williams's condemnation of Kwato's work in the Keveri Valley was not, however, absolute. Kwato's 'greatest achievement' had been 'to inculcate the spirit of friendliness' in the people; in many ways an improvement upon what had previously been the salient feature of their culture - shared with their very similar mountain neighbours of the Abau district - which was 'nothing other than an intense interest in killing'. The idea of 'friendliness' he believed, lay at the centre of Kwato teaching, 'and in so far as it ha[d] been realised among the Keveri, it represent[ed] a very good advance'.\footnote{Ibid.}
But, their propensity for killing their fellows apart, what the Keveri had been unnecessarily deprived of by Kwato far outweighed the benefits they had received from the mission. 'As for the actual handshaking and yelling', Williams observed sardonically, the people seem really to enjoy these forms of collective activity, the more so, no doubt, since they now have so few others. No one therefore would begrudge them certain other kinds of amusements, no more harmful and much less objectionable.50

He also saw at least a theoretical possibility that the removal of outlets for social excitation of any kind could backfire completely. 'It is an open question', he believed, 'whether the suppression of feasting, ceremonies and dancing will conduce to peace or tend to drive the Keveri back to murder'. Although at Amau, the mission's Keveri headquarters, there might be little danger of such a reversal, the outlying villages were a different matter. With nothing to replace the old activities, idleness and boredom were resulting and 'in such an atmosphere' he believed 'there would be much excuse for a revival of man-killing'.51

The Kwato programme of worship drew Williams's attention, for here the missions' 'substitutes' for old forms of social excitation lay and so much of the people's time and attention was occupied. 'The main preoccupation, solace and pleasure of the modern Keveri' was now 'just praying'. A gentle note of sarcasm aside, his comments on prayer at Kwato's Keveri establishment were in accordance with his conviction that prayer could be of cathartic benefit. He 'found something both touching and admirable in the Keveri native's addiction to prayer' and thought it 'a great achievement on the part of Kwato to have brought it about'.

By contrast, in his observations upon Kwato's utilisation of 'preaching' in the Valley, Williams revealed his own disapproval of the method, perhaps combined with a little mischievous satisfaction at some Keveris' attitudes to it: the constant preaching, 'even if

50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
it did nothing else ... would provide an excellent training in public oratory, if such were needed'. Like the prayers, the sermons were mostly on somewhat hackneyed lines, consisting of moral exhortations and condemnations of native custom or practice. He 'still [thought] that native evangelists (who of course do most of the preaching) adopt an unnecessarily antagonistic attitude towards existent native culture'. And since this provided a constant theme for the sermons or addresses, he could not help thinking that in some respects they did actual harm. As for 'confession', while a 'thriving and no doubt potent institution at Amau', Williams suspected that in the smaller villages it was probably still 'merely an entertaining adjunct to the new religion; not a means of purging the soul, but rather something to play at'. Under a new code that 'virtually forbids all sorts of activities which were formerly considered free, harmless, or even commendable', he observed pointedly, it was 'easy to imagine that the native would find ample scope for all his confessions'. He noted that most of those sins to which the Keveri convert confessed publicly, had been committed a very long time ago.

It was in the Keveri Valley too that Williams found the most striking example of the mission practice of 'centralisation'. This was generally carried out in accordance with a belief in the 'complete change' theory which asserted that successful conversion and education could only take place if the subject were completely removed from his heathen surroundings. Williams observed that, were the theory 'sound in native education', and if the practice were not carried to extremes, 'centralisation' would seem to be the ideal method of transforming native culture - of 'establishing a thoroughly new order in any given district'. But unless a mission's organisation was so extensive as to embrace all the people in one large station, in which their environment was completely changed and a new generation could grow up 'under the close supervision of a large staff of white and, to a certain extent, Samoan and native teachers' to

52 Ibid.

53 Williams discussed other aspects of Kwato's nature and beliefs - including doctrines, morals and conversion - in a similar vein, in the same report.
attempt a complete substitution of Christian customs for 'native' ones was 'both foolish and harmful'. Williams's predecessor, Armstrong, had voiced a similar opinion with regard to the Suau Tawala people and Williams cited him in support. Although on a reduced scale centralisation had been carried out successfully in a number of places, Williams suggested as Armstrong had done that on a complete one it was not feasible. In contrast, Chinnery, in the Mandated Territory, approved of the practice and was actually implementing it himself both to improve New Guinean living conditions and for administrative convenience. "I have a scheme in mind for centralizing the scattered groups of the Bainings and other areas", he told J.S. McLaren, 'the Administrator is very keen on this sort of experiment'.

But Williams personally did not subscribe to the 'complete change' theory; it was 'not a proper aim'.

I cannot for one thing, imagine that we have an ethical right to go so far in the destruction of any people's chosen way of living; nor, for another, do I conclude from my reading on the subject that the aim spoken of is in keeping with advanced theories of native education.

Centralisation did however have advantages. It provided in some instances a fuller community life, and peace stemming partly from the reduction of the incidence of sorcery which tended to be less in a larger community. And so, despite an apprehension that the system 'might be abused', and setting aside his personal preferences, he admitted that within regional limits, centralisation might be 'a very good thing in the Papuan environment'.

During his visit to Keveri he noticed a shifting of

54 Ibid.
56 E.W.P. Chinnery to J.S. McLaren, 10 December 1925, CAO CP637-71d.
57 Williams, 'Report on a Visit ...'. For an idea of the nature and breadth of Williams's reading on education, see below, Chapters IV-VI.
58 Ibid.
population from small outlying villages into the large central station of Amau, leaving many small settlements deserted and gardens abandoned. The same mass migration had been observed two years earlier by a Patrol Officer who remarked upon its beneficial influence and the enthusiasm with which it was being pursued. Williams considered both the advantages and the drawbacks of the moves - which, he recalled, Murray had once remarked bore 'dangerous possibilities' - and the motivation underlying them. To centralise, he believed quite correctly, was 'an old policy of Kwato's'. Despite his strong reservations about the 'complete change' theory on which centralisation was based, Williams noted that it had been successfully implemented at Amau. There he had observed a number of its benefits, most notably increased community life and peace. 'If we may assume that the people now settled at Amau are genuinely free, that no undue pressure of any kind will ever be used to keep them there', he commented, 'then the migration should be in the main a blessing to them'.

Although he had judged that social life in the central settlement was stable, however, Williams was apprehensive about the outlying villages. There, substitutes for the lighter, more entertaining side of life were much less in evidence. The new philosophy of life, as one Keveri spokesman had expressed it, was that 'the people should make a clean sweep of the past and noho vava - "stop nothing"'. To Williams this recalled 'the old familiar expression of the Gulf Coast - "stop quiet along village" - which belonged to, and perhaps preceded, the Vailala Madness'. Consequently, in addition to the 'man-killing' possibility, he thought it a further inherent possibility worth mentioning to the Administration - an idea 'not so outlandish', especially with regard to the small settlements - that 'the Keveri situation would be quite favourable to an outburst similar to the Vailala Madness which was perhaps

59 J.B. McKenna, 'Report on Kwato Mission Influence ...'
60 Williams, 'Report on Visit to the Keveri Valley'; Wetherell, 'Monument to a Missionary ...', p. 31.
61 Williams, 'Report on Visit to the Keveri Valley'.
a product of religious zeal plus boredom'. 62 But he admitted that such an outcome was unlikely among the Keveri, firstly because the environment, which was sparsely populated and separated by long distances, seemed against it and secondly, because there was a 'spiritlessness' about the people in the outlying villages which had not existed among those where the 'Madness' had erupted.

Williams was particularly curious about the motivation behind Keveri migration to the Kwato station. On one level he could see that the central village was likely to be attractive to the people because of its social advantages — its vigorous society, school and rice growing project. But on another, he observed that the mission's assertion that the Keveri 'make up their own minds' about the migration was largely nonsense. In fact, Williams believed, people moved to Amau 'only after a long course of persuasion, propaganda and indirect pressure'.

In the present connection, as in most others, all this is reinforced by the religious sanction; if the native fails to fall in with the mission way of thinking then he cannot expect heavenly rewards, and, at the worst, may even be threatened with 'the fire'. 63

Just as the Keveri had been 'forced' by Kwato to live in the central settlement, so had they been motivated to abandon most of their culture. Although Mr Abel and the other European members of Kwato would deny that they placed any bans on feasting, dancing or ceremonial life, their practice as Williams observed it in the Keveri Valley was tantamount to exactly this. He found it 'hard to believe that such a claim [could] be made seriously' and borrowed Russell Abel's own description of his father's methods, to support his view'. 'In every case, after long prayer and debate, they advocated a clean break with old heathen ways'. 64 It was, Williams declared indignantly, a 'fallacy [to represent] this or that change as a matter of free choice when it is really the result of a long

62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
campaign of suggestion'.

From beginning to end the Keveri and their neighbours have been taught that many of their practices and customs are wrong and unchristian, and that if they persist in them they will lose their chance of everlasting life ... It would therefore be a mistake, if not a pretence, to say of the Keveri natives that the abandonment of so much of their old way of living was an entirely free choice - 'entirely without outside instigation'!!^5

In the Keveri case, as in most others, Williams admitted that the Papuan evangelists were largely to blame - 'presuming it is a matter for blaming' - for the demise of ceremonial life, as the extreme exponents of 'the destructive policy'. He noted that not only the general hold of Kwato, but its leadership too, was weaker in the outlying settlements. Among the evangelists interviewed, one particular 'accredited functionary of ... Kwato' impressed him as being 'the most cunning-looking man' in his community and 'a liar'. But, Williams observed, the man would probably have been so even if he were not a Kwato 'official'. Other Keveri evangelists he found helpful and honest. Of their strategy, he wrote:

The Kwato evangelists seem to possess, in their way of going about things, a sort of gentle forcefulness which must be well-nigh irresistible ... So much so that I feel fairly sure that any man whom they made a dead set at must crumple up.66

But Williams was no longer prepared, as he had been in the case of the Abau district, to absolve Kwato's European missionaries of all responsibility for the actions of their functionaries. Although in some instances the European missionary was 'taken aback at the excesses of his native assistants', sometimes even remaining 'ignorant of what is going on behind his back', Williams was adamant that he could not be wholly excused from blame. In Kwato's case he clearly no longer believed the missionaries when they professed to disapprove of either the methods or the 'excesses' of their evangelists.67

65 Williams, 'Report on Visit to the Keveri Valley'.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
A comparison of the Abau and Keveri cases is interesting for more than the obvious reasons of their geographical proximity to one another and shared Kwato presence. In the Abau case, Williams had himself observed that the culture was in an unhealthy state before any mission had arrived in the area, without seeming to reflect on possible reasons for its arrival at that state; and that the people were actually asking for a missionary. In that of the Keveri Valley, although he had never visited it before his 1940 trip, he attributed the culture's disintegration, apparently without question, almost entirely to the mission's influence. Possibly it was clear to Williams, as an anthropologist, where it might not have been to a lay observer, that the cultural decline in one area was of an undeniably distinct nature, and had without doubt been precipitated by a different influence, from that in the other. Nonetheless, the apparent anomaly is worth noting. That Williams certainly had cause to conclude Kwato was affecting Keveri culture to at least some extent, there is ample evidence; but that he may have overlooked other contributing factors also seems highly probable.

Williams's new willingness to find the Kwato missionaries responsible for the actions of their evangelists in the Keveri Valley, where he had not done so earlier in Abau, also bears reflection. It seems unlikely and indeed there is evidence to the contrary, that the mission's policy on this matter would have altered markedly in the time involved; and equally improbable that Williams's powers of observation would have failed him in the first instance but improved, meanwhile, to enable his later judgement to be made.68 But it must be remembered that he did not see Kwato or its evangelists in action in the Abau District. He merely read an administrative officer's report on them.

The question of Kwato's allowance of 'freedom of choice' to Papuans in the two areas is a slightly different one. It might seem on first consideration that, as with the evangelists, Williams's initial view of this was a misinformed or incompletely informed one, that he did not actually know what 'went on' under a Kwato mission. But the most plausible explanation is that he always held approximately

68 Wetherell, 'Monument to a Missionary ...' p.36.
the same opinion of Kwato's 'freedom' but that during Murray's lifetime, in view of the Lieutenant-Governor's desire to keep the missions co-operatively harnessed as his 'education department', he did not express it publicly. The fact that Williams had written in a personal letter to Murray as early as March 1937 that he believed the missions' claims on the subject were 'largely a pose or a bluffing of themselves', some 'flagrant instances' of which could be found in Abel's book about his father, lends weight to this interpretation.  

Similarly, with the question of Kwato's influence on Papuan culture, it is probable that Williams's initial praise was mainly lip-service paid in the course of 'public relations'. It is perhaps even possible that he employed a touch of flattery and reiterated Kwato's own claims about its innocence in connection with the destruction of Papuan culture, without personally believing them, in the hope that the mission might be prompted to fulfil its claims.

MORE often than any other mission, Williams observed the influence of the London Missionary Society on Papuan cultures. During his investigation of depopulation on Suau Island, in the mid-1920s, it was the Fife Bay establishment of the Reverend C.F. Rich which drew itself to his attention. He observed in the people of the Suau villages 'a sort of fatalism' which seemed to prevent them from expressing any opinion based on their own feelings or beliefs. They displayed an acceptance 'without approval or disapproval of what is ... i.e., of what Government or Mission ordains' and 'took a great time to understand the question' "What do you yourselves want, apart from the Government and Mission?" Williams felt that if the people 'made a lively resistance in any matter they [would] probably get more consideration'. He found too a paucity of 'good' Suau

69 Williams to Murray, 13 March 1937, CAO CRS G69-16/14.

70 Williams, FN, the village of Savaia, Suau Island, January 1926, WP 5/15-138.

71 Ibid.; and Williams, FN, the village of Nauabu, Suau Island, January 1926, Ibid.

72 Ibid.
informants of any age; and the young men told him they no longer learnt from their elders, claiming that the Government and Mission had directed them not to 'learn the old men's fashion ... learn ours'.

As for the local ceremonial life, villagers wanted to throw away Hudi, the ritual process through which the men passed, and Soi, their ceremonial feast, apparently because of mission disapproval.

In explanation of their attitude, they '[always came] back to Mr Rich ... If the [Government] and Mr R[ich] made it open however, next year they w[oul]d make Hudi again.' But nowhere did Williams find any vigorous protest to the effect that the Suau villagers wanted their ceremonial life back.

Having in mind no doubt that the missionaries would read his report on depopulation, Williams referred in it to his previous suggestion that Christianity, without sacrificing any essential feature, might fittingly adopt some attractive ritual and even incorporate certain 'native usages ... in order to recommend itself to native minds'. By way of inducement to the missionaries he suggested that through such an adaption the comparatively slow progress of Christianity could be accelerated; 'the newly-accepted faith should be made a really permanent and satisfying substitute for the dead customs and beliefs'. His readers were to bear in mind that in the context of the depopulation problem he was dealing with Christianity 'as providing an interest for the apathetic native'. If it were to do this effectually, it must 'be acceptable' to him.

But Williams was at pains to stress it would be impossible to claim every individual mission had failed in these ways, 'least of all

73 Williams, FN, Suau Island, late 1925, Ibid.
74 Williams, FN, the village of Nauabu, Suau Island, January 1926, Ibid.
75 Ibid.
76 Williams, Depopulation of the Suau District, Papua Anthropological Report No. 13 (1933), pp. 45-46, referring to The Taro Cult, Papua Anthropological Report No. 6, published as Chapter XI of Orokaiva Magic (1928); most of Williams's Suau Island findings were presented to the Administration in 1926, but with an additional section on 'food supply' added by him in 1932, they were not published until 1933.
77 Williams, Depopulation ..., pp. 45-46.
perhaps ... the Mission in this Suau district'. No visitor could fail to be impressed with 'the vigor [sic] and liveliness' of the Fife Bay establishment; 'and I do not suppose there are any happier people in the Suau district than those who live on Mr Rich's station'.

He could not help thinking, however, that 'the excellent tone' of the settlement was due to the personality of those who controlled it, as much as to the substance of their teaching. He observed, as he was to do in the Kwato case, that the same spirit certainly did not prevail in the average village mission station under the direction of a native teacher. These visible shortcomings were 'largely due to the teacher's inability to infuse into his people that wholesome and energetic spirit which permeates the station at Fife Bay'. In short, Williams believed that the L.M.S. station supported the proposition that Christianity, if made to entail the absolute substitution of Christian ceremonies for native, could only be maintained by an all-embracing mission station. The smaller L.M.S. stations illustrated 'the necessity for someone to keep the native, "up to the scratch" of Christianity'. But 'a preferable alternative would be a Christianity with a stronger admixture of attractive elements, which a native might embrace with more readiness, and retain with more sincerity'.

It was, after all, his investigation of the Vailala Madness which had first brought Williams into contact with the L.M.S. And, hospitably as the missionaries had received him there, he had been forced to admit that the mission had 'contributed much to the Vailala complex'. He reached a similar conclusion about the equally helpful Anglicans with regard to the Taro cult in the Orokaiva district. Although the excesses of the Vailala cult were disowned by the L.M.S. missionaries, Williams presumed there were features in its doctrinal context which would have their approval; and that even the

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78 Ibid., p. 46.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
cessation of ceremonies and dances might be regarded as 'a means to salvation and a rare opportunity for the substitution of Christianity'. Further, some evangelists had been placing pressure upon villagers to discourage their traditional ceremonies, prior to the outbreak of the cult. Although not specifically accusing the L.M.S., he commented that there was 'no doubt that in various parts of the Territory it has been the considered policy of certain bodies or individuals to suppress the native ceremonies'. But he made it clear he believed the L.M.S.'s 'substitutes' for old customs had been inadequate. The type of Christianity it offered in the Gulf, as at Suau, was unacceptable. More worship of an active ceremonial nature was required. Much of the old ceremonial life of the Gulf, he suggested, was quite compatible with Christianity; with the Administration's backing and the support of the L.M.S: it could be retained and perhaps ever, in those areas where the 'Madness' had displaced it, restored.

These observations brought no noticeable reaction from the L.M.S., though it will be recalled Kwato protested vociferously against them. But Murray had something to say on the matter. He commented that he believed it almost inevitable the old customs would die out; and although he would order administrative officials to take 'a sympathetic attitude' towards their maintenance and revival, he would 'not support any administrative action to bring [ceremonial life] back'. He certainly would not allow officials to take any action against Vailala cultists 'which may be construed as implying Government opposition to any form of Christianity'. Given Murray's virtual dismissal of Williams's criticisms of the L.M.S. and his assurance to that mission and by implication all others, of his intended benevolent protection of them in the face of such suggestions - all of which was printed by Murray's command at the front of Williams's...
Vailala report - it is hardly surprising that the L.M.S. felt no need to fly to its own defence. Williams, seemingly unabashed by Murray's attitude, persisted in his attempts to convert him to his views on the subject for the following seventeen years.

And in the course of his many visits to the Gulf Division, Williams had ample opportunity to further observe the continuing influence of the L.M.S. on its population. In particular he observed with dismay what he believed to be the mission's effect upon his one great love, Hevehe. He became increasingly confirmed in his belief that there was nothing in the ceremonies which made them inherently incompatible with 'Christian Faith':

the two are not, on a liberal view, mutually exclusive; and in so far as the native has been taught that he must surrender the one before he can embrace the other, he has been confronted by a false antithesis. 87

Given the opportunity, Williams believed, church, school and Hevehe 'might thrive together'. 88

But in the Gulf, as elsewhere, the problem of over-zealous Papuan mission teachers militated strongly against such an outcome. Their attitude towards existent institutions he believed to be 'wholly out of keeping with the principles of native education and, in its effect, thoroughly mischievous'. 89 Among the young Oroko teachers and preachers produced by the L.M.S. station, he observed a predominant element 'of strong hostility against the old ceremonies'. 90 One teacher he judged a 'zealous and masterful' man; to him the complete obliteration of the ceremonies from his own village was undoubtedly attributable. In contrast, in another village, he found a 'mellower ... and unaggressive' teacher, under whose more moderate regime the ceremonies had so far managed to survive. The arguments of the Papuan L.M.S. teachers against Hevehe ranged from the Biblical, including

87 Williams, Drama of Oroko: The Social and Ceremonial Life of the Elema (London, 1940), pp. 443-444. Williams's 'Drama of Oroko' material was first presented to the Government as Papua Anthropology Report No. 18.
88 Ibid., p. 444.
89 Ibid., p. 445.
90 Ibid., pp. 430-431.
commandments against 'graven images' and 'other gods', through claims that the ceremonies were full of lies and deceit, stemming from the supposed living characters of the masks and the deception of the women about them; the women were victimised by being made to labour under false pretences to produce food for the ceremonies; the ceremonies themselves were 'devoid of the spiritual' and were, instead, 'things of the full belly'; to the arguers' coup de grâce: the ceremonies distracted the young from their studies. 91

Direct propaganda through the school room and the pulpit, sometimes involving the exposure of ceremonial secrets, Williams found to be the 'native' L.M.S. teachers' main methods. The effect was to bring Hevēhe and the other Orokolo ceremonies into disrepute with the great majority, who, Williams believed, desired co-operation with the L.M.S. Of the ceremonies, he wrote: 'There is a widespread impression that they are disapproved by God'. 92 Most of the ceremonial aspects of life in the Gulf Division 'have been condemned by God through the mouth of his Western Elema apostles. They are definitely on the black list'. 93 Recalling his opinion that the 'Vailala Madness', 'which dealt such a shattering blow to the ceremonies', was largely due to mission teaching although not instigated by any missionary, Williams warned that the doctrines being presently propounded by some of the more fanatical L.M.S. 'native preachers', did not differ essentially from those of the 'Madness'. 94

As for the European missionaries, the L.M.S. had posted 'a succession of energetic and capable men' in the Gulf district who appeared 'on the whole' to have adopted a sufficiently broadminded attitude towards native institutions as they found them. 95 It was indeed probably only because the European missionary in charge

91 Ibid., pp.433-434.
92 Ibid., p.435
93 Ibid., p.436. The people of the Gulf coast were sometimes referred to as the Elema or Western Elema.
94 Ibid., pp.435-36.
95 Ibid., pp.430-431.
of the L.M.S. station at the time of the 'Vailala Madness', the Reverend H.P. Schlencker, 'counseled the villages to resist it', that 'the Western Elema stronghold', particularly the village of Orokolo itself, had been prevented from capitulating. 96

But, once again, the conduct of European missionaries was by no means irreproachable. Some had been more vigorous than others in encouraging a new system with which Hevehe was regarded as incompatible. And their control over their evangelists, Williams told Murray privately, was dubious. Although the Reverend Stanley Dewdney was 'rather against [one] native teacher's methods himself' he did not 'seem able to control him'. 97 Williams had told Dewdney he was going to have a talk with the man, a 'fanatic' who wanted to 'smash the old ways', but 'a nice chap personally'. The missionary had asked him 'not to say anything that might shake [the evangelist's] beliefs, because they meant a great deal to him. Of course I didn't do so', Williams told Murray, 'but if I were in Dewdney's position I would shake more than his beliefs'. 98

Although he had not heard of any European missionary taking 'direct and active measures' against the mask ceremonies, Williams believed L.M.S. policy had been opposed to them. There existed amongst the large population of youths being trained at the L.M.S. station 'a long established tradition that none should wear a mask'. 99 In personal communication with Murray, Williams was again rather more forthcoming about the L.M.S.'s European missionaries. Dewdney, he told the Lieutenant-Governor, although not speaking against Hevehe and 'anxious to appear neutral', was nonetheless helping to hasten its end. 100 Apparently with the intention of showing Williams how liberal he was in such matters, Dewdney had related an instance of his 'not openly oppos[ing]' the ceremonies. One of his 'station boys', whose family wished him to be initiated in the

96 Ibid., pp.435-436.
97 Williams to Murray (from Orokolo), 13 March 1937, CAO CRS G69-16/14.
98 Ibid.
99 Williams, Drama of Orokolo ..., pp.430-431.
100 Williams to Murray, 13 March 1937, loc. cit.
traditional fashion, had approached the missionary about the matter. Dewdney told him: "if you really feel you should, you may. Of course I shall be sorry"! What should happen, Williams told Murray, was that what he believed to be the 'standing rule of the L.M.S., viz that no mission boy may go in a mask' should be abolished 'and [the missionary] would say on the contrary to every whippersnapper in the compound "Go and be initiated like the rest of the village or I will kick you off the Mission"'.

As he told Murray from the field:

With constant suggestion on the part of the missions the people whom they keep under their tutelage and control are not really free to make a choice; the choice is made for them. And in his official report which, like the Keveri one did not reach the public until after Murray's death, he made no attempt to conceal his belief that such freedom, for the people of the Orokolo district, was spurious. What the L.M.S. offered was 'that alleged free choice which is really nothing of the kind. It is rather the inevitable result of long-continued propaganda upon a relatively suggestible people'. Williams could not believe that the people's verdict against Hevehe had been based 'on an impartial presentation', as for four decades they had heard nothing but 'condemnation and contempt' directed at it. Yet it might be said that in comparison with other Papuans, 'the Western Elema have been particularly stubborn: after more than forty years of missionary effort they still retain a remarkable attachment to their old customs'. But even this resistance, he predicted, must be overcome 'in the

101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 Although the original report on the 'Drama' was completed during Hubert Murray's lifetime, it was not published until after his death.
105 Williams, Drama of Orokolo ..., p. 441.
106 Ibid.
long run" by such methods as those employed by the L.M.S. 107

Williams began writing his report on Hevehe sixteen years after his first introduction to it, by which time his admiration for it had become intense. He did so, he told Murray in 1937, with the intention of 'present[ing] it in all its attractiveness' and of showing just 'how much [the people] lost' through its demise. His greatest hope was 'to influence the Missionaries here, who are the ones with power to let it stay or go'. But even as he wrote, he confided in Murray the same belief that the Lieutenant-Governor had expressed years earlier in his comments on Williams's 'Vailala Madness' report: 'It looks as though the ceremonies will disappear completely'. 108 But where Murray had indicated that the demise was inevitable and no one in particular responsible for it, Williams saw a specific cause.

If the missionaries continue, either directly or through their teachers, to train the younger generation to despise the ways of their fathers, then there is no doubt that they will eventually have their way. 109

It remained therefore 'for the anthropologist to convince the missionary that Hevehe is really a good thing. If that could only be done the way would be easy.' The L.M.S. missionaries 'would not simply profess neutrality', they would take positive action to ensure the survival of the ceremonies, for example, by making initiation compulsory. 'The anthropologist has here set himself the job of converting the missionary. What', Williams asked Murray, 'do you think of the chances?' 110

Whatever the Lieutenant-Governor thought he apparently did not communicate it to his anthropologist. But Williams himself believed that there was a possibility individual L.M.S. missionaries in the Gulf district might be won over. 'It would be a fine opportunity', he told Murray, 'for a young missionary like Dewdney,

107 Ibid.
108 Williams to Murray, 13 March 1937, op. cit.; see also Williams, Drama ..., p 446.
109 Williams to Murray, 13 March 1937, op. cit.
110 Ibid.
or like Nixon down the coast, to show how the thing can be kept alongside with Christianity ... Both Dewdney and Nixon ... are young and, as missionaries go, modern, so there is a faint possibility.' Williams believed that these two men could, 'if they were game for it, and of course if they agreed with me (which is the moot point), set an example to the missionary world'. Everything depended on whether or not they could 'look at both sides with a broad mind'.\textsuperscript{111} He said as much in his published report and offered the L.M.S. missionaries the opportunity to act as the redeemers of *Hevehe* by 'taking some active steps to break down the tradition against it' and specifically, by making a new rule that 'every youth on the Station must be initiated'.\textsuperscript{112} The present 'able and progressive' L.M.S. missionary at Orokolo, Williams assured the readers of his report with diplomatic ambiguity, placed 'no definite obstacle' in the path of *Hevehe* and had 'expressed himself ready to allow the Station boys, if they so desire, to undergo initiation'.\textsuperscript{113} This missionary had 'a great opportunity' to demonstrate that 'evangelization and education may proceed hand in hand with the continued functioning of what is best in the old culture'.\textsuperscript{114}

But Williams's confidence in the possibility of converting the L.M.S. was clearly limited. And as he had done in his Vailala report, so he tried again to convince the Administration that it should intervene. Considering the 'long established missionary predilection', he declared, 'it seems doubtful whether the attitude of neutrality consistently adopted by the Government is sufficient to meet the case'.

We admittedly hold the fate of the Papuans in our hands as trustees; we cannot evade responsibility for their cultural future; and so intervention may become a duty. In the personal opinion of the

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{112} Williams, *Drama* ... , p. 445.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p. 445.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., pp 445-446.
writer, who sees so much to commend in Hevehe, a policy of non-intervention may amount to a betrayal of the natives' interests. So long as we remain neutral we are merely standing by while the supporters of Hevehe go under to their enemies. 115

Probably the impassioned nature of Williams's attitude to what he believed to be the L.M.S.'s influence on Orokolo ceremonies, struck Murray as reminiscent of the visiting anthropologist Reo Fortune's approach to D'Entrecasteaux matters, which is discussed in a later chapter. 116 As a practical suggestion Williams recommended to the Administration that 'the destructive influence of certain evangelists and teachers should be brought definitely to an end'. 117 Exactly how the Government was to achieve this he did not venture to suggest. For all his efforts, neither the Administration nor the mission seem to have reacted in any positive way to his plea for Hevehe.

A YEAR after the submission of his Orokolo report Williams received more news of the progress of Hevehe. During a visit to Port Moresby in 1939, W.F. Burke, a planter and trader at Orokolo, told him that much of the ceremonial life and its physical trappings - the ceremonial buildings and dancing masks - had recently been destroyed. On returning to his plantation Burke wrote a long and detailed description of the proceedings for Williams, stressing that the leader of opposition to the ceremonies was a strong L.M.S. supporter and that 'the L.M.S. boys, more influential now than before, were agitating for the destruction of the remaining ceremonial buildings and masks'. 118 'Dewdney', the planter claimed, 'has a very definite influence in the village now and practically rules the lives of the natives, in fact most [court] cases go before him before they go on to Kerema', the Government Station. Burke professed to deplore the change in the people of Orokolo compared with ten years previously when their ceremonial life had

115 Ibid., pp. 441-442.
116 See below, Chapter VIII.
117 Ibid., p. 445.
118 W.F. Burke (from Haevi Plantation, Orokolo, Gulf Division) to Williams, 7 September 1939, WP 5/11-91.
had been active, 'and [they] did seem to be very happy'. In these present days, he reckoned, the villagers were aimless and dejected; 'When the last few masks are destroyed it will be good bye to all social life for the natives at Orokolo ... all brought about by one missionary in the short space of three years'. '[I]f you came again to Orokolo', he told Williams, 'you would not only see, but you would feel the change'.

All of this was calculated to arouse Williams's despair. Despite this and perhaps having some suspicion about the motives of his correspondent, he calmly referred the matter to the Administration for investigation. Soon afterwards a similar report reached him from his magistrate friend R.A. Vivian, stationed at Kerema, though the administrative officer was not as intent upon fixing blame as the planter had been. To Burke, Williams wrote expressing his personal feelings on the matter. He believed the planter's information to be 'bad news as far as Orokolo is concerned'. And he had feared 'the Hevehe was doomed right enough, but at least thought that the big men's house at the far end would go through with the show they had on hand'. Williams thought he knew the particular L.M.S. teacher to whom Burke referred. He was, he recalled, 'a very influential man ... who seemed to be in sympathy with both the old and the new, which is as it should be. But it appears ... that he has swung right over'.

Referring to the burning of one of the last ceremonial buildings, he commented with a mixture of anger and regret: 'someone deserves to get into trouble if it was actually deliberate, but I fear the game has been played out finish'. With apparent surprise, Williams observed that the Government Secretary H.W. Champion, appeared to be 'taking [the matter] seriously' and had called for a report on it. But he was

119 Ibid.
120 Williams to H.W. Champion, 21 September 1939, WP 5/11-91; see also H.W. Champion to Williams, 28 September 1939, Ibid.
121 R.A. Vivian to Williams, 23 September 1939, WP 5/11-91.
122 Williams to Burke, 7 October 1939, WP 5/11-91.
123 Ibid.
pessimistic about the likely outcome of the Administration's interest. 124

The patrol officer who conducted the inquiry verified that the people were rather listless and indifferent and stressed the need for Government or mission action to fill the gap created by the disappearance of ceremonial life. But he also pointed out that Burke was probably not an objective witness, as the L.M.S. had been trading copra on behalf of the villagers, consequently removing some of the planter's profits. The officer's conclusion might be thought to throw the Orokolo situation into a slightly more realistic perspective than that in which either Williams or the planter, for obvious though different reasons, saw it.

I think Burke's statement that this is all due to three years work by one Missionary is a little biased and sweeping - if not it is a wonderful compliment to Dewdney, whose influence I would say is just as unstaple [sic] as the Government's.125

And, as far as Williams was concerned, this might be generalised beyond the Orokolo-L.M.S. case to a number of others; most notably that of Kwato in the Abau and Keveri districts. Many writers have produced evidence that missions severely damaged 'native' societies; the claim is not under dispute.126 But it may fairly be observed that, on at least some occasions, Williams tended to fix extensive, sometimes even sole responsibility for ills which he detected in Papuan life, upon individual missions or missionaries, rather than look at the overall impact of administrative officers, traders and planters, missionaries and perhaps even anthropologists - in short, of Europeans and their culture - upon Papuan societies and cultures.

It was a major difference between Williams and Chinnery,

124 Ibid.
125 D.F.M. Rutledge, Patrol Officer, Vailala East, Gulf Division, 'Report', 26 October 1939, copy in WP 5/11-91.
126 See for example, Wetherell, 'Monument to a Missionary ...', p. 48.
who did very occasionally comment on missionary activity too, that while the latter was solely concerned with affects upon social stability, deprecating in particular the unrest caused by mission rivalry and the related administrative inconvenience, Williams was most concerned with affects on culture and specifically aesthetic culture. Underlying this was the fact that, although Chinnery too regretted it greatly, he unlike, Williams, believed the destruction of culture, by whatever means, inevitable.  

Model human head on bird *Eharo*
sketched by F.E. Williams
CHAPTER IV

Race, Culture and Education:

'The ideal is a blending of cultures'

.. the social reformer dare not overlook psychological limitations ... we may fairly assume that racial differences exist in mind no less than in body; so that, even granted equal opportunity, it is a problem whether the races of Papua - to take a definite instance - will every be fitted to assimilate a culture evolved by the races of Western Europe.

F.E. Williams

Our purpose ... is to guide and assist the development of a new culture in which all that is best in the old native life shall blend with elements and forces derived from our own civilization.

F.E. Williams

EDUCATION was the very hub of 'Native Administration', as Williams saw it, and the aims of the two were virtually identical. He lamented that he was not an educationist; one of his friends would have it that he did so 'in his natural modesty'. Indeed, he had no formal training in that field and a matching lack of experience.

3 Ibid., p. 1.
Nonetheless, he investigated, wrote, reported to his employers, published, and addressed international gatherings including educational experts, upon it. And when he discovered that an impending ANZAAS Conference was to deal with education but had not invited him to contribute a paper on the subject, he was noticeably piqued. If Williams 'in fact combined the roles of educational adviser and anthropologist in Papua' and was relied on 'heavily' for advice, then his views and influence upon the vital area of Papuan education warrant particular attention.

Whether or not Williams influenced educational trends in Papua, he certainly did not initiate them. The rudiments of an education 'system' had started to emerge almost as soon as the first Christian missionaries became firmly established in Papua (then

5 Williams to A.P. Elkin, 22 December 1934, copy in WP 5/1-5.


referred to as Eastern New Guinea) in the early 1870s. By the 1890s the British Administration of the Territory (then British New Guinea) had begun to offer verbal encouragement to the missions in this work. An extremely basic scholastic education, varying amounts of technical training and extensive religious instruction constituted the curricula of the schools of Papua in their early years; by the first decade of the twentieth century most had begun further formal training. Vernacular languages or linguae francae were generally employed by the mission teachers as media of instruction. Little English was either taught or learnt despite the fact that the Government stressed its desirability.  

In his early years, Hubert Murray was busy with other matters and let education pursue uninterrupted the same course. In later years, however, he came to think increasingly about it; made enquiries in German New Guinea and elsewhere; developed and repeatedly communicated grandiose intentions regarding it to his expanding reading public; and, from time to time, made tentative approaches to his own home government on the subject. In 1910 he broached the possibility of government-backed technical education, but was abruptly reminded that there was no money available.  

At this time Murray's ideas about the education of Papuans rested on his belief that they were at a primitive stage of evolution, a view generally in line with the theories of members of the early schools of anthropological thought and with those of H. Maine's *Ancient Law*, with which he was familiar. In Murray's view it followed that the aim of any attempt to educate Papuans should be to 'further their best welfare' while they were making the long march along the evolutionary path. In practice this

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8 William MacGregor, British New Guinea Annual Report 1893-4, p. xxvi and p. 12; Austin, 'The History of Technical Education ...'

9 Dickson, 'Murray and Education ...', p. 17.

10 Murray to Minister, 4 March 1910, Despatch 23, CAO CRS G76-5.

this meant providing them an improved basic practical knowledge of agriculture and handicrafts. The provision of higher education by his Administration Murray regarded in these early years as undesirable. He suggested to the Australian Government in 1912 that 'the three "R's" plus technical training would be sufficient education for those Papuans showing 'special aptitude'.

On a number of occasions in the succeeding thirty years, schemes for systems of education, always of a technical nature, were placed before Murray. In turn, with varying degrees of support and enthusiasm, apparently dictated in part by the degree of personal appeal which individual proposers held for him, he submitted these to the Australian Government. For various reasons, usually financial ones, the schemes were never realized. But Murray became increasingly convinced that education was an area in which 'good administration' should at least appear to be achieving something. By the time Williams arrived in Papua, Murray had a scheme underway for subsidising mission schools through the Native Tax; and he was still speaking and writing about vague hopes for the establishment of at least some fully government-run schools in the future. The object, he now asserted, should be 'to help the natives of Papua to raise themselves to the highest state of civilization which they are capable of attaining'.

That begged a big question. And bound as they were to influence Williams's approach to education, his own views on race, culture and civilization, which were somewhat ambivalent, bear consideration. When pondering the possibility of Papuan psychological limitations hindering the 'social reformer', he wrote that 'we may

13 Murray to Minister, 20 July 1912, Despatch No. 202, CAO CRS G76-10.
14 Austin, pp. 3-7.
15 Murray, Review of Australian Administration in Papua from 1907 to 1920 (Port Moresby, 1920); see also Austin, p. 9.
16 Murray to Minister, 25 November 1916, Despatch No. 211, CAO CRS G76-18.
fairly assume ... even granted equal opportunity, it is a problem whether the races of Papua - to take a definite instance - will ever be fitted to assimilate a culture evolved by the races of Western Europe'. 17 If there were any 'striking deficiency in the native mind', then in his view it was the noticeable 'lack of exactitude in native accuracy': the roughness of Papuan measurements and the extreme difficulty with which Papuans conveyed approximations of distance, size and time. 18 Linked to this was what he saw as the 'irrationality' of Papuans which had so often hindered him in his fieldwork. 19 He doubted too that 'we can ever expect the same intensity of labour from the Papuan as from the European'. 20 But he was also disturbed at detecting among Papuans a loss of confidence in themselves and their cultures in the face of the European. 21

It has often been asserted that Papua's 'Australian' population was less severely racist and more humane towards 'natives' than was New Guinea's. 22 Williams had his own views on the European community of his Territory, 'a population which is not distinguished for the impartiality of its judgments'. 23 On the basis of his own observations, he believed racial prejudice on the part of Europeans in Papua to be 'widely spread and ... deep-seated, and, as such, ... a force to be reckoned with'. 24 And he described the situation as one

17 Williams, 'The Blending of Native and European Cultures', op. cit., p. 372.
19 See above, Chapter II.
23 Williams, The Blending of Cultures ..., p. 27.
24 Williams, ibid., p. 5.
of 'dormant race-hatred'. He was horrified too to read reports of violent repercussions of a similar thing in other parts of the world, particularly of the lynching of a 'Negro' in the United States of America. He attempted to analyse 'racial prejudice':

it is no doubt one of the methods we adopt for defending our sense of superiority; and in effect it means that, so long as there is a marked and distinctive difference in culture, we may be prepared to tolerate and sometimes to admire, whereas any approach to sameness or equality may stir resentment.

He was repeatedly struck by the antipathy with which 'the white man' at times regarded those Papuans who made the nearest approach to his own culture, and was firmly convinced that without the protection of the Administration, Papuans would be ruthlessly exploited by the Europeans. But Williams also believed that Europeans had rights in Papua; and that 'the maintenance of European prestige in a country where there is a minority of Europeans' should not be questioned. 'I am not', he once asserted, 'an out and out pro-native simply because I am a Government Anthropologist'. He inadvertently revealed, through an extremely perceptive awareness of European racial attitudes in Papua, some degree of fellow-feeling:


26 Williams, The Blending of Cultures ..., p. 5.
27 Williams, 'The Blending of Native and European Cultures', p. 373.
28 Williams, 'Native Welfare in Papua'.
29 Williams, 'The Blending of Native and European Cultures', p. 373; see also Williams, The Blending of Cultures ... and Williams, 'Native Welfare in Papua'.
30 Williams to A.M. Hocart, 7 March 1936, WP 5/2-8.
[Complete Europeanisation] must surely imply eventual equality, or at least social commingling; and (be it remembered that I speak of those races which we call "native", and generally consider our inferiors) it is more than doubtful whether this latter is desirable or even possible. Whether or not they think themselves superior to their black brothers, most whites (most Britishers at any rate) do not want to be hobnobbing with them. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact of racial antipathy.\textsuperscript{31}

Partly because of his own estimations of the Papuan-European situation and of the results of similar ones in other countries; partly for aesthetic reasons; partly too, it would seem, because of his personal racial feelings, Williams urged that Europeanisation must at all costs be avoided. 'It is not a matter of keeping the native under, but of keeping him different ... we must insist upon Cultural Differentiation'.\textsuperscript{32} By perpetuating aspects of Papuan culture, and thus ensuring a definite degree of 'Cultural Individuality', a 'better feeling of European towards native' would be promoted in the Territory.\textsuperscript{33} As he put it on another occasion: 'In the long run I believe we shall be better pleased with the native, and he with himself and us, if he remains a native'.\textsuperscript{34}

The use of English as a universal medium of communication would do much to improve race relations in Papua. Williams's views on the language question, especially with relation to the matter of racial antipathy, were probably influenced not only by his own racial feelings and his Papuan experience, but also by the view of his old mentor, R.R. Marett, that 'nothing counts for more in the struggle for existence between ethnic types than the advantage of common speech ... Colinguals are cousins whatever their pedigree, and, no less

\textsuperscript{31} Williams, 'The Blending of Native and European Cultures', p. 373.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{34} Williams, \textit{The Blending of Cultures} ..., p. 6.
naturally than they talk, are inclined to share sympathies and ideas'. The prospect of peaceful co-existence contained in Marett's views on language probably appealed to Williams rather more than the familiarity implied by the word 'cousin'. In making such recommendations to the Administration, he hastened to assure Europeans that, by urging the improvement of communication with Papuans, 'I do not suggest [the] white men should invite Papuans to their dinner tables'; he merely referred to 'all the inevitable points of contact'.

Although Williams was undeniably a racist in his own right, his attitudes were relatively mild in comparison with, and of a rather different nature from, those of many Europeans in Papua. Like Murray, he was a benevolently paternalistic racist. He often couched statements on matters bearing racial implications in ambiguous terms. And he probably did so to enable them to be interpreted by more virulently racist Europeans in a manner that would allow them to feel secure, while simultaneously providing an alternative interpretation which precluded his necessarily having to avow the same attitudes. He wrote, for example, that 'when the native can speak and read English the scope of his education is only to be limited by the power of his brain'.

CULTURE, viewed - in as far as it could be - separately from race, was a subject of great concern to Williams for its relationship to education as well as to his anthropological work. Reflecting upon the fact that youths no longer learnt from their elders and seemed to know 'little of any fashion, new or old', he jotted in his field-notebook:

In native education we should deliberately aim at keeping the knowledge of the old as well as giving

36 Williams, Native Education ..., p. 10; see also Williams, The Blending of Cultures ..., p. 25. (My emphasis).
37 See, for examples of the more typical European attitude: letter to the Editor, Papuan Courier, 16 December 1925; 'Auriel', ibid, 6 February 1925; 'Auriel', ibid., 13 February 1925, quoted by D.J. Dickson in 'Murray and Education ...', pp. 33-34.
38 Williams, Native Education ...
the knowledge of the new ... there is room for both ... e.g. mission text books should deal to some extent with native subjects ... particularly native stories ... not only the Bible and the hymn book ...

Natives [are] taught reading and writing [yet] they seldom do either and their reading must be exceedingly remote and uninteresting. Why read about Daniel and the Lions and not about Taufo and the pigs?\textsuperscript{39}

He first publicly outlined his ideal of a 'blending' of Papuan and European cultures when considering the need to find a \textit{modus vivendi} which would 'preserve the rights of both European and native and ensure their mutual satisfaction and goodwill'.\textsuperscript{40} Explaining to a group of fellow anthropologists, just prior to his promotion from Assistant- to Government Anthropologist, he stressed that he did not express the official views of the Papuan Administration but on the contrary was 'in some points at variance with those views'.\textsuperscript{41} His paper reflected the smug self-confidence of a European certain that his own culture and society were superior to others under consideration. But concurrently, as in much of his work, an unwittingly patronising tone was tinged with a genuine sympathy and admiration for certain aspects of the other cultures.

It was, Williams told his audience, to neither the Papuan's nor the European's advantage to Europeanise the former completely. The most suitable alternative was a blending of the two cultures; the Papuan should 'receive something from our new culture on the one hand and keep something of his old culture on the other'.\textsuperscript{42} A vast number of benefits could be imparted to him - though not in 'too rigid a reform'; for 'every native is an old bottle' and 'we must not fill him up to the neck with new wine, lest we burst him altogether'.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{39} Williams, FN, the village of Sibarai, Suau Island, late 1925, WP 5/15-138.
\textsuperscript{40} Williams, 'The Blending of Native and European Cultures', p. 372.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 371.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 374.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p. 375.
Williams was particularly concerned with 'what we may allow [the Papuan] to keep'; Europeans 'must make up our minds as to what, in [the Papuan's] own culture, is worth keeping'. And here he felt entitled to carry out extensive alterations. Worthy of preservation were:

not his body of beliefs or his general intellectual outlook: that is far more heavily adulterated with superstition and magic than our own, and it should be the principal object of education to change it. Nor his existent economic system, which, if he is ever to progress, must change in the direction of individualism and specialisation (though let us hope it fall short of industrialism). Nor, again, his primitive methods of government, whether they mean subservience to chieftainship or that even more stagnant condition of leaderless democracy.

Williams's dismissal of much of Papuan culture stemmed to a large degree from a belief which he held in the supreme importance of 'the individual'. 'Modern education' too, he believed, was 'in theory individualistic'. It recognises that each human being has his own potentialities'. The individual was the 'end' and culture merely a 'means' developed to make the most of his life in relation both to his environment and his fellows. In fact not all educationists of the time would have agreed with Williams. But believing it himself, Williams was hostile to any form of communalism, be it in economic, governmental or social sphere.

Once he had disposed of these aspects of Papuan life, it might be expected there would be little for him to 'allow to remain'. Not so; for Williams believed that it was at 'things that have a predominantly emotional value' that 'we should pause' and with which 'we should deal kindly, proceeding with caution'. Everything that had emotional value demanded - as he rather unfortunately phrased it - 'careful and sympathetic thought before we abolish it'. Especially

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44 Ibid., pp. 374 and 375.
46 Williams, *The Blending of Cultures* ..., pp. 30-33.
47 Austin, pp. 40-41.
48 Williams, 'The Blending of Native ...' p. 375.
those things possessing an aesthetic value were 'worth keeping'. And the survival of arts, crafts, architecture and, above all, the dances, 'some so full of spirit, some so full of dignity and restraint; and ... those ceremonies which, whatever their meaning, have evolved a form and sequence to which we cannot deny the name of art', should help more than anything else to keep alive the Papuan's 'pride in himself and his people'.

To best ensure this survival it was necessary to go beyond toleration, actively to encourage. His reference to the inadequacy of mere toleration was an implied criticism of both the Administration and the missions; and it was here that one of his 'differences' with official Papuan policy was located. He believed that positive actions should be taken to preserve Papuan culture. Specifically, he ventured 'it might first be made a prime object of education to promote the established arts and crafts [rather] than the substituting of new ones'; for these gifts and skills 'deserve their place - and a not inferior place - alongside technical education'. Ceremonies and dances should be retained. The missionaries, he asserted on the basis both of his field observations and his racial views, need not fear that encouragement would form a bulwark against Christianity; firstly, because the meanings of most ceremonies were not understood by the performers; secondly, because Papuans so easily held conflicting beliefs that it was quite conceivable that they might become religiously Christian while remaining artistically heathen.

Williams's assumption that Europeans with 'native welfare' at heart had a right to pass judgment on Papuan cultures was supported by his confidence that 'a sympathetic teacher could do much to keep alive all that is good in [native] customs'. And, doubtless with his missionary readers in mind, he remarked on one occasion: 'I trust always that [the teacher] will be liberal in his judgement of what is good'.

49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., p. 376.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Williams, Native Education ..., p. 20.
His fullest statement of the blending of cultures idea, and that destined to receive the greatest publicity and draw the widest comment, took the form of an entry for an essay competition aimed at encouraging the 'application' of anthropology to 'practical problems'. In his entry, *The Blending of Cultures: An Essay on the Aims of Native Education*, Williams argued against those who would claim that native cultures and societies should be left alone. He held that change had begun, its continuation was inevitable, and this inevitability alone was sufficient to justify any attempts to educate 'the native'; and further, much of 'native' culture 'admitted of or called for improvement'. And, presumably in anticipation of protests from Europeans in Papua, he was adamant that there were a number of 'good reasons' why the Papuan should be provided with the means of 'raising himself' to a new level. These included an altruistic one, of extending widely though 'judiciously' the scope of the Papuan's mental experience, by opening up to him aspects of the 'incomparably richer' European civilisation; a moral obligation, that of aiding 'the native' to adjust to the changed situation for which the European was responsible; and the reason of European self-interest, necessitating the development of 'mutual understanding' between the races in order to create a *modus vivendi*.

Williams argued too that education must have due regard to the society and culture in which the pupil was destined to live. It was, he believed, within the power of the educator in Papua to shape not the man for the society - as many contemporary educators would have it - but to influence instead the shape the 'new' culture was to assume; to fit the society for the man. It was necessary to change Papuan culture,

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54 Williams, 'Account of 1934 visit to England', extract from draft of Papua Annual Report, 1933-34, copy in 'Papuan Staff. Williams F.E.', Department of Territories Correspondence File, CAO CRS A452 - 59/5972; see also Williams 'Address to the Anthropological Society, Adelaide'.

55 Williams, *The Blending of Cultures ...*, p. 2.

56 Ibid., p. 3.

57 Ibid., p. 4; The most notable proponent of the 'education for life' approach was F.G. Peabody, with whose works Williams was familiar; Peabody's educational theories are further discussed below, Chapters V-VI.
he asserted, because it did not allow sufficiently for the development
of the individual personality and contained elements 'which entail
suffering and unhappiness'.\(^{58}\)

The essay competition also provided him with an opportunity
to publicise his arguments against Europeanisation; both the racial
one, and that which predicted the loss of much that was 'intrinsically
admirable in native culture'.\(^{59}\) Three 'processes' or 'tasks' were to
be entailed in bringing about the 'blending of cultures': through
'Maintenance' all that was good would be preserved and encouraged;
through 'Expurgation' the evil elements of the old culture and any
considered incompatible with the new, would be eliminated; and
through 'Expansion' positive contributions from European culture would
enrich the 'blend', particular caution being taken to adopt only
elements which could be comfortably incorporated with the old. The
creation of the 'blend' was to constitute 'the special work of
education'.\(^{60}\)

Although many contemporary educationists were keen to graft on
new elements, Williams believed that few took a similar attitude
towards the preservation of 'worthwhile' aspects of the original culture.
Here he clearly felt himself to be comparatively original in his
approach to 'Native Education'.\(^{61}\) In the process of 'Maintenance',
he stressed, mere neutrality was inadequate, positive encouragement
vital. Again the example of 'native art' was held up, as it had been
in his earlier papers, and dwelt upon as 'a good instance of a
department of native culture which is obviously worthwhile encouraging'.\(^{62}\)

His choice of example is highly significant. One is led to suspect
that, given his personal preferences regarding Papuan cultures and
societies in general, Williams might as well have said that 'art' –
taken in its broadest sense to include artifacts, handicrafts, dances,
ceremonies and music – was the\(^{62}\) only department worthy of encouragement.

\(^{58}\) Williams, *The Blending of Cultures* ..., pp. 30
and 33.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., p. 5.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 7.

\(^{61}\) Williams, *Practical Education* ....

\(^{62}\) Williams, *The Blending of Cultures* ..., p. 11.
And although he commented that 'one might speak at length of native political [and economic] institutions ... and the possibility of developing them and turning them to account' in the 'new' culture and society, he did not. He chose instead to voice yet again his plea for the concerted protection and fostering of Papuan ceremonies.63

His discussion of the second process, 'Expurgation', was largely an attack on the school of anthropological thought known as Functionalism, which is discussed further in a succeeding chapter.64 Because of his belief that cultural elements could be eliminated without damage to the overall culture, Williams had no compunction about recommending that those, such as sorcery, considered undesirable according to the value judgements of 'sympathetic Europeans', should be removed.65 It was mainly through education 'in the stricter, intellectual sense' that 'Expurgation' was to be achieved.66 Many undesirable customs, Williams believed, would yield to 'better knowledge', particularly to that of cause and effect.67 But the provision of sufficient 'substitutes' for those elements removed, he stressed, formed a vital auxiliary to 'Expurgation'.

In the final process, the 'Expansion' of Papuan cultures, he stipulated three major contributions: a reformed horticulture; a scholastic training, placing particular emphasis on the teaching of English; and, finally, Christianity, his views upon which have already been discussed. His educational ideas had been developed and presented to the Administration prior to their inclusion in The Blending of Cultures and their nature, more readily examined in these earlier reports, is discussed in the two following chapters.

WILLIAMS'S essay won the Wellcome Memorial Medal. The public reaction to it illustrates the contemporary standing of his educational views. Although he had expected to draw criticism from the Functionalists,

63 Ibid., p. 12.
64 See below, Chapter VIII.
66 Ibid., p. 16.
67 Ibid., pp. 16-17.
few of them seemed to find the essay worthy of comment. A notable exception was Reo Fortune whose views are discussed in a subsequent chapter. A German anthropologist working in Kenya, who was not a Functionalist, found Williams's analysis of the educational situation 'very much to the point' and was 'surprised to [learn] how similar the issues are in such different places as East Africa and the Pacific Islands'. It was, however, the theorists and more especially the practitioners of colonial administration who found most cause to comment upon his ideas. Some, such as Lucy Mair - a Functionalist who taught at the L.S.E., studied African and, after World War II, Papuan and New Guinean societies, and came to be regarded as an authority on matters of 'colonial administration' - merely wrote politely: 'I have read [your essay] with great interest'. But most were more enthusiastic. A New Guinea District Officer informed Williams that he had 'read it with a view to offering humble criticisms', but found himself to be 'in complete agreement with your opinions'. Yet he had to admit that Williams's theories were usually 'difficult to put into practice'; and he doubted that 'we know any better than natives' about agriculture.

The head of the Auckland Institute and Museum gently hinted that New Zealand had rather pre-empted him. Nonetheless, Williams's essay had been 'a great help to us in our consideration of the right treatment of the Maori people, who, while much more sophisticated and more readily amenable to civilization than the Papuans, have, however, passed through the stages which you so admirably describe'. The New Zealander had been 'much interested to see [Williams's] claim for the value of teaching English'. It was significant, he observed, that Sir Apirana Ngata, 'the leader of Maori thought', insisted his people must

68 Williams to A.P. Elkin, 8 September 1938, WP 5/1-5.
69 See below, Chapter VIII.
70 Günter [Daguer?] to Williams, 7 February 1936, WP 5/2-8.
72 K.W. [Bilston?], District Officer, Wewak, New Guinea, to Williams, 12 January 1936, WP 5/2-8.
learn to read and write English 'if they are going to make any progress under the European economic system'. Ngata's avowed policy was that the Maori people and culture must fuse with the European and that the best of Maori arts, crafts and customs should be 'preserved for the joint culture'. If Williams were familiar with the New Zealand situation at this stage, he had certainly made no public reference to the fact; it is improbable that it influenced his own cultural or educational ideas. Equally, if the New Zealander had been more familiar with the Papuan situation, it is unlikely he would have detected such marked similarities between it and that of his own country. For Ngata's 'plans' entailed the Europeans' adoption of some aspects of 'native' culture; Williams's certainly did not.

Praise came too from Margaret Read, another anthropologist of African experience, who was at the time Acting Head of the Colonial Department in the Institute of Education at the University of London. She had shown the essay to H.S. Scott, a former Director of Education in Kenya who was then on the Advisory Committee of Education at the British Colonial Office; Scott was 'so much interested in it', that he called for 'a copy [to be] put into the hands of every cadet for [British] government service, whether for administration or education' and every student of 'this Colonial Department'.

Williams was greatly satisfied to know that Lord Onslow, who had been Chairman of the Joint Committee of both Houses of British Parliament on East Africa, and whose Presidential Address Williams had heard at an anthropological conference during one of his rare trips to London, was able 'out of [his] wide experience' to entirely agree 'with what I have written from a much narrower standpoint'. And he

73 [The Curator?], Auckland Institute and Museum, to Williams, 4 November 1935, WP 5/2-20/41.
75 Dr Margaret Reid to Williams, 11 July 1940, WP 5/2-8.
76 Ibid. See also Kuper, pp. 131 and 133.
77 Williams to Lord Onslow, 5 March 1936, WP 5/2-8; Lord Onslow to Williams, 3 December 1935, ibid.
must have been quietly flattered by the comments of Sir Hesketh Bell, who had been a colonial administrator in the Far East and had written at some length upon the subject. 'That is an extraordinarily interesting pamphlet of yours', Bell told him, 'I think it masterly in its common sense and balance. It makes me think you ought to be a governor'.

To the more conservative of his commentators, especially to the older members of the 'establishment' of colonial administration, Williams's cultural and educational ideas were eminently acceptable.

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78 Sir Hesketh Bell to Williams, 15 December 1935, WP, 5/2-8.
CHAPTER V

Intellectual Education:
'Ve must disabuse their minds'

Native Education is something more than a mere department of Native Policy. Viewed in the wider sense it is no detached subject, but rather permeates the whole problem of administration. Indeed, if we allow a sufficiently wide meaning to the term, it appears that education is the very essence of native administration ... it may almost be said that the aims of native education and of native policy are one and the same.

F.E. Williams

Secondary education does not as yet exist for the Papuan, and, at the risk of appearing reactionary I hope that it will not be introduced for another generation at least.

J.H.P. Murray (1938)

AN opportunity arose for Williams to air his opinions to Murray on the nature and system of scholastic education being provided for Papuans, in 1925. By then he had been in the Territory for slightly more than two years, observed mission schools in operation and experienced some contact with their products. 'The only real argument for the A.B.C. and figuring on slates which the mission schools spend their time on', he asserted, 'is that of mental discipline.' He supposed that 'not 1% of the pupils ... learns to read and write to any practical advantage'; consequently, much of the time 'given to slate-scratching' was 'time wasted'. The Papuan he told Murray, required instruction rather than mental discipline and needed to acquire 'more correct notions of cause and effects. Instruction was particularly necessary if the people were ever, as both Williams and Murray believed they should, to escape from magic; but he supposed that 'was a long way off'. What the school children needed were Kindergarten methods, general information classes and 'from the beginning, English'. Why the missions

2 Murray to Minister, 11 March 1938, CAO CRS G69-27/5.
3 Williams to Murray, 27 April 1925, CAO CRS G69-16/42.
were so reluctant to teach the language perplexed and annoyed
Williams, for once a common language was established, he predicted,
'the education of the natives [would] proceed by leaps and bounds'.

When, having furthered his own observations and enquiries in
Papua and read generally on education—including the reports of two
recent commissions called to investigate East African education, the
Ormsby-Core (or East Africa) Commission and the Pelps-Stokes Commission—
Williams presented the Administration with his report on intellectual
education, one of his central themes was the need to give priority to
the teaching of English. He was in complete agreement with the Papuan
Government on the choice of English as the most suitable medium of
instruction, and against the African commissions on the desirability
of using the vernacular or a lingua franca in the initial years of
teaching. He argued that there was no intention in Papua of wiping out
the local vernaculars and thus depriving Papuans culturally in any way,
as the African commissions prophesised generally would result; although,
incidentally, he claimed on the basis of his own field observations
that there was little or no cultural content or importance in Papuan
vernaculars in any case. The question did not arise, because Papuans
were to become bilingual. As the two great advantages of employing
English as the language of instruction he listed here the access it would
give Papuans to literature and the intercourse it would facilitate
between them and Europeans. And, probably more hopefully than naively,
he pictured 'every European' becoming 'a teacher' to the Papuan once
communication became universal. Such intercourse would 'immensely
increase the native's intellectual benefits. Once given such facility
the educative stream will be wider, faster, and by no means shallower'.

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4 Ibid.
5 Williams, Native Education: The Language of Instruction
and Intellectual Education, Papua Anthropology Report
No. 9, (Port Moresby, 1928). pp. 1-12; see also
Williams, The Blending of Cultures ..., pp. 23-25.
6 Williams, Native Education ..., p. 5.
7 See also Williams, The Blending of Cultures ..., 
pp. 24-25.
8 Williams, Native Education ..., p. 9.
9 Ibid., p. 10.
The manner in which English was to be taught to Papuans particularly concerned Williams. He had no doubt that many of the present mission teachers 'lacked enthusiasm'; and in the case of those who upheld the vernacular, he found this unsurprising. He thought too that they did not begin teaching English early enough; and were mistaken in treating it as one subject on a par with all others in their curriculum. He might have added that the majority of linguistic teaching performed by Papua's missionaries took the form of rote learning. Instead, Williams urged that English should be taught from the earliest stage of formal education, exclusive of all other languages, and should rank above every other subject. It should, indeed, be the medium through which Papuans were taught. In so far as its use was unavoidable, a vernacular should only be used to assist in the teaching of English and should be abandoned as soon as possible. Ideally, English was to be taught to Papuan children by conversational methods in classes of the Kindergarten style.

While being well aware that the two necessarily overlapped, Williams examined the more general question of intellectual education - he claimed for purposes of convenience - as separate from 'overall education'. He believed that it neither received nor deserved 'the same disproportionate attention that was formerly given it', and observed that 'the modern view regarding 'native education' seemed to be sheering off the old literary and clerical ideals towards 'something more practical'. His perception of this contemporary trend was correct, though its extent and emphases elsewhere varied, and were by no means everywhere the same as he would have them in Papua. Despite the trend, 'progressive educationalists' would not, in Williams's view,

10 Ibid.
11 Williams, Native Education ..., p. 11.
12 Ibid.
13 Williams, Native Education ..; see also Williams, The Blending of Cultures ..., pp. 16-21.
14 Williams, Native Education ...
wish to sacrifice 'old-fashioned schooling' completely for the new 'practical ideal'. The definite aim of literacy was to be kept in mind.  

He dealt with intellectual education under the two headings of 'training' and 'teaching', the former having regard to the functions of the mind in acquiring knowledge and the latter to the knowledge itself. In the case of 'training' he stressed the need to develop certain specific qualities of mind by which the process of 'getting, storing and using knowledge' would be best facilitated. Among these were observation, accuracy, curiosity, concentration, memory and reasoning. In each of these regions Williams found fault with the Papuan. Quick to observe details in nature, he remained oblivious to the oddness of socks. He was inaccurate in his measurement of distance, size and time; lacked curiosity - the 'philosophers' discontent' which was 'essential to progress'; was unable to concentrate; and, in the matter of reasoning, where Williams located 'the real problem', was 'constantly on the wrong track'. He was suggestible, attributed qualities and powers which they did not possess to inanimate objects; his mind was swayed by anything emotionally appealing; he constantly argued by false analogy, and held a body of beliefs entirely on the authority of the past. All of this, Williams asserted, was inconsistent with 'progress' and the new life of the Papuan into which European influence had brought, and was continuing to bring, change. 

In his report on the 'magic' of the Orokaiva he argued that 'the only method' by which the belief and the fear of magic could be successfully eradicated, was 'education'. And 'however slow and laborious' this was, it was 'none the less sure'. Through education, the Papuan could 'become increasingly familiar with causes and effects as we see them' so that 'we may expect him little by little to find out and correct the falsity of his own ideas'. Similarly, years later, when

16 Williams, *Native Education* ..., p. 12.
17 Ibid., p. 12.
18 Ibid., p. 16.
19 Ibid.
he observed that the Kwato Missionaries were telling their converts to 'give up' sorcery, he remarked: 'little good is done by telling the people to refrain from practising sorcery. They continue to believe in it. The only thing is to disabuse their minds'.  

Refusing to suggest actual educational methods, on the ground that he was not an educationalist, Williams examined each of the areas in which he found Papuans wanting, offering 'general guidelines' for their development. The powers of observation, for example, might be improved by 'observation lessons and tests'. As for 'accuracy', much improvement would be wrought by 'continual insistence on careful statement and on a strict regard for measurement in observation'. This he saw as one way in which the Papuan's 'regard to truth in itself' might be furthered. But of even more importance, the people had to be brought to a greater familiarity with 'things as we see them' and a 'keener observation' of causes and effects 'as we can show them to him'. These were the best means, tardy as they were, by which Papuans could finally 'rise superior to the old hangers-on, magic and superstition'. Constant exercise in elementary logic through conversational classes handling everyday problems, aimed at exposing 'false' and promoting 'true' thinking, and the teaching of natural sciences - particularly zoology and botany - with emphasis on field study, were among the main areas in which the proposed training could best be carried out. But, formal lessons aside, it was mainly through daily intercourse with minds, and reading of works produced by minds, of better education than their own, that young Papuans would 'acquire the powers of logical thought'. And because the European view of things, though also imperfect, was 'less dim and distorted' than that of the 'native', Williams believed Europeans should welcome the possibility of intercourse and the opportunity to act as the Papuan's 'teacher'.

22 Williams, Native Education ..., p. 13.
23 Ibid., p. 14.
24 Ibid., p. 18.
25 Ibid., pp. 16-17.
26 Ibid., p. 17.
In the actual 'teaching', he could not over-emphasise the necessity for the imparted knowledge to be readily assimilable; such that would be capable of interpretation in the light of previous experience. It was vital that instruction received by the Papuan have 'some point of contact with his life', and that it encompass his past and present. But, at the same time, there was a need for the education to be progressive enough to 'fit' the Papuan for 'those changes in [his] manner of life which European contact must bring about'.

There was a glaring lack of Papuan-oriented reading matter. The Bible was a 'most unsuitable book for native reading' with its archaic language and mass of details about countries and civilizations remote from the Papuan's understanding. And it was no vehicle for imparting useful knowledge. Prior to publication, Williams had read and discussed with the Reverend W.J.V. Saville of the L.M.S., the missionary's Papuan Reader. Designed for school pupils and written in English, the Reader included items about nature and art, both Papuan in particular; the aims and achievements of Europeans in the Territory; and sport. Williams professed himself considerably indebted to Saville's work and called for more like it. But the Papuan Reader was written with school children in mind and Williams wanted reading matter for Papuans beyond school age. His solution was a newspaper.

According to his plan, the newspaper was to be printed in English and its scope to be that which Williams had outlined as indicating 'the proper content of native education'. It would be 'primarily an educative organ', but one which presented education 'in a guise that would attract its readers'. For those adult Papuans who had learnt English, it would become a means of continuous, voluntary self-education. It would purvey information specifically adapted to Papuan life and permit of 'a normal and useful advance in education'. The writing style would have to be of the simplest and most straightforward nature. An

27 Ibid., p. 18.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 19.
30 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
31 Ibid., pp. 22-25.
32 Ibid.
appropriate title, the Papuan Villager, had been suggested by the Government Printer, W.A. Bock, who was particularly interested in Williams's proposal.

THE Papuan Villager did eventuate - and Williams, 'finding that the editorship devolve[d] upon me ... rather bless[ed] the day I thought of it'. 33 It appeared first in 1929 and continued monthly for thirteen years. In his new capacity of Editor he received an additional salary which, by the time of the final issue, amounted to £100 per annum. He was assisted by Bock and during his own occasional absences from Papua, by the Assistant Editor, Mr Armit, Chief Clerk of the Lands and later the Government Secretary's Department. 34

Murray was quite enthusiastic about the paper. After all, he informed the Prime Minister of Australia, although the idea in the particular instance had been Williams's, it concerned a gap which he himself had long recognized the need to fill. He had previously only been prevented from doing so, he said, by the great difficulty of finding an editor. The paper would be 'of great value as an educational influence'. 35 And further, Murray ventured in his Annual Report of the same year, it might serve to develop a feeling of national pride amongst Papuans - a phenomenon which he believed he had seen manifested for the first time at a recent inter-racial cricket match, where he felt Papuan spectators had identified with the Papuan Kwato team. 36

The Villager was notable for the fact that it was 'not merely about Papuans, it includes Papuans'; this 'unusual' attitude was first detectable in the extensive use of individuals' names. 37 But it was Williams and a few enthusiastic government officers and missionaries

33 Williams to F. Wylie, 1 February 1929, in file of F.E. Williams, Rhodes House.
34 Papuan Villager, Vol. 9, No. 4, April 1937.
35 Murray to Prime Minister, 7 May 1929, CAO CRS A518 A850/1/5.
who contributed most material to the paper. Seldom more than a quarter of its eight sides was ever contributed by Papuans, and this was usually filled by no more than two 'essays'. Prominent among Papuan contributors were Williams's own clerk, his messenger and the clerk of the Government Printer. Not surprisingly, Papuan contributors were for the most part mission pupils and employees, and employees of government officials; and the same people often submitted several contributions.

Essay competitions were conducted regularly, prizes being awarded to successful entrants. But rarely were more than six or seven entries received and Williams often expressed himself disappointed at the response. 'The Editor feels wild', he wrote on one occasion, 'because so few entered for the competition.' Chiding readers, in another instance, for the lack of response, and calling for an improvement in the number of entries for future contests, he told them:

You natives ought to know a lot about the animals that live in your own country. The white people who read the Papuan Villager will expect to hear something good from you. This time you can teach the white man something if you try. Just show him what you can do.

Anything closer to a stern but benevolent father attempting to encourage a slightly backward, recalcitrant child, would be difficult to imagine.

Many contributions were legends or myths, related to contributors by their elders, and not, as Williams would have preferred them, original essays on personal experiences and contemporary events. It was merely incidental to his scheme that a valuable collection of Papuan folk material was amassed. The most enthusiastic original contributions usually concerned sporting events, notably cricket matches that had taken place on mission stations. A small section on 'District News' generally amounted to the same three or four Papuan 'correspondents', selected by Williams or administrative officers, reporting repeatedly;

38 Williams, *Papuan Villager* (Hereafter referred to as *PV*), Vol. 8, No. 9, September 1936, p.65.
it, too, frequently contained sporting news and scores.

Individual sales of the *Villager* were never high. In the first year of publication slightly over one hundred annual subscriptions were purchased by Papuans at a cost of two shillings per annum. By 1935 there were only forty subscribers and, contrary to the original plan, many readers were mission school pupils rather than adult Papuans; almost five hundred copies were distributed each month among the schools. There were also a number of European readers, out of who knows what interest? The low circulation was attributed in part, in the Port Moresby area, to 'Motu commercialism' which inclined readers to prefer to borrow 'a friend's copy' rather than purchase their own. But it also seems possible that the paper was not particularly interesting to Papuans. This was the impression gained by an anthropological observer, Camilla H. Wedgewood, on discussing the *Villager* with Papuans not long after it ceased publication. In an attempt to boost subscriptions, Williams offered a free pocket knife to anyone who could persuade two friends to subscribe; but with little success. As for a rosy prospect he had seen of deriving financial support from advertisements, only one or two ever appeared in the *Papuan Villager*, though one did so repeatedly: J.R. Clay and Co., Ltd., Buyers of Trochus and Beche-de-mer, advertised a 25,000 word Standard Pocket Dictionary costing 1/- per copy. The *Papuan Villager* included articles on matters and events Papuan, European and international. Reminding his flagging readers on one occasion of the many attractions it offered, Williams pointed among other highlights to interesting articles about 'marvellous things that the white men are doing'. Prominent among these, judging by the

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42 Murray to Prime Minister, 7 May 1929, CAO CRS A 518 A850/1/5.
44 See, for example, *PV*, Vol. 7, No. 5, May 1935, p. 40; see also *PV*, passim.
seldom-changing nature of the paper's contents over the years, were considered aeronautical exploits and the outings and celebrations of the Royal Family.

Propaganda aimed at arousing 'Imperial loyalty' was, however, far outweighed by that intended to promote the Administration's aims. Friendly 'words of warning' appeared in the Villager from time to time, sometimes in undisguised form and at others in that of moral tales. Murder was deprecated. 'We don't want any more killing' Williams told readers, sounding this time more like a public school prefect than a scolding parent. 'The men who go round killing people are a beastly nuisance, and we put them in gaol'. And what was more, 'murderers are always caught in Papua'. An item on how to behave in gaol was published in one issue. 'Reminders' to clean up litter, not to fight at cricket matches, not to steal and not to eat other people's cats, dotted the newspaper's pages. What a good thing it was to have large families was either the theme or the moral of a number of stories. Health, and village and personal hygiene featured frequently and Williams asked Strong to contribute suitable articles. The doctor did so, though he did not think Papuans were capable of understanding them. Missionaries might however, he thought, find them useful for teaching purposes.

There were constant calls too, for Papuans to improve their command of English. 'Though there are many who can read English',


47 PV, Vol. 8, No. 5, May 1936, pp. 34-35; see also ibid., 'Editorial', Vol. 8, No. 8, August 1936, pp. 57-58.


50 See, for example, PV, Vol. 9, No. 4, April 1937, p. 28.

51 W.M. Strong, C.M.O., to G.S., 25 June 1931, copy CAO CRS A518 L840/1/5.
Williams told his readers after seven years of the paper's publication, 'there are not many who want to'.\(^{52}\) After grappling with this 'problem', he concluded that:

perhaps they don't read well enough and find it too much like hard work. But those who try their best and have practice at school will find that reading becomes easy in the long run; and then they will like it'.\(^{53}\)

In a later issue he tried a different approach to the matter, telling readers that once they read English they could 'do useful work for the white man. You can work together with him, and this will help you to get a good job'.\(^{54}\) Papuans did not learn English in order to talk to the people of their own village, but 'so that you can talk to the whiteman'. This, Williams assured them, was 'very important. We want the white man and the native to be friendly towards each other and to help each other'.\(^{55}\) Further to facilitate this desired peaceful co-existence, hints on how to behave towards Europeans often crept, in humorous guise, into articles on quite unrelated subjects. An item on 'Funny Names' used by 'natives' of the Gulf of Carpentaria in Australia, for example, carried the message: 'you may be certain of one thing. No white woman would ever call her baby "Cockroach". If she ever hears you call it "Cockroach", look out!'.\(^{56}\)

But, above all other propaganda, there was a preponderance of Williams's own brand of anti-Europeanisation and a constant driving-home of his 'blending of cultures' ideal. And throughout the newspaper generally went the heavily patronising tone of its Editor as time and time again he told Papuans how 'we' wanted them to be. Overall, the Villager was composed of an incongruous mixture of items aimed on the one hand at boosting the 'confidence' and 'pride' of the Papuan in himself, while directed on the other at 'warning him off' attempting to

\(^{53}\) Ibid.; my emphasis.
\(^{54}\) Williams, \textit{PV}, Vol. 8, No. 5, May 1936, p. 33.
\(^{55}\) Ibid.; see also \textit{PV}, Vol. 1, No. 1, February 1929, p. 1.
\(^{56}\) \textit{PV}, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 1935; my emphasis.
be like the European. Reduced to its essence, what Williams was telling Papuans through the pages of 'their newspaper' was:

The white men know far more than you do. They make and do a lot of things that are quite beyond you. You cannot be the same as the white men; and there is no reason why you should ... you can never be quite the same as the white man; and you will only look silly if you try to be. When we see a native in European clothes we usually laugh at him.\textsuperscript{57}

He apparently did not perceive any contradiction between such statements as this and his professed aim of boosting the confidence of the Papuan.

On the other hand there were things Europeans did that Papuans might also do. For example, they might learn 'to work hard and save money', read and do arithmetic, look after health and sickness, learn to use gardening tools, buy 'all sorts of useful things' in the stores, and 'buy and sell and be "business-like"'.\textsuperscript{58} They might even acquire and drive motor vehicles.\textsuperscript{59}

In his attempts to increase Papuan self-esteem he often reminded them that they had 'some good customs' of their own.\textsuperscript{60} He also pointed encouragingly to examples of other 'native races' or their individual representatives. Most of the West Indian cricketers were 'dark men' and they knew a lot about good cricket.\textsuperscript{61} Jesse Owens, the fastest runner at the Olympic Games, was a 'black man'.\textsuperscript{62} And some of the delegates at a conference the Editor had attended were black and, what was more, spoke English very well.\textsuperscript{63} He drew attention, too, to the existence of a newspaper for Africans entitled \textit{Listen: News From Far and Near} and suggested a letter-writing competition, the winning entry to be sent to the African paper for publication.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{57} Williams, \textit{PV}, Vol. 4, No.1, January 1932, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{58} \textit{PV}, Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{59} \textit{PV}, Vol. 7, No. 10, October 1935.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Williams, \textit{PV}, Vol. 4, No. 1, January 1932, p. 1. My emphasis.
\item \textsuperscript{61} \textit{PV}, Vol. 7, No. 3, March 1935, p. 18.
\item \textsuperscript{62} \textit{PV}, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 1937, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{63} \textit{PV}, Vol. 8, No. 9, September 1936, p. 66.
\end{itemize}
Ironically the sole and winning entry was never despatched on the grounds that its writer was 'not a full Papuan'.

The propaganda channelled by both Williams and the Administration through the *Papuan Villager* had some influence. Letters and essays arrived which were near-perfect echoes of the voice of Government or of the Government Anthropologist. A Papuan clerk explained the Native Taxation system; and Papuan constables submitted their reflections on how good it was to read English and be policemen. Essays on such topics as hygiene and village-care showed that contributors knew the line expected of them on these matters. And when the Second World War was under way one contributor wrote: 'We Papuans shall be glad if our old Empire wins the war'.

The propaganda campaign was not entirely successful from Williams's point of view though. Entries for a competition on the question of the Papuan wearing of European clothes brought answers indicating that contributors believed their own ways to be unacceptable and those of the European, preferable. But although the paper's influence on some Papuans - be it for good or bad - was marked, these *evolutions* were probably very few. It is as difficult to measure its influence upon readers, other than its few regular contributors, as it is to assess their numbers.

APART from the concrete result of the *Papuan Villager*'s being printed, the influence of Williams's ideas on intellectual education and the language of instruction is not easy to detect, far less evaluate. On Papuans it was probably almost non-existent. His recommendations were generally philosophical, concerned with approach rather than practical

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65 *PV*, Vol. 9, No. 12, December 1937, p. 92; ibid., Vol. 8, No. 5, May 1936, pp. 38-39; see also ibid., Vol. 8, No. 4, April 1936, p. 32.
66 Peter Ifogome, Bosmana, to Editor, *PV*, 1941, in WP 5/3-26.
67 Contributions to the *Papuan Villager*, 1941, in WP 5/3-26.
questions of educational method or resources. And the philosophy had first to influence the Administration or the missions before any effect percolated to Papuans. The very nature of Williams's views made it easier for both institutions largely to ignore them; the Government, because any form of involvement in education implied financial expense and because Williams and Murray both personally believed that Papuans, and the 'racial stability' of the Territory, would be better served if Papuans did not receive much scholastic education; and the Missions, because more than an iota of intellectual education was superfluous and the vernacular was an adequate medium for the production of 'good Christians', their over-riding aim. The missions did not alter their teaching methods to any noticeable extent in accordance with Williams's few practical suggestions.

Williams implicitly accepted most of the limitations imposed on the development of Papuan education. He usually aimed his criticism at the missions, rather than questioning either the Papuan or Australian Governments' priorities in the allocation of resources. Not believing in the desirability of more than a modicum of scholastic education for most Papuans, he reported on their intellectual education primarily as an academic exercise. He had much more to say about practical education, for it was with specific aspects of this for Papuans that his personal preferences lay.
A Hornbill *Eharo* sketched by F.E. Williams
CHAPTER VI

Practical Education: 'The Hammer and the Hoe'

It is surely much to be regretted that in the past this practical training has been largely neglected in favour of a traditional education, less suited to natives than to Europeans.

F.E. Williams

Perhaps, then, for those who have never turned the soil with anything save a digging stick, the iron hoe will be an adequate beginning (the single-furrow hand-plough being altogether too revolutionary).

F.E. Williams

PRACTICAL education, particularly technical training, expanded in Papua during the 1920s largely as a result of subsidies to mission schools from the Native Education Fund. The Australian Government's attitude to its Territories had remained static. At the time Williams was investigating questions of education in Papua, an Imperial Education Conference with a special section devoted to education in tropical countries was being organised in England. The Australian Government declined to send delegates from either Papua or New Guinea.

Despite a considerable personal interest in technical education, Murray himself became increasingly suspicious about the missions' work in the field; he received complaints, too, from European residents that instead of technical trainees going out to work for private enterprise or government, or returning to their villages, the majority were remaining to work for the missions. In 1923 he


2 Williams, Ibid., p. 22.

3 Minute by Secretary of Prime Minister's Department, No. 27/969, 27 January 1927, CAO CRS Al-28/3143.

promulgated new regulations to 'tighten up' the conditions of subsidies for such training. In the same year he announced a modification of his previous view that technical education was of foremost importance to Papuans. Murray purported that, because of the depopulation occurring in some areas of the Territory, Papuan interests would be better served by agricultural education. At one point he asked the missions to encourage pupils to leave the stations on completion of training. But when the missions produced a small number of trainees for Administration employment, the Government found itself unable to place them. A report called for from an officer of the Public Works Department as late as 1932, indicated that there were still fewer employment opportunities than technical trainees available in Papua.

As the Depression progressed, the amount of revenue entering the Native Taxation Fund threatened to diminish, and a decline to take place in 'native education'. Finally, in 1937, the Papuan Government stopped part of the technical education grant to missions. This, however, was done at the bidding of H.W. Champion the Government Secretary and Treasurer, during one of Murray's short absences from Papua. Champion believed the money would be better spent on medical attention for Papuans. Murray was displeased with the decision but allowed it to stand.

In 1924 Murray had arranged an inspection of the mission schools by Colonel Victor Green of the New South Wales Department of Education whom he also asked for advice on the establishment of a government technical school. Green reported that the missions were

5 Murray to Gilbert Murray, 17 November 1923, MFP 565/413; Territory of Papua Government Gazette, Statutory Rules, No. 18 of 1923, Vol. 18, No. 16, p. 207.


7 Austin, pp. 16-18.

8 Murray to Prime Minister, 1 June 1932, CAO CRS A518 D923/1; Murray, Papua Annual Report, 1932-33, p. 27.

9 G.S. to Murray, 12 November 1936, CAO CRS A518 D9231; Murray to Minister, 14 November 1936, Ibid.

too concerned with 'production' in their technical courses and not enough with education. He recommended a curriculum similar to those of technical schools in his own state, but with emphasis on technical skills applicable to Papuan needs; and emphasised the necessity to teach students to understand how and why things operated, not merely how to make them do so. On reading the Colonel's report, the missionaries, in their turn, declared that the type of education Green recommended was too theoretical and bore little applicability to the Papuan situation. As one writer has pointed out, the influence of the report on mission schools was minimal, as was its effect on improving government policy towards technical education. Nonetheless, Murray was at pains to let the public know he had initiated the enquiry. The one notable effect which Green's report did have, by indicating the financial outlay that would be required, was to convince Murray he must 'postpone indefinitely' the establishment of the Government technical school for which he had been setting aside a proportion of the Native Education Fund.

HAVING disposed for the time being of intellectual education and the language of instruction, it then became Williams's turn, in 1929, to present a report on practical education. After investigating depopulation on Suau Island he had concluded that 'the most promising remedy for Depopulation lies in the reform of native horticulture'. His practical education report centred on this subject.

Far more concerned, as he was, with improving the Papuan's living standard and nutritional level than with 'educating' him, Williams made his report in large part merely an expansion of suggestions in an earlier one on 'The Garden Culture of the Orokaiva'.

11 Austin, p.13.
13 Ibid.
14 Williams, Practical Education and the Reform of Native Horticulture, Territory of Papua Anthropological Report No. 14, (Port Moresby, 1933); Williams, Population and Education in Papua, (1933) p. iii.
15 This earlier report had been published the previous year as part of Williams's first Oxford University Press book, Orokaiva Magic.
In typical fashion, he prefaced it by describing the modern trend in 'native education' as 'a saner attempt to educate in accordance with the necessities of economics', and to give native pupils a training which would be 'more useful to themselves'; he made no mention on this occasion of 'the necessities of race'. He saw the new trend as a vast improvement upon 'the previous flooding of a small employment market with clerks,' which he had observed in Papua, 'who sometimes had a cocksure pride in their new learning and a rather disloyal contempt for their rustic brothers'. Most educationists, Williams noted, felt emphasis should be laid on scholastic and practical education. A few however, among whom he counted himself, believed in greater stress on the practical. Papuans would in the main, and in Williams's view should, remain cultivators; it followed that their education should fit them for this task and not for that of the clerk.

He was influenced to a marked extent by the views of F.G. Peabody, founder of the Hampton Institute in Virginia, U.S.A., where he applied his 'education for life' theory in the belief that needle, broom and hammer should be allies of scholastic education. With regard to intellectual education Williams had been at variance with Peabody's views, claiming that in the Papuan situation at least, the culture should be altered to fit the man rather than the reverse; in the case of practical education, he found basis for agreement. For Williams had no doubt that there was room for improvement in almost every practical aspect of Papuan life. Nonetheless, unlike the American educationalist who placed great emphasis on 'character building', he believed the prime aim of practical education should be a materialistic one - it should equip pupils to 'do' rather than to 'be' something, with a view to improving their living standards through their own efforts. The moral side, Williams believed, could be left to take care of itself.

16 Williams, Practical Education ... pp. 1-2.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., pp. 10-11.
20 F.G. Peabody, Education for Life, p. 117, cited by Williams, Practical Education ..., p. 3.
21 Williams, Practical Education ..., p. 8.
His own view he judged, in the Papuan situation, to be more sensible and less patronizing than Peabody's.

As with intellectual training, Williams wished to realize 'a wholesome and vigorous blend of cultures which will remain to the end distinctively Papuan'. The natural development of the practical aspects of 'native' culture was to be aimed at, but with an addition of new, though not necessarily European, elements. These would act as an 'infusion of power' resulting in a quickening of the advance of Papuans 'along natural lines'.

Outlining the nature of the reforms he thought fitting not only in horticultural but in a number of other practical areas of Papuan life, Williams again stressed the vital necessity for 'new' elements to bear a genuine relationship to Papuan life: improve first what already existed - be it an agricultural technique, a style of art or craft, or a method of cooking - only then should attempts be made to introduce new elements; and these should 'fit' with those already existent and be harmonious with the Papuan's life and environment.

The assessment of the suitability of additional practical elements, was to be made on the basis of appropriate examinations in search of 'inspiration and guidance', of other cultures by understanding Europeans. But it was not the practices of Europeans that were to be examined, rather those of 'other native races', 'slightly more advanced' than Papuans. The agricultural methods of the Indian peasant with his simple manual plough, for example, might provide useful suggestions for Papuan advances, although not perhaps immediately; a more suitable initial step would be from the digging stick to the hoe. Maize, millet and pulses - more nutritional and easier to store for long periods than present Papuan crops - should be introduced; and more permanent settlement result, with a richer social life.
Williams believed that Papuan horticulture might be improved in many areas. It lacked tools; it was conducted in an untidy fashion, plots being haphazardly located; and there were no effective systems of either co-operation or division of tasks. Still more disastrously, there was no rotation of crops; instead, a destructive rotation of areas of land had led in some regions to deforestation and to instability in village existence. All of these faults were to be rectified. He favoured the development of small gardens in preference to the Administration's rather grandiose Native Plantations Scheme which he saw in unsuccessful operation in the Gulf District. The goal of prosperity could be approached 'as surely though the slow agency of the individual peasant as through a direct attempt at the communal plantation'. The encouragement of individual responsibility in the development of small plots, and of competition between the small-holders, would, he thought, produce a marked advance on present Papuan agriculture; and it would not conflict with custom because, although Williams recognised that the laws of Papuan land-ownership varied, he believed that generally the individual or family owned the produce of the land it cultivated. Williams's perceptions of land ownership are discussed in a later chapter and it is sufficient to observe here that they were rather over simplified.

The Papuan horticulturalist, he insisted, should be encouraged to adopt orderliness, system and neatness into his garden design. Definite allocation of plots should be made to individuals; gardeners must be trained to fix their cultivation to one spot; and the co-

26 Ibid., p. 18; see also J.D. Legge, Australian Colonial Policy: A Survey of Native Administration and European Development in Papua, (Sydney, 1956) pp. 163, 171-7, 215-16.
27 Ibid., p. 13.
28 Ibid., p. 32.
operation of a number of people with each individual - in the form of 'working bees' - should be encouraged for major tasks. In addition, a competitive spirit should be cultivated amongst gardeners.

Williams's ideas on agriculture were not entirely his own, nor did he claim them to be. He read fairly widely on the subject and gathered his recommendations partly from the writings of a number of experts, including J.C. Willis, C.R. Enock, H. Roquette and H. Ling-Roth. He recommended those aspects of their ideas considered applicable to the Papuan situation, in combination with some of his own.

He was not solely concerned with horticulture. Williams believed, too, that there was an urgent need for more sophisticated methods of food preservation - such as the sun-drying of sago - to be introduced, and for encouragement in the cooking and consumption of poultry. The conjured vision of the literate Papuan housewife, busily preparing the family's Sunday roast chicken to the specifications of the Government Anthropologist's proposed Tropical Cookbook, would no doubt have amused some, and annoyed other European residents. But it reflected Williams's genuine though paternalistic interest in the human welfare of Papuans; at the same time it indicated that he did believe Papuans had some developmental potential.

Among other aspects of the Papuan way of life which might

30 Willis had worked in Ceylon, Malaya and Africa, and in his writings on tropical agriculture in Africa he advocated education of a type similar, in some respects, to that recommended by Williams. He had, for example, suggested 'School Gardens', as a means of educating 'the peasant' in horticulture. Unlike Williams, however, Willis recommended that teaching be conducted in the vernacular. (J.C. Willis. Agriculture in the Tropics: An Elementary Treatise, (Great Britain, 1909). Enock had examined and written upon the possibilities of co-operation between black and white men as partners in the production of goods. C.R. Enock, The Tropics, (Great Britain, 1915); The prospects of developing the simple plough had been investigated by Roquette, and Ling-Roth had written generally about agricultural origins and methods. H. Ling Roth, 'On the Origin of Agriculture', Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 16, (1887), pp. 102-136.

31 Williams, Practical Education ...
be improved were housing and furnishing. But here, as elsewhere, the general pattern was to be retained and only such modifications as would be necessary for health reasons, and likely to encourage comfort, made; apart, that was, from an improvement in 'tidyness', an area in which Williams found Papuans rather lax. It would be 'a good thing' if they were taught to build shelves and cupboards in their houses.

The question of which 'luxury items' Papuans should be 'allowed' to utilise in their daily lives had also to be considered. Despite a disagreement with those who thought 'natives' should have none at all, Williams believed Europeans should 'only bring to the natives' attention those [luxuries] we think suitable'. Some clothes and cheap ornaments, and 'many things manufactured by Europeans', could lead to 'an easier and more interesting life' for Papuans; they might be of great benefit if they came to be regarded as 'indispensable' and were purchased regularly. Guns, liquor and a long list of further items, on the other hand, should definitely not be permitted; and 'useless', extravagant or 'incongruous' items were to be most strongly discouraged.

The health of Papuans received particular attention in his programme of practical education reform. He offered suggestions for the improvement of general village hygiene and sanitation, and for basic medical and surgical training of villagers. Personal hygiene should be cultivated, but where possible not at the expense of traditional modes of adornment such as charcoal or oil-anointing, or elaborate though unclean hair-dos. In cases like this when, as it appeared to Williams, the aesthetic aspects of Papuan life could be readily divorced from most others, his liberalism came to the fore. He was adamant that Europeans had no right to object to tattooing and ear-piercing. The only argument against these, he declared, was prejudice. And such customs should be particularly allowed to remain because of the contribution they made 'to the native's sense of individuality and what is all important, his pride of race and tribe'.

32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., p. 50.
HOW pride of race would have emerged from Williams's concurrent scheme for a series of 'Garden Boarding Schools' is not clear. Their object, though, was plain enough - to board fourteen and fifteen year-old boys and girls for two years while they learned all these improved agricultural methods, nutritional cooking techniques, and a modicum of English; and to send the enlightened and procreating youngsters home to raise village standards of living. The students would also, he proposed, have some contact with the community surrounding their school.

The schools had to be boarding ones, Williams insisted, because people would only be taught hygiene 'by discipline'. There is, however, some indication in the general tone of his writings on education, that he personally felt Papuans could probably only be successfully taught most things in this manner of paternalistic discipline and guidance. Only in a boarding school could students be made subject to the necessary 'fairly constant supervision'. Nothing they were introduced to at school must be beyond their manufacture or reasonable purchase in adult life - but their choice, in further illustration of the manner of the paternalistic disciplinarian, was to be 'limited and guided by the European's sense of fitness'. If need be, it might even be guided in horticultural matters by the Asians' sense of fitness.

For it was with relation to his practical education scheme that Williams first made the only one of his suggestions ever censored by Murray before publication. If Papuans were to work for themselves, then Asians must be introduced to the Territory, under a scheme of rigidly - controlled immigration, to labour for Europeans. Personally, Williams recorded on a much later occasion, he believed

35 Williams, 'Hygienic Improvement and Native Custom, Etc.', Report to the Administration, 16 June 1931, CAO CRS A518 L840/1/5).

36 Williams, Practical Education ...

37 Ibid.

38 Williams referred to this suggestion and its censorship in 'Notes on the Future Development of New Guinea and its Peoples' (14 March 1943), copy in WP 5/1-2; see also below, Chapter XI.
Asians were historically destined to move south into Papua and New Guinea; there was little point in attempting to impede their progress - far better to organise and control it. Intermarriage between Papuans and Asians might be an acceptable development, helping to advance the Papuans' rate of development. Murray, partly no doubt with the predictable reaction of the 'White Australia' - fixated Commonwealth Government to such a suggestion in mind, rapidly silenced it.

ALTHOUGH Williams's Garden Boarding School scheme was ignored, Murray's interest in agricultural education experienced a resurgence the year his anthropologist's practical education report was published. He considered the Administration harnessing the Methodist mission to educate gardeners; but the scheme came to nothing, Champion disapproving as usual on financial grounds and, personally, on racial ones. The Methodists, however, supported by Williams's magisterial friend Leo Austen, took up the suggestion independently and, with a small government subsidy, established the Kiriwina Agricultural College in the Trobriands, employing some of Williams's ideas. The venture was a failure, mainly for technical and administrative reasons, and Murray died - still lamenting that he had not achieved more in the area of agricultural education - on his way to visit the school.

Despite the fact that Champion opposed the scheme personally for racist reasons, he was possibly, in another way, more realistic and less patronising in his approach to Papuan horticulture - and, by implication, to Papuans and their ways of life - than either Murray or Williams; he certainly demonstrated a greater sensitivity to the possible repercussions of Williams's general approach to culture.

39 Ibid.

40 Murray to H.W. Champion, G.S., 16 October 1933, CAO CRS G119-749B.


43 Dickson, 'Murray and Education ...', pp. 24-25.
Champion could see nothing severely wrong with Papuan agriculture. 'I am afraid', he wrote, 'that we shall end in making the Papuan distrustful of his own cultures and with nothing to put in their place'.

Horticulture was not the sole subject of practical education. Williams emphasised it because he wanted the Papuan to be an all-rounder, but a gardener first. Depopulation — purportedly his major reason for stressing horticultural reform — was not a severe problem Papua-wide, as even Williams himself admitted. But it is probable that it provided a convenient justification for a scheme of 'practical education' which, seeming likely to perpetuate 'true Papuans' and not produce competitors with Europeans, most appealed to him. Nonetheless, technical education had also to be considered.

As Williams pointed out, most countries did not nowadays lack practical education — with resultant 'swarms of boat-builders, joiners, electricians and bootmakers'. The dangers were overproduction leading to unemployment, with social unrest; and the probability that genuinely educative motives would be swamped by utilitarian ones. In this he was in line with Colonel Hooper, though his specifications regarding the level of technical training desirable for Papuans were even more conservative than Hooper had thought the missions.

In keeping with the education maxim of the day, Williams argued again that Papuans should be 'trained for life'. Accordingly, he opposed the training of 'finished craftsmen qualified for European employment'. He wanted, instead, 'a kind of training at once more modest and more generalized' which would produce 'what we call a "bush carpenter", and, probably, a rough one at that'. There was certainly some inconsistency between the tremendous emphasis he placed on the

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44 Champion to Murray, 2 February 1935, CAO CRS G119-749B.
45 Williams, Depopulation in the Suau District, (Port Moresby, 1933).
'utilitarian' motives for horticultural education and his professed fear about the swamping of 'genuinely educative' motives in the case of other technical training. But this apart, and once granted the general assumptions upon which both his technical and horticultural schemes rested, they might well have met with some success in achieving the aims he desired. The Government, he implied, should also provide the technical training; predictably, it did not. He was left to attempt to disseminate his ideas as best he could through the *Papuan Villager*. 

WILLIAMS'S ideas about the types of both technical and scholastic education which Papuans should receive, as developed and presented in the '20s and early '30s, were motivated partly by a most humane, though extremely paternalistic desire to make Papuans independent of the European, able to 'help themselves'. In this way he was very like Murray. The philosophy which underlay these ideas, however, was undeniably that of the white supremacist. Their implications, and their potential effects insofar as they might ever have been realized, were for an increasing development of apartheid in Papuan life. Once trained in the technical and scholastic fields in the manner Williams advocated, Papuans would be precluded from competing with Europeans for employment in most fields other than that of manual labour. The Papuan might to some extent be assured protection from the European, but the European would also be protected from the Papuan.

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48 Ibid.

49 See, for example, Editorial, *PV*, Vol. 8, No. 9, September 1936, pp. 65-66 and *PV*, Ibid., pp. 70-71.
Specimens of Kavahe designs sketched by P. E. Williams
CHAPTER VII
The Arts and a Conference: 'The Natives' Own'

The corporate pride of a people may survive the perils of culture contact, and I feel sure that devotion to their own arts and crafts will play no insignificant part in the saving of their self-respect.

F.E. Williams

Your art and your dancing are your own and you have no cause to be ashamed of them... the editor hopes that you will be proud of the things that are worth being proud of.

F.E. Williams

PRIDE of race in the Papuan meant particularly, for his anthropologist, pride in Papuan art and the relatively faithful observance of old motifs. Williams was himself an extremely competent draughtsman - his sketches of Orokolo ceremonial masks are both accurate and sensitive. And he was horrified at the adulteration of arts and crafts by 'European' motifs or materials in some areas, and their decline or disappearance in others. In Suau Island, in 1925, the old men had told him that the youths no longer learnt to carve, as they had to go away to work in order to pay 'the tax'. Although the reasons given in this case were debatable, the fact remained that in this and in other regions visited by him, the old arts and crafts were no longer being passed on to the young men.

Williams was particularly anxious to see this situation remedied. Too little attention, he claimed in an address to an

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3 See above, Chapter II; Williams's papers on 'Native Art' are in WP 5/3-31.
ANZAAS Conference, had been paid in the past to 'the native as an artist'. And the importance of 'native' arts and crafts in education was far greater than generally recognized. As art was 'likely to have a thin time of it under the stress of contact and change', he directed his attention towards ways of preventing both its decline and its transformation to a state beyond recognition.

European collectors who took artifacts, either for personal gain or in order to 'preserve' them, should be controlled. But the greatest problem was the cultural disintegration which, if no compensatory action were taken, 'inevitably follows from contact with Europeans'. Decline in the teaching of arts and crafts in villages generally occurred either because youths were no longer present to learn, having left the village to work elsewhere; or because the old motives, such as the need for a certain design to be emblazoned on implements of warfare or ceremony, had vanished. The aesthetic trappings of secret ceremonies and feasts were 'virtually prohibited by Christians' and no longer produced in many areas. A 'feeling of contempt for their own manner of life' which had developed amongst some Papuans, accompanied by 'a sweeping condemnation of the old manner of living', had encouraged them to abandon art as a manifestation of the scorned life-style.

To one mission, Williams's criticisms did not fully apply. The mission with which he disagreed most upon matters of conversion-technique and interference with Papuan village life and culture, was also the one that came closest to his ideals concerning the treatment of Papuan arts and crafts. In the early 1930s Kwato had begun to encourage older craftsmen to teach their patterns to station youths. It brought carvers from Gwavili to teach the fifty Kwato

5 Williams, 'Native Art and Education', in Proceedings of Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, Vol. XXIII, 1937, pp. 191-96.
6 See also Williams on collectors in The Collection of Curios and the Preservation of Native Culture, Territory of Papua Anthropological Report No. 3 (Port Moresby 1923).
7 Williams, 'Native Art...', p. 193.
tradesmen and apprentices. It is indeed possible that Kwato's example influenced Williams's own recommendations. But when he included Kwato in his blanket condemnation of all Papuan missions he almost certainly had in mind rather the effect he believed Kwato had on ceremonial life in general - and consequently upon the arts and crafts it fathered.

As the first step in an attempt to revive dying art forms Williams recommended that 'an attitude of sympathy and respect' for Papuan arts and crafts should be 'demanded from our educators'. It was 'the duty of educators to see that pride is kept alive'. Papuan arts and crafts should be made part of the curriculum of the schools and master craftsmen be employed as instructors. They were to have been emphasized, too, in his ill-fated Garden Boarding Schools. Local materials were to be preferred, though only because they were easily accessible; they were not to be made compulsory. European tools were to be used 'within reason'. But, as with those of horticulture, they were to be tools that villagers could acquire for themselves. And, as with technical education, there was no room for elaborate implements or machinery. Home-grown native designs or legitimate adaptations of them should be employed: they were often 'truly admirable'; had, through passage of time, achieved a certain congruity; and were familiar to the Papuan. But, most importantly, the designs were 'the natives' own'. For the Papuan to produce them 'with the encouragement of the European', Williams predicted, would have the effect of increasing his pride in his own achievement. Rather than a strict adherence to established forms

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9 Williams, 'Native Art...'.
10 Ibid., p. 195.
11 Ibid., p. 196.
12 Ibid.
however, he believed that a free, imaginative application of old
techniques and designs to 'new uses' should be encouraged. Nonethe-
less, although he did not prescribe who was to define 'legitimate
adaptations', the implication was unmistakable. He was here as
elsewhere a paternalist.

The cornerstone of his 'scheme for the development of arts
and crafts' was to be commercial incentive. This, he explained,
was deliberately intended to be a 'substitute' for the old, vanishing
motives. A salesroom connected with a museum should be established
in Port Moresby and, through these, products of the reformed
training which Papuans were to receive in the schools, should be
sold to tourists. Only first-class specimens would be accepted by
the proposed shop, thus preventing shoddy workmanship. It seems
probable that Williams's idea of utilizing commercial motivation
in this area was inspired, at least in part, by the similar practice
of the British colonial government of Malaya, of which he had heard
at a recent conference. He was anxious for his views on the
subject to reach the missionaries and it was at his request that his
ANZAAS paper was circulated amongst them by the Administration.

It was probably naive of Williams to believe that European
tools could be used without a deterioration of traditional craftsmen-
ship; African experience had already shown that this was not so. But,
faced with the threat of a complete loss of Papuan arts and
crafts, this was part of his proposed campaign of preventative
measures; the tools would provide a degree of ease and speed which
might encourage the craftsmen to persevere. From the financial view-

13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Williams, 'Impressions Gained from the Conference on
Education in Pacific Countries, Honolulu, 1936', type-
script in Papers of the United Church, MS Collection, in
the New Guinea Collection, The Library, UPNG.
16 Champion to Williams, 20 August 1937, WP 5/1-5; Williams
to Champion, 21 August 1937, ibid.
17 A.R. Austin, 'The History of Technical Education in Papua,
point it was unlikely that the occasional handful of tourists who visited Port Moresby could have kept his proposed 'store' in business.

The Administration's reaction was wholly predictable. The scheme for a shop and exhibition centre could not be put into practice 'for the present', due to financial considerations. But the Official Secretary was directed by Murray to inquire among the missionaries about the type of art and craft education, if any, they were providing. Beyond this, apparently no more came of Williams's report and recommendations as far as the Administration was concerned - though there is little doubt that he influenced its earlier decision, in 1933, to enable a sum of money to be paid from the Native Taxation Fund 'for the encouragement of native crafts'. In practice however, the allocation became almost meaningless: by June 1940 only a trifle over twelve pounds had been spent.

The missions were of course affronted at the suggestion that they were in any way responsible for the decline of Papuan art. They wrote to the Administration denying the accusation. A list of arts and crafts taught and encouraged by Kwato was accompanied by a statement of its reasons for promoting the subjects among its converts. 'We believe', wrote one of Abel's teachers, 'that the encouragement of arts and crafts helps considerably in supplying zest to the normally dull native existence.' That it could possibly have been at all responsible for the 'dullness' it detected, Kwato flatly denied. A Roman Catholic Missionary was provoked to reply to Williams's paper in the form of an article on the 'Artistic Education of the Papuans'. His mission was 'favouring as much as possible the

18 Williams, 'Native Art...', p. 196.
19 Murray to Official Secretary, 20 April 1938, CAO CRS G69-16/52.
22 J.M. Smeeton (on behalf of C.C.S. Abel), to Official Secretary, 7 June 1938, CAO CRS G69/52.
native arts and crafts in our Technical Schools'. Their hackles thus raised against him, the missions continued to give the same varying, though generally minimal degrees and kinds of emphases to Papuan arts and crafts in their schools, as they had before Williams offered his suggestions.

IN 1936 Williams had an opportunity to review his educational ideas in an atmosphere more conducive to philosophising than his usual one, at a conference of educationists held in Honolulu by Yale and the University of Hawaii, delegates to which were financed by the Carnegie Corporation. It was only by chance that he went at all, as the conveners initially asked E.W.P. Chinnery to represent all Australian Territories, much to both Murray's and Williams's displeasure. Chinnery however was too busy with administrative matters to attend, and Williams finally represented New Guinea as well as Papua.

For five weeks he lived on campus at the University of Hawaii, mixing with educators from many countries. Among them were highly educated men and women of a number of different races including black Americans, Maoris, North American Indians, Africans, Chinese and Japanese. This in itself must have been an illuminating experience for Williams in racial attitudinal terms.

There was a shared conviction among many delegates that 'native' races were educable to the highest levels and that opportunities for varied and extensive scholastic education should be made readily available to them, which he may have found slightly

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23 [Fr. Dupeyran?] on behalf of Bishop of Papua, to O.S., n.d. (1938), referring to same to O.S., 23 August 1937, CAO CRS G69-16/52; see also CAO ibid., folios 1-20.
25 Administrator of New Guinea to Murray, quoted in O.S. to G.S., 6 March 1937, ibid.
disconcerting. On one specific question he was almost entirely alone. Where Williams advocated that education in the initial years be carried out in English, the vast majority of delegates believed the vernacular should be used. There was not, however, a complete disparity between prominent Conference views and Williams's own, as it was widely accepted that general education should be related to the culture and environment—usually a rural one—of the educands.

During the conference Williams developed a particularly good rapport with W.C. Groves who was both an experienced educator and anthropologist. The two shared the view that societies should be studied by anthropologists before any attempts to alter them were made, and the resultant findings taken into account in whatever administrative measures ensued. And there is little doubt Williams was influenced by Groves's strong conviction that governments should control education. Groves also stressed the necessity for educational institutions to make themselves an integral part of community life. Williams had felt that pupils of his Garden Boarding Schools should keep in touch with the surrounding community, but he had not considered such a deep involvement as Groves advocated.

When the Conference discussed racial, cultural and educational problems in Pacific countries, there were generally two sides, and Williams was usually among the moderates. He was not, however, so extreme a conservative as some other delegates. The official representative of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, for example, was

29 Elkin, ibid.
31 See: W.C. Groves quoted by Williams in 'Impressions...', p. 68; and Williams to Groves, 17 March 1937, Groves Papers, file 2/1, New Guinea Collection, The Library, UPNG.
opposed to almost any form or amount of education for his subjects on the grounds that they were not going to meet many Europeans anyway, and that 'natives' in general had poor taste in literature once they were taught to read.  

There were a number of preferences expressed at the Conference which Williams might be expected to have considered. Stress was placed on the desirability for 'natives' to determine their own cultural and social futures. The racial segregation of educational institutions was attacked as a major factor in producing and perpetuating feelings of inferiority. There was a call for community and adult education to run parallel with children's education. Like Groves, the majority of Conference members emphasized the necessity for governments to take responsibility for education. And there was a strong conviction that governments and teachers should take it upon themselves to adjust social and economic conditions so that educated 'natives' would not be prevented from full and equal participation in their countries' affairs. The 'true educator', it was felt, would be 'a disturber of the conscience of the dominant race'. Teacher training was stressed by many delegates as the most vital area in which development was necessary; and governments were to shoulder responsibility for this too.

Williams agreed in principle that 'self-determination' was highly desirable. But at a later date he revealed that he had no illusions about the concept. In practice, he believed, it was inevitable that the 'native' would emerge with many of the assumptions and prejudices of his particular educators, though both he and his teachers would no doubt believe that his choices were 'self-determined'. It followed from this, Williams argued, that teachers should attempt to train pupils to assess and evaluate critically the

32 H.E. Maude, at Conference on Education in Pacific Countries, quoted by Williams in 'Impressions Gained from the Conference on Education in Pacific Countries, Honolulu, 1936', pp. 33 and 53.
34 Ibid., p. 162.
35 Ibid., p. 163.
range of possibilities at their disposal. But the 'ideal' of self-
determination should not preclude teachers from 'guiding' their
'native' pupils along those paths the teachers considered desirable. 36
His personal predilections continued to govern his views in certain
areas. There were times, he remarked, when nearly all Europeans
would condemn Papuan taste, for example in matters of dress. In such
cases 'the more impulsive of us' would be tempted to cry: 'Self-
determination be hanged!', 37

In a Conference discussion on the distribution of educational
resources, Williams revealed the approach he might have taken to
secondary education if it had existed in Papua. It was a matter he
had never had cause to discuss before and it was probably only because
of the nature of the Honolulu Conference that he ever expressed his
views on it at all. Where some, such as Murray, argued for a broad
advance across the entire 'native' population, Williams suspected
that educational resources would be better expended to produce an
élite of Papuans. It was probably better to educate a small number
to a high level in the hope that their influence would filter down
through the wider population, than to educate everyone in a country
to the point where he was capable of writing his own name upside
down with a stick in the sand. 38

Williams believed that, on at least some questions,
delegates to the Conference 'probably carried away from Honolulu much
the same opinions as they brought there'. 39 He himself was not
dramatically converted to any new general philosophy of education.
Indeed some of his ideas can only have been confirmed. He heard
there, for instance, to what must have been his greater frustration,
of the Feleti School in American Samoa which, supported by a generous
Foundation, was thriving on almost identical lines to those of his
visionary Garden Boarding Schools, and placing particular emphasis

36 Williams, 'Native Art...', pp. 192-93.
37 Ibid., p. 193.
38 Williams, quoted in Keesing, loc. cit.
39 Williams, 'Impressions...', p. 30.
on Samoan culture. But he did return to the Territory with the hope – probably a rather faint one – of instigating some changes. He submitted another 'scheme for education' to the Administration. This time it was for the training of Papuan teachers. He could not have been surprised when he heard nothing of his scheme. Lack of capital, he told his friend Groves, had no doubt killed it from the start.

But this was not an entirely satisfactory explanation of the Papuan Administration's disinterest in Williams's scheme for teacher training, though it may have played a more significant part in quashing his earlier practical education scheme. There was in fact a strong reserve of money set aside for education which the missions, perhaps, as one writer has suggested, had not fully exploited either because they did not want to be dictated to by the Government, or because they had insufficient staff to expand their educational activities. Champion asserted, many years later, that the reserve had to be kept for emergencies. But, Murray's general view of Papuan capabilities being what it was, the Lieutenant-Governor probably could not have begun to consider expenditure on such a scheme as valid; his Government Secretary and Treasurer would certainly have discouraged it.

THROUGHOUT Williams's career in Papua, both educational policy and practice remained virtually unchanged. By 1938 Murray could tell the Australian Government that 'Secondary education does not as yet

40 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
41 Williams to W.C. Groves, 17 March 1937, Groves Papers, file 2/1, New Guinea Collection, University of Papua and New Guinea.
42 Ibid.; I am particularly grateful to Mr Kevin Green for drawing this correspondence to my attention.
44 Dickson, ibid., p. 27.
exist for the Papuan, and, at the risk of appearing reactionary I hope that it will not be introduced for another generation at least... It will be soon enough in the next generation to consider the establishment of secondary schools and the creation of a Papuan intelligentsia. In the meantime, he believed, it should be endeavoured with the aid of the missions 'to extend primary education as widely as we can, so that as many natives as possible should have a working knowledge of English, and at least some rudimentary instruction in the three R's'.

Williams tried to influence the educational development of Papua and his attempts were ignored. But even if his ideas had been applied it is doubtful that they would have dramatically altered the course education was already taking, though within a limited scope they would certainly have given greater educational opportunities to some Papuans than were actually received. Despite specific differences and varying degrees of emphasis, Williams's attitude to Papuans and their education was essentially the same as Murray's. Largely because of this, and the convenient excuse of inadequate finance, the question of a clash between them on the subject never really arose.

45 Murray to Minister, 11 March 1938, CAO CRS G69-27/5.
46 Ibid.
CHAPTER VIII

Anthropologists, Their Theory and its Application:
'Culture has nothing sacrosanct about it'

[I]t is the fate of theories to be washed away... and I am not so presumptuous as to expect or to desire for mine an exemption from the common lot. I hold them all very lightly, and have used them chiefly as convenient pegs on which to hang my collection of facts.

Sir James Frazer

Works such as yours... will have a permanent value.... Books like mine, merely speculative, will be superseded sooner or later (the sooner the better for the sake of truth) by better inductions based on fuller knowledge; books like yours, containing records and observations, will never be superseded.

Sir James Frazer to Sir Baldwin Spencer

WILLIAMS’s educational views, his opinions concerning the missions and Christianity and his ideas on many matters of 'Native Administration' were closely related to, and indeed often grew from, his anthropological thought. He, and to a lesser extent Hubert Murray, were both involved in two distinct yet often overlapping debates engaging the anthropological world. One concerned theory and the other the application of theory. The views they expressed in these debates, the reactions they drew from other anthropologists, and Williams's relations with these latter, reveal not only their stances on anthropological theory, but also their assumptions about the potential utility of the discipline in 'Native Administration'. The debates are of further importance because, as well as his own theoretical predilections, Williams revealed in them much of his

2 Sir James Frazer to Sir Baldwin Spencer, quoted in ibid., p. 80.
general philosophy about the particular purpose to which he put his subject and training.

When Williams was a student, and for some years afterwards, the anthropology taught at Oxford was 'largely mistaken and misguided' - 'not only by modern standards, but by the standards of the day at the L.S.E. and in America'.\(^3\) It was full of diffusionist and evolutionist assumptions, the former - although the two were often combined - coming from those ethnologists most intent on tracing the paths of customs or institutions, which had supposedly begun in one place and spread around the world; the latter, on ranking various peoples in their order of 'evolutionary development' on the basis of such evidence as technological implements.\(^4\) It was confused, too, by 'doses of physical anthropology, still racialist in orientation, technology, and preposterous theories of religion'.\(^5\)

Williams was in some ways fortunate, however, in having R.R. Marett as his teacher, for Marett had been attracted by the theories of Emile Durkheim the French sociologist and his followers, writing in the *Année Sociologique*, before the Great War. Durkheim, who also influenced A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, insisted that social facts should be treated as objective phenomena and that they could be explained in terms of other social facts. A 'social fact' - a taboo, ceremony, grammatical usage or courteous gesture, for example - was characterized by its external and coercive nature. It was prior to any individual and exercised a constraint on his behaviour. A type of sacrifice or a custom of diet could not be understood in terms of the psychological make-up of any individual; they existed before his birth and continued after his death; further,

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5 Kuper, p. 129.
the individual did not choose to adopt them. The set of social facts with which the analyst was concerned must be treated as a system, and the meaning and purpose of a custom could only be understood by relating it to the total set of relevant social facts. Its 'origins', which had consumed the interest of diffusionists, were irrelevant; the important issue was its present function.6

Dürkheim saw society as essentially a moral order and came increasingly to concentrate on the 'collective consciousness', the values and norms of a society. These were 'socialised' into the individual's consciousness. In 'primitive societies' individuals were more extensively socially conditioned than in more complex societies where individuality was greater. The continued existence of the social order depended on sentiments of solidarity being maintained. In 'primitive societies' social solidarity was based on mutual resemblance; it had a different basis in more complex ones. In all societies however, forms of social grouping determined members' social consciousness, and forms of consciousness were maintained and invigorated by being re-enacted in symbolic rituals. But not only ritual in the usual sense had this effect. Even crime was necessary to society as, by dramatizing deviance and retribution, it strengthened the sentiments which supported the moral order.7

Marett believed, erroneously, that he discerned a fundamental similarity between Dürkheim's and his own position.8 In reality he was too preoccupied with the psychological to approximate the type of sociology Dürkheim advocated. The real influence of the French body of thought only emerged in British anthropology with

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7 Kuper, pp. 67-8.
8 Kuper, p. 53.
the works of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, which began to appear in the year after Williams left Oxford. Nonetheless, through Marett, Williams had become familiar with Durkheim's views and he had arrived in Papua fairly convinced that every element of a society was vital to its survival. In his second anthropology report he wrote: 'You have only to remove one wheel to stop the watch, or one stone from the social structure to have it tumbling about your ears.'

It was not long, however, before he came to doubt this belief on the basis of his own field observations. He saw in Papua societies from which elements had been removed, still operating, and decided that those elements could not therefore have been vital, though they might have been important. It followed from this that education might justifiably modify or 'patch up' Papuan culture, agriculture and technology, and that Christianity might be 'substituted' for missing elements of the old life.

An anthropological school with various factions and individual leaders and members of prominence, grew up in England in the 1920s which became labelled 'Functionalism'. It dominated British anthropological thought until the 1940s and left its permanent mark upon it. Most of its 'members', incidentally, at one time or another forswore allegiance to it. Essentially, 'functionalism' was the application of Durkheimian thought with various modifications and some original additions, to anthropology, on the basis of prolonged periods of field-work such as Malinowski had pioneered.

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10 Williams, *The Vailala Madness and the Destruction of Native Ceremonies in the Gulf Division*, Papua Anthropology Report No. 4 (1923), p. 64.


12 This is an over-simplification of functionalism, but an adequate outline for the purposes of this study.
It stressed that a society was an integrated whole and must be studied as such or, in the parlance of its practitioners, studied 'synchronously'.

Williams accepted the Functionalists' general approach to anthropological work as the one of most use to a Government Anthropologist - not as the only one. He believed that the 'strictly sociological method' did not exhaust the possibilities of explanation, and that a psychological approach was often permissible and indeed necessary. One critic wrote of him:

... fortunately he holds an exclusive brief for no one of the various "modern" schools of anthropology. His independence of theoretical bias allows him to employ whatever method seems best suited to each subject he treats.

In Papuans of the Trans-Fly - where he is recognized to have gone 'a little deeper still' than in most of his other works - this eclectic use of theories is amply illustrated. In his treatment of certain peculiarities of religion in that society, Williams employed a psychological form of analysis, attempting to discover 'the Kerakis' motives for doing things as they do them', and particularly, the meaning and relative importance of the religious factors in the minds of individuals and groups. But of various other aspects of the culture as a whole, he used a restrained functionalist interpretation.

It is particularly significant that the German anthropologist, Richard Thurnwald, commended Williams's work. For although

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14 Williams, Pupuans of the Trans-Fly, p. ix.


16 R.R. Marett to Williams, 2 February 1936, WP 5/2-8.

17 See Williams, Papuans of the Trans-Fly, (London 1936), pp. ix, 315-60 and passim.
Thurnwald is often placed in the Functionalist school, and in fact himself purported to adhere to functionalist theory, in the view of one notable commentator he actually 'takes so wide a view, and is cognisant of so many methods, that he cannot be labelled'. Thurnwald's comments on Williams's work incidentally do much to support this view of the German anthropologist, while expanding the picture of the use of anthropological theory made by Williams. He was particularly impressed by the Trans-Fly book, he told Williams, since 'your theoretical explanations appeal to me in an unusual way. I rarely come across books with which I feel myself so thoroughly in harmony'. Williams himself had in fact been disillusioned by the results of this particular theoretical exercise and felt he would have been wiser never to have embarked upon it. Specifically, Thurnwald approved of Williams's opinions about the bipartite social system he had demonstrated and his explanation of the way it had come about. But probably most of all he appreciated in him the practitioner of his own technique of employing a range of different theoretical approaches.

It was in some ways unfortunate that Williams's own training in psychology was minimal. Marett was widely read, though himself not formally trained in the subject, but not having physically worked in the anthropological field he was unable to pass on to Williams any suggestions about methods and techniques of obtaining psychological data there; and his own brand of psychology was of a primitive form. Williams's extraction of the psychological side of his material was probably substantially 'instinctive' and amateurish, rather than systematic and 'scientific'. This might be contrasted with the situation of the American anthropologists working contemporaneously with him. Margaret Mead, for example, set out to apply gestalt psychology, 'learning theory' and psychoanalysis in her

19 R.C. Thurnwald to Williams, 9 May 1937, WP 5/2-8.
interpretation of culture. And her master, Franz Boas had worked in the field, among American Indian tribes. Reo Fortune, a New Zealander who studied at Cambridge and became allied for a time with American anthropology, took a psychological approach to his work as well as a functionalist one, and he had a degree in psychology. Williams should not however be condemned for failing to have the appropriate combination of psychological training and grounding in the psychologist's methods. In some ways it was force of circumstance which dictated this; the Americans just happened to be advancing in the direction of psychology while the British anthropologists were taking another avenue; and there was little communication between the two countries' anthropologists at this time. Also, Mead and Fortune began anthropological work some years after Williams. He might, however, be slightly censured for having himself failed to develop more satisfactory methods of employing psychology than he did - in short, for lack of inventiveness or originality - but such criticism would be fairly pointless.

In some instances Williams's work suffered to a degree because of his mishandling of psychology. But more often the mistakenness of his own perceptions of the psychological root of a Papuan attitude or action, rather than 'Psychology' itself, was responsible. In practice, his use of the discipline was little more than the asking of questions or the observation of Papuan behaviour, accompanied by his own intuitive perceptions or interpretations of the meanings of answers or actions, in psychological terms.


23 Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* was published in 1928 and Fortune's *Sorcerers of Dobu*, in 1932.

24 See Williams's field-notes, passim, WP.
is by no means to say that his interpretations were always or even frequently at fault; indeed, in comparison with more recent and presumably more advanced anthropological work in the same areas of Papua, his explanations of social phenomena are generally still acceptable.® His external observation was usually remarkably accurate. But it was in the psychological region, rather than any other, that he did sometimes fall down. The most glaring example of this lies in his interpretation of cargo cults.

Williams believed that the causes of cults such as the Vailala Madness were to be found in 'certain effects of contact with and subjugation by a superior people'. This involved firstly 'the effort to assimilate a body of new and difficult ideas, and a resultant mental confusion'; secondly, the loss of customary means of social excitement; and thirdly a general sense of inferiority. He suggested that the first factor was largely responsible for the emergence of the leading ideas of the movement, and that the latter two placed the masses in 'just the right mood for their acceptance'.® Some cult leaders were 'cunning exploiters' of their fellows, others were 'unbalanced'.®

Though he used the term 'confusion', Williams did not go far beyond the Administration's view of cults as a form of 'madness' or 'lunacy'.® Despite all the evidence before him of Papuan cultists imitating European fashions and preparing for the arrival of 'cargo', he failed to make the interpretation which many anthropologists have

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27 Williams, The Vailala Madness and the Destruction of Native Ceremonies, Papua Anthropology Report No. 4 (1923), pp. 31-33.

made since, that the cults were a manifestation of indigenous envy of European resources, and frustration at their inability to acquire them; and that the associated ritual destruction of property was an adaptation of traditional methods of controlling the environment, wherein the correct ritual was required as part of any process but was not seen as a separate activity. As more recent anthropologists have shown, there was a 'complexity, elaborateness, and logic' to 'cargo thinking'; it was a 'highly integrated and organized belief system so widely held that it is entitled to be regarded as a philosophy in its own right'.

To an extent it may justly be argued unfair to judge Williams by standards of more recent anthropological research; little other work had been done on cargo cults in his time and the interpretations in that, some of which was by Chinnery, were not remarkably more perceptive than his own. But to do so would not be entirely unwarranted. For Williams had the same type of evidence - often in even greater abundance - that other anthropologists have had, to draw conclusions from. Yet, even when he was told that 'certain elements in the Mekeo', who had 'for a long time' been known to want to rid their villages of missionaries and Government officers, were spreading rumours in 1941 that Australia was losing the war and that God was about to send them guns and lorries, he did not make the connection. He isolated again the removal of traditional

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30 J.K. McCarthy, Foreword, P. Lawrence, Road Belong Cargo..., p. ix.


32 W.H.H. Thompson, A.R.M. Kairuku, to G.S., 19 February 1941, copy in CAO CRS A518 A840/1/5; Williams to G.S., 30 May 1941, WP 5/14-125.
forms of excitement as a major cause; as the A.R.M. had complained, 'hundreds of young men loaf around their villages with time heavy on their hands'.

33 Williams did not look beyond this. He recognized not the violent expression of dissatisfaction, but an irrationality which was to be treated in 1941, as he had recommended in similar cases twenty years earlier, as a mixture of misbehaviour and mental illness. Williams's personal racial attitudes and preconceptions help to explain why he was precluded from fully understanding the cargo cults and particularly from recognizing their 'remorseless logic'.

34 It should not, however, be construed that Mead, Fortune and others proved theirs were 'superior' psychological powers of perception and produced proportionately better works than those of Williams. Both Mead and Fortune have been criticized for blundering in their work. Fortune has been accused of superimposing his own psychological state - purportedly, at the time he worked in Papua, one of paranoia and emotional disturbance - over that which he interpreted to exist among the people he studied. The Dobuans of his book were portrayed as being in an extremely nasty psychological state, one which - at least in its severity - has been challenged by other anthropologists. Similar, though not identical criticisms have been made of Malinowski and other field-workers. And Mead and others lived long enough to be subjected to what is perhaps the ultimate test of an anthropologist's perceptions of the 'native psyche'. Their work was read by young, European-educated members of the societies they once studied, and discussed with older members. As a result, Mead has been accused of misreading the 'savage mind' and culture.

35 In comparison, Williams does not emerge too badly. His interpretations in the case of the cargo cults may have left much to be desired but, on the other hand, his general observations of
societies or cultures, though perhaps not outstandingly penetrating or brilliant, have stood the test of time. Generally he was an extremely conscientious and accurate observer of at least the externals of society and, probably largely because of his own self-controlled personality and detachment, he did not obviously, unconsciously inflict his personal psychological state onto his observations. The material he gathered in the 1920s and '30s will consequently be of lasting value as descriptions of particular societies at specific times - in other words, as purely ethnographical work. His books, republished in the 1960s by Oxford University Press, appear today on the reading lists of many anthropology courses, and a collection of his shorter writings was published in 1976. Furthermore, some anthropologists today do acknowledge the existence in Williams's work of certain sparks of theoretical insight and originality. His early recognition of the nature and significance of 'exchange' activity, in particular that women actually constituted important objects of exchange in some Papuan societies, is believed to have made him a precursor of the present, more extreme exchange theorists, his observations having been carried a number of steps further, years later, by, amongst others, C. Lévi-Strauss and E. Schwimmer.

WILLIAMS launched his own attack on the 'purer' functionalists early in his Papuan career and continued it for the rest of his life. In 1934 he went to England and spent two and a half terms in Malinowski's 'electrical seminar' at the L.S.E., which he found 'as keen and busy as a nest of red ants'. He attended the seminar with the object of 'acquaint[ing] myself at first hand with the aims and methods of the Functionalist School'. The 'intellectual stimulus of contact with Dr. Malinowski' and his students, he later remarked, 'could not be valued too highly'; and Williams felt he had 'come somewhere near

36 This opinion is held by most of the anthropologists I spoke to, including M. Silverman, M.C. Groves, R. Fortune, M. Reay, E. Hau'ofa, D. Feil and M. Young. See Erik Schwimmer (ed.), Francis Edgar Williams: 'The Vailala Madness' and Other Essays, (London 1976).

37 Dr M. Young and Mr D. Feil are of this opinion. See E. Schwimmer, Exchange in the social structure....
achieving an understanding of the school. Some years later he told Murray that:

The Functionalists' attitude generally speaking seems to me to be the right one for applied anthropology; indeed... the only sort of anthropology that is likely to be of any use in problems of government, education etc. I hope therefore that I am a functionalist, but it is certainly in a very guarded sense.

His own revised stance was that, although he 'did not for one moment' suggest culture was devoid of system, he believed it was 'only in part a system. It always remains to some extent a hotch-potch and a sorry tangle'. Elsewhere he drew an analogy between society and a heap of rubbish, which would hardly have delighted many of his colleagues. Certainly if one piece of rubbish were removed from the pile, the pile would be altered; but it would not, according to Williams, be irretrievably damaged, it would continue to exist quite satisfactorily. Culture, he concluded, 'has nothing sacrosanct about it'.

Williams is not unique in having made such declarations about the incompleteness of integration of societies. The American anthropologist, R.H. Lowie, for example, used similar analogies about society, referring to 'patches' and 'scraps'. But, as has been noted, the Americans too were interested in using psychology in their work. It was Williams however who conducted a crusade against the more rigid form of functionalism. In almost every one of his public-

38 Williams, 'Account of 1934 visit to England', extract from draft of Papua Annual Report, 1933-34, in CAO CRS A452-59/5972.
41 Williams, Drama of Orokolo, pp. 109-10; Williams, 'Creed of a Government Anthropologist'.
42 Williams, 'Address to the Anthropological Society, Hawaii', (1936), WP 5/1-2.
44 Kuper, p. 64.
atations he launched a salvo upon the functionalists and their theories. His technique was to set up the most extreme formulation of the theory and then systematically batter it to the ground.

No doubt many anthropologists were slightly amused by his antics, others annoyed. As the Australian Government's Minister responsible for Papua told him of one sally - which had been delivered on Williams's behalf by A.P. Elkin to an ANZAAS Conference - it 'was received with some little astonishment by some of the members'. Possibly Williams's attack on the Functionalists was partly motivated by a sense of inferiority and isolation. Removed from the pulsating heart of the anthropological world for most of his time, and performing a job which he knew to be disapproved of by a number of his colleagues, it seems possible that he found his anti-functionalist campaign a valuable aid in asserting his respectability and justifying himself both to others and perhaps also to himself.

Personally he was on amicable terms with many anthropologists. S.F. Nadel, a Functionalist working as a government anthropologist in the Sudan in 1940, told Williams that he found his latest ANZAAS paper, 'Creed of a Government Anthropologist', 'most excellent' and was 'even prepared to go a long way with' him in his 'attack on the integrational [functionalist] school'. Nadel had, moreover, shown the work to his Governor, and it 'had such a success' that more copies were sent for to be circulated among the officers of the Sudan. Raymond Firth, another Functionalist who had studies under Malinowski, wrote from the L.S.E. that

[Your anthropology reports] are extremely interesting for their descriptive material, but even more so for their theoretical (and practical) setting and generalisations. That isn't to say of course, that I agree


46 R.A. Bronowski to Williams, 19 June 1939, WP 5/1-5.

47 S.F. Nadel to Williams, 27 March 1940, WP 5/2-8; Williams, 'Creed of a Government Anthropologist', pp. 145-59.

48 Nadel to Williams, 22 May 1940, WP 5/2-8.
with every word - if we could discuss together I imagine we should still argue about Functionalism... 49

Firth added the justifiable accusation that 'I think you give it a more formal tinge than it really has'. 50 Elkin, at Sydney University, less consumed by the Functionalist cause than a number of others, admired Williams's work greatly, in particular the Trans-Fly book because of 'its commonsense, independence of "schools" and shibboleths and its humorous tilts'. He approved of his emphasis on the incompleteness of integration in most societies and found his views on sorcery and warfare 'helpful and sane'. 51

A number of other anthropologists praised Williams's work, among them Margaret Read, T.F. McIlwraith and A.M. Hocart; and, particularly, members of the old establishment of British anthropology, including Marett, Seligman, and Haddon. It was from this latter group that he drew the most unqualified compliments. Marett, for example, wrote that 'Mr. Williams is too good an anthropologist to praise or blame' and told others that they could not but admire 'the masterly treatment which ought to secure [for Papuans of the Trans-Fly] the rank of a classic among ethnographic studies.' 52 The old ethnographers however were still thinking more about the material amassed than of anthropological theory, and they saw Williams's works as fine examples of the collection and presentation of data. He often corresponded with them. For Haddon, stranded in England, he was a valuable and frequently-exploited source of ethnological information. The older anthropologist was 'thoroughly ashamed of the number of questions' he asked and felt 'rather like the "daughter

49 Raymond Firth to Williams, 18 November 1936, WP 5/2-8.
50 Ibid.; Firth pointed out an example of what he referred to, in one of Williams's reports, in his letter.
51 A.P. Elkin to Williams, 28 April 1936, WP 5/2-8; the two corresponded frequently on ethnological matters, as did Elkin and Murray.
of the horse-leech" - of Scripture', but he believed that Williams would 'appreciate my position'. 53 Marett kept him up to date with Oxford gossip, enjoyed having Williams as a visitor to the University in 1934 when they had many long discussions, and offered to help, if he could, to 'have you here again'. 54

ALTHOUGH at least one writer has attempted to do so, it is impossible to say on the basis of documentary evidence whether Williams influenced Murray's views on the integration of society, whether the reverse was the case, or whether they were modified independently. 55 There is a strong possibility that, despite his own assertions, Murray had never really believed in integration at all. Like his Government Anthropologist, Murray too criticized the Functionalist school frequently. And Williams's arguments provided ammunition for his retaliations against anthropologists who accused him of interfering with society. He reached a point, Murray claimed, where he could no longer believe, although he once had, that 'everything in native life is so closely intertwined that you cannot abolish any particular custom without upsetting the whole organisation'. 56

THE second debate in which Williams and Murray participated, concerned the so-called 'application' of anthropology as an aid to administration. The debate, on a subject obviously vital to the role of

53 Haddon to Williams, 31 January 1938, WP 5/3-33; Haddon to Williams, 6 March 1937, ibid. See also Williams to Haddon, 25 June 1929, ibid.; Williams to Haddon, 14 August 1937, ibid.; Williams to Haddon, 25 October 1937, ibid.; Williams to Haddon, 28 February 1938, ibid.; Williams to Haddon, 26 August 1937, ibid., and others. Haddon often wrote requesting descriptions, specimens and sketches of tobacco pipes and canoes.

54 Marett, Rector of Exeter College, to Williams, 2 February 1936, WP 5/2-8; Williams, 'Account of 1934 Visit to England'.


56 Murray, 'Native Administration and Education: An Address', p. 9, MP ML MSS A3138-2.
Government Anthropologists, was carried on for a number of years in anthropological journals. Many anthropologists, some leading Functionalists among them, argued that their discipline or 'science' could be of immense value to administrators. Their motivation, to a large extent, was to acquire funds and professional posts for their increasing numbers, though doubtless they also genuinely believed they could be of some assistance, both to administrators and their subject races. An adherence to functionalism, as Nadel's case shows, did not necessarily preclude one from advising administrators, the idea being that the advice - following a functionalist examination of a custom and its society - would generally be to leave them alone. Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown both promoted their subject to politicians and administrators, the former through the pages of the journal *Africa*. Murray lent his weight enthusiastically to the Australian section of those advocating 'applied anthropology'. In contrast, Chinnery seldom participated publicly in either debate. He did, however, accept 'functionalism' in general terms, and it was this which underlay his conviction that, the European having already affected them, the disintegration of New Guinean cultures was inevitable.

One of the most dogmatic opponents of 'application' was A.M. Hocart, Professor of Sociology at Cairo University, who had studied Classics at Oxford, then psychology and philosophy at Berlin, before working in the Pacific, first with W.H.R. Rivers and then alone. Hocart was one of the most interesting though neglected


59 'Memorandum concerning First Meeting of Permanent Advisory Committee in connection with the Chair of Anthropology, the University of Sydney, 7 and 9 March, 1927', copy in CAO CRS A518-P806/1/1.
anthropologists of his time. In 1931 he asked the anthropological world: 'Do anthropologists seriously believe that the study of the manners and customs of any people qualifies one to legislate for them?... No, because their knowledge is knowledge and not experience'. The appropriate experience, Hocart believed, was impossible to attain; and 'the best service we can render to savages', was 'to leave them alone'.

In view of this, it is initially surprising that Hocart and Williams were firm friends. But Hocart was not a Functionalist; his 'ideas and his historical and comparative preoccupations were unfashionable in the heyday of functionalism' and his 'originality did not commend his theories to a very large body of students'. The first circumstance helps to explain why he and Williams were to a notable extent soul-mates. They did not, however, always agree.

Their argument is important not only as a representative example of the wider, more public debate, but because it reveals the philosophy which enabled Williams to be a Government Anthropologist. Hocart accused Williams of presenting moral doctrines as scientific systems. 'You want to give up science for morals. This is after all what this applied anthropology means'. He cited the example of the prohibition of sodomy in Papua. The only ground, in Hocart's view, for this - and one which as a result of his phrasing conjures up lurid visions - should have been 'the result of a scientific demonstration'. Famous scientists, Hocart asserted, had never bothered with 'utility' or 'moral laws' but had been 'unashamedly academical'. They had taken 'the long view'. Unlike these other sciences, he told Williams,


61 A.M. Hocart to Editor, Man, November 1931, p. 259.

62 Ibid.


64 A.M. Hocart to Williams, 20 November 1935, WP 5/2-8.
anthropology is taking the short view. It is trying to convince people it is useful. The result is [that] we are having an 'applied science' before the theoretical science has been established. It is degenerating into moral problems, which easily leads into politics, and eventually will make it the dupe of 'big business'.

Already, Hocart believed, anthropology had supplied pseudo-scientific justification for a great many of the rascalities perpetrated behind fine phrases about being 'trustees for the child like savage'. 'Beware of applied anthropology', he warned his friend, 'it is so easy for it to become the handmaid of politicians.' Instead of being a Government Anthropologist, Hocart recommended that Williams could 'do more useful work by being strictly academical and thus laying the foundations of a real understanding of society, which can then be applied, as physics, etc., have been'.

But Williams's justification of his career, though he did not say so, depended on an acceptance that 'pure' and 'applied' anthropology were not mutually exclusive. 'You scolded me very severely', he told Hocart, 'but I am not as bad as you think'. He appreciated the difference between the two brands of anthropology but would continue to maintain that it was 'possible for the "pure" scientist to step into the other man's shoes when he wants to' and, later, back into his own. When writing about matters of concern to administration he adopted 'of necessity the viewpoint of ideas, values, and so on', but he insisted that he was 'not committed to this attitude' and consequently, 'when it comes to ordinary investigation I do my best to assume once more the cold objective manner'.

'I really am interested' in the application of anthropology, Williams attempted to convince Hocart. As 'a Government

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65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Williams to Hocart, 7 March 1936, WP 5/2-8.
69 Ibid.
70 My emphasis.
Anthropologist, one whose screw is paid out of Native Taxation, I must be'. 71 As for postponing the 'application' of anthropology, this was out of the question. Even though anthropological knowledge was imperfect, administrators were obliged to apply it 'in the government of the dark races' and in trying to solve the problems of contact; the matter was 'too urgent to be let slide'. The achievement of a 'real understanding' of society might take forever. 'Already', he told Hocart,

we have some understanding and we must use what we have. We are a long way from a complete understanding of the laws of physics, but we have applied what we have with remarkable success. We are still, I fear, a long way from a complete understanding of military science, but that does not prevent us from killing one another successfully. In native affairs the administrator, like the general, must hop in and do something. 72

'I think', he concluded, 'that the anthropologist is entitled to come down once in a while from the academical level and help [the administrator] by making concrete suggestions!' 73

By the way Williams wrote about the subject, Hocart could tell that he was 'not the dupe of that noisy crowd' who 'sneer at the search for principles as "academic"' and who were presently talking about 'applied science' 'as if it will change the world'. 74 And Hocart assured him that if he wrote at such length and 'scolded' him, it was a compliment; 'it means that it is worth interchanging views with you, because you are out for the best'. But, although he and Williams were 'agreed in principle' he concluded sadly, they must inevitably differ in practice, because Williams was a Government Anthropologist and Hocart was not. 'I', he wrote, 'am freed from the necessity of giving any expert opinion to politicians, and so can cultivate pure science'. 75

71 Ibid., Williams's emphasis.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
74 Hocart to Williams, 19 April 1936, WP 5/2-8.
75 Ibid.
WITH Hocart, the debate over the application of anthropology was carried out across a safe geographic distance and there was little likelihood of his affecting Papuan administration in any way. But a rude collision between Hubert Murray and another one of the anthropologists who, like the unfortunate Malinowski and Pitt-Rivers, intruded into his Territory, brought the debate closer to home. Late in 1927, Reo Fortune arrived in Papua to work in the D'Entrecasteaux Group. He and Williams encountered each other on a number of occasions during his time in the Territory and their relationship was amicable. Fortune met Murray briefly on his way through Port Moresby and the Lieutenant-Governor told him he would call at his camp early the following year. The young New Zealand anthropologist struck Murray on this occasion as 'rather a prig, but... otherwise reasonable enough'.

After a short time in the field however, Fortune sent word to Murray not to visit him, as he was suspected of being a spy for the Government - a suspicion he understandably did not want reinforced. Murray was horrified and demanded to know where the people gained their view of the Administration and under what injustices they believed themselves to be suffering; Fortune, incidentally, had mentioned no injustices. Fortune replied that he could not possibly answer these questions 'without betrayal that would dis-honour my obligations to my University and my science were you to act upon my information in any administrative way'. He would not, he stressed, 'act as a spy'. He believed 'the blinder' that Government officers were rendered of his own work by their ignorance of

76 Reo Fortune, Interview, Cambridge, 8 August 1976; Murray to ? [an officer of the Australian Department responsible for Papua], (Despatch No. 16/41/22), n.d., CAO CRS 669-16/41.
77 Fortune to Murray, 29 December 1927, CAO CRS A518 A806/1/5; Murray to Minister, 24 May 1928, ibid.
78 Murray to Minister, ibid.
79 Fortune to Murray, 29 December 1927, ibid.
80 Murray to Fortune, 2 May 1928, copy in CAO CRS A518-A806/1/5.
81 Fortune to Murray, 22 April 1928, ibid.
Papuan languages and their professional status, the better he could perform it. Administration of a 'native' race such as Murray was trying to perform, as long as 'Administration conforms to the ideas of the white race', was undesirable and indeed impossible. What good feeling existed between Papuans and the Administration was 'due only to the amiable ignorance of Government officers of the truth of native life'. But Fortune would 'most willingly co-operate... and lay every whit of information' he had before Murray, if it were guaranteed to be 'a matter of complete detachment from the present Administration'.

Murray immediately despatched Williams to talk to Fortune and hurried himself to the division in which the visiting anthropologist was working, to question administrative officers and missionaries about the matter. Williams 'could not understand' Fortune's attitude. He had, he asserted, faced the same dilemma about divulging information concerning specific instances of Papuan practices upon which the Administration frowned, but had finally asked for the matters not to be taken up by the Government and they had not been. Fortune's suggestion to leave customs alone was, he assured Murray, 'preposterous to anyone who believes that the business of a Government is to govern'. But he had to admit there was 'a real danger' that the missions would act on any facts Fortune might provide, by for example abolishing ceremonies they had previously been unaware existed.

The widely divergent attitudes of the two anthropologists, both to sorcery and, more importantly, to the entire question of

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82 Ibid.
83 Murray to Williams, 27 June 1928, CAO CRS G69-16/41; Murray to Minister, 24 May 1928, CAO CRS A518 A806/1/5; Murray to ? [Australian Government] (Despatch No. 16/41/22), n.d., CAO CRS G69-16/41; Williams to G.S., 4 September 1928, ibid.; 'Extract from Lieutenant-Governor's Memorandum to G.S., (Samarai), 10 August 1928, ibid.; the Reverend Mr. Gilmour to R.M., Eastern Division, 9 August 1928 ('Notes on Mr. Fortune'), ibid.
84 Williams to Murray, 27 June 1928, CAO CRS G69-16/41.
85 Ibid.
Government interference in Papuan life, was amply illustrated over an incident of supposed sorcery. Two Dobuan men had killed a pig which belonged to another man. The owner threatened revenge by sorcery if each culprit failed to pay him twice the pig's value; they concurred. Fortune argued that if the two men made a successful case against the pig owner for sorcery, he would be gaoled, and that - in his anxiety to defend himself against the charge - the 'sorcerer' would probably forget to mention the pig's theft. To Fortune, the incident supported his case against the punishment of sorcery. But to Williams, with the help of some mental gymnastics, it 'seem[ed] to... give an admirable example of the use of law in providing a means of redress other than a resort to sorcery'.

By the time Williams reached Fortune's base, Fortune had left for Australia. But Fortune later told him that he had 'cooled down' after writing to Murray. Murray was terrified Fortune would make a statement to the Australian press and in anticipation wrote warning his Minister that anything the anthropologist might say would be nonsense. Fortune, he explained, 'belongs to the same school as Captain Pitt-Rivers, but must be taken more seriously than the latter gentleman, in as much as he is a trained anthropologist, which Captain Pitt-Rivers is not'. Pitt-Rivers, Murray had already taken pains to 'expose' to the Minister, as he had also done with Malinowski. Fortune's school, he elaborated, did not believe that white races should govern black.

87 Murray to Minister, 30 May 1928, CAO CRS A518 A806/1/5.
89 Murray to Minister, 30 May 1928, op. cit.
90 See, for example, Murray to Minister for Home and Territories, 17 December 1927, CAO CRS G69-16/19, and, same file, folios 1-11 inclusive; Murray to Editor, *Man*, July 1930, No. 14. See also: H. Laracy, 'Malinowski at War, 1914-18', (1976; at press).
91 Murray to Minister, 30 May 1928.
Williams, in *Orokaiva Society*, published soon afterwards, gave 'a word on the ethics of ethnography' and, though airing personal views, coincidentally spoke very much as a mouthpiece of the Administration. He asserted there that 'no enlightened person thinks that anthropology, whether under Government or any other auspices, is to be identified with espionage'. Provided the investigator made his reports in an impersonal manner, there was 'no danger of inculpating his informants'. Whatever a government or mission did in the light of his revelations 'cannot be a concern of his, *qua* ethnographer'. It was the ethnographer's business to record facts 'trusting that those who govern or educate the native will make the best use of the information'. When that information led to a better understanding of 'native life', he had done the 'native' a good turn. But if it led to harsh, unsympathetic suppression of customs newly discovered by the investigator, then it would be 'a bad state of affairs for which he will be sorry, but not to blame'. It is revealing of how Williams managed to be a Government Anthropologist for two decades that he did not believe the Papuan Administration would ever put his information to evil use. 

Perhaps understandably, when next Reo Fortune returned to the field he chose the Mandated Territory; and there he received every assistance from Chinnery and the Administration. In later years Fortune and Williams corresponded on friendly terms, the former trying as Hocart had done to divert the Government Anthropologist from his wicked path. 'Be a R[esident] M[agistrate], trader or missionary if you like it', he told Williams. 'But if you are an anthropologist, study native cultures [and] keep your own ground'. In fact, in one major underlying attitude the two men had much more in common than either perhaps recognized or cared

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93 Ibid.
94 Margaret Mead, *Blackberry Winter*..., pp. 168-80, 189; Halligan to Fortune, 13 October 1931, CAO CRS A518 A806/1/5; McLaren to Fortune, 14 October 1931, ibid.; 'Extract from personal note from Chinnery to McLaren, 1 June 1931, ibid.
95 Fortune to Williams, 24 February 1936, WP 5/2-8.
to admit; as Fortune put it: 'I dislike native cultures that are so well fucked that they are the painted whores of our own culture'.

Ironically, later again, with Williams not long dead, Fortune found himself without a job and applied to the Papua and New Guinea authorities for one, only to be told that his services were not needed. When he applied for a position working for the Government of Burma he was highly recommended by a referee, but with the qualification that 'it should be emphasized... Fortune's work has been straight out scientific, and not concerned with Applied Anthropology'.

FOR Murray, there was a constant battle with anthropologists like Fortune who did not think he should be interfering with Papuan life. Whenever he had the opportunity he wrote or spoke to their discredit. The school of 'very brilliant young men and women' which criticized his Administration, he lamented to the Prime Minister in 1932, 'seems to be winning every round'; but it was 'inconceivable that all its vagaries can ever be seriously accepted by any sane Government'. He had realized, Murray remarked on another occasion, that 'the influence of anthropology might extend too far'. And he was convinced that 'we should be prepared, if necessary, to close our ears and our hearts to the siren song of this most fascinating...

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96 Fortune to Williams, ibid.
97 Memorandum for Secretary Department of the Army, from J.R. Halligan, Assistant Secretary of External Affairs, 17 August 1943, CAO CRS A518-A806/1/5; Memorandum for Halligan from Secretary Department of the Army, 28 September 1943, ibid.; Memorandum for Secretary Department of the Army, from Halligan, 5 November 1943, ibid.
98 A.P. Elkin to Halligan, 3 December 1945, CAO CRS A518 A806/1/5; see also Halligan to Elkin, 23 October 1945, ibid.; Elkin to Halligan, 31 October 1945, ibid.
99 See, for example, Murray, 'Manuscript of a book on Papua', in MP. Vol. 1, pp. 137-43, A3138-2; Murray to Prime Minister, 17 December 1930, CAO CRS A518 A840/1/5; Murray to Prime Minister, 31 March 1932, CAO CRS A518-A840/1/5.
100 Murray to P.M., 5 April 1932, CAO CRS A518 L840/1/5.
science'. Murray wrote to Malinowski, as he did to Pitt-Rivers, both privately and through journals, denying Malinowski's assertions about the Papuan Government's deleterious effects on culture and, incidentally, praising his 'very delightful little books'.

Malinowski replied with the hope that Murray would not find the 'practical anthropology' he advocated in the journal Africa 'completely unpractical!'. He mentioned too that he and his colleagues had 'now the active co-operation of a number of Administrators of long experience' including 'my friend Lord Lugard, Mr. Palmer the Governor of Nigeria, Sir Donald Cameron of Tanganyika' and others. And he thanked Murray for his kindness in speaking of 'my productions as "very delightful little books". Two of these at least', he pointed out, 'now run into 200,000 words each'.

'It is very hard', Murray frequently declared, 'to get anthropologists and others to see that an administrator's job is quite different from theirs'. An Administrator had to act. He had even heard an anthropologist say that 'native administration is practical anthropology' and this was 'obviously a most misleading and fallacious statement'. Murray's view, encapsulated in his own words, of the relative merits of 'anthropology' and 'administration', have a marked significance when considered as part of the background against which Williams had to work:

101 Murray to P.M., 17 December 1930, CAO CRS A518 A840/1/5.
102 Murray to Malinowski, 30 April 1929, CAO CRS G69-16/14. See also Murray to Malinowski, 4 October 1929, ibid.
103 Malinowski to Murray, 19 June 1929, CAO CRS G69-16/14; my emphasis.
104 Murray to Gilbert Murray, 8 December 1931, MFP 565/446.
105 Murray to Prime Minister, 17 December 1930, CAO CRS A518 A840/1/5; see also Murray to Gilbert Murray, 8 December 1931, referring to Gilbert's defence of his brother against criticisms from a group of anthropologists at a meeting of the British Association held in 1931.
106 Murray to P.M., 17 December 1930; my emphasis.
[The anthropologists'] devotion to their science may lead them to take, unconsciously, an attitude towards native custom which is more lenient and more conservative than could be consistent with good administration.... Anthropology is a useful aid to native administration.... But administration is itself too lofty and too dignified a science to be dragged at the chariot wheels of any other, however novel and however interesting. 107

107 Ibid.
CHAPTER IX

Anthropology and Administration:
Administration Dragged at the Chariot Wheels?

[I]f you wish to shatter the social fabric, you must not expect your professor of Social Anthropology to aid and abet you.... He is only a student, a student of the past, who may perhaps tell you a little, a very little, of what has been, but who cannot, dare not tell you what ought to be....

Sir James Frazer

[I]t is the anthropologist, provided he will deign to think sometimes in terms of value, who is best qualified both to criticize and to suggest the ways and means of adding to an existent primitive culture; for not only should he be the best judge of what is suitable and assimilable, but he should be best aware of the shortcomings of the culture as it stands.

F.E. Williams

A pioneer member of the Papuan administration, old and proud, once asserted that neither anthropologists nor anthropology had ever contributed anything useful towards the administration of Papua. J.T. Bensted, a former Director of Public Works and an ex-member of the Papuan Executive Council, told readers of the Sydney Morning Herald in 1932 that, 'for all the material value [anthropology] has been to the government and development of the native races of Papua


it might have remained just as well in its past obscurity'.  Bensted might almost have been Hubert Murray in one of his more personal confidences, when he wrote:

The Macgregor and Murray Administrations did not need to delve into the past to discover the why and the wherefore; they just took the customs and institutions as they found them, and built their edifice upon them without any "expert" direction - their qualifications being just sound common sense and a realisation of the duty of the superior to the inferior. The pioneer officer in British New Guinea had no training in anthropology, yet he produced and administered a system which the anthropologist has, so far, failed to improve or even modify - the "native regulations" of Papua standing as a monument to him.

'In fact', he concluded, 'the anthropologist has been forestalled in Papua'.

Indeed Bensted was substantially right; although Williams was not totally preoccupied with the past. Williams did little to alter or improve the system he found on his arrival in Papua, but it was by no means for want of trying. In the two decades he spent working for the Papuan Government Williams provided it with information and advice on a vast number of diverse subjects. At various times he touched upon almost every major facet of Papuan life. An examination of the recommendations he made, his relations with Murray and other administrative officers, his treatment by the Papuan Government, and both its conception of his role and his own, is made in the following two chapters, contributing a final, vital piece to the jigsaw of Williams's career.

3 J.T. Bensted to Editor, *Sydney Morning Herald*, (S.M.H.), 24 September 1932; see also: ibid., 6 October 1932; H. Ian Hogbin, 'Anthropology and the Native Problem, I', *S.M.H.*, 15 September 1932; Hogbin, 'Anthropology and the Native Problem, II', *S.M.H.*, 17 September 1932; Hogbin to Editor, *S.M.H.*, 28 September 1932; ibid., 12 October 1932.

4 J.T. Bensted to Editor, *S.M.H.*, 24 September 1932. Sir William MacGregor's name was mis-spelt by Bensted.

5 Bensted to Editor, *S.M.H.*, 6 October 1932.
EARLY in his career when Williams was issued a somewhat vague, blanket invitation to write to Murray with any ideas he had about anything, he was almost embarrassingly pleased. In reply he reeled off a long list of thoughts and suggestions on a variety of topics, including the missions, education, language, and the communication of Administrative propaganda. Requests to look into particular matters, he hinted broadly to Murray, were 'helpful, because my ideas will not always rise very willingly of their own accord'. But there were long periods during which no requests came.

Once, he was asked for assistance by another department of the Administration, but this was only after he had indicated a desire to help. The Chief Medical Officer, Strong's successor, asked if he could 'throw any light' on the 'natives' reluctance to attend the Native Hospital at Port Moresby, even if it meant 'criticism of the Medical Department or of individual members of it'. And Williams 'made some enquiries'. But most Administration enquiries came via the Government Secretary, direct communication between Williams and Murray being rare. Probably only twice, and this late in his career, did he ever receive a letter of fairly personal tone from the seemingly impassive Lieutenant-Governor.

Williams developed the habit of volunteering recommendations in conjunction with his responses to requests for pure information. He prefaced these remarks with such phrases as: 'Although I am not asked to express an opinion, I feel bound to say that...'. He was well aware that his suggestions were unwelcome. Of one of his unsolicited series of recommendations, he told his missionary friend Constance Fairhall, in true sportsman's spirit: 'as far as I am

6 Williams to Murray, 27 April 1925, CAO CRS G69-16/42.
7 Ibid.
8 Dr F.J. Williams, C.M.O. of Papua, to Williams, 5 September 1940, WP 5/13-108; Williams to C.M.O., 11 September 1940, ibid.; see Williams, 'Health Conditions in Poreporena', submitted to the Administration on 11 December 1940, copy in WP 5/13-108; see also Williams to G.S., 11 December 1940, ibid.
9 Williams to G.S., 17 December 1937, WP 5/14-125.
concerned I have just nearly completed a brief and showy innings. I don't expect they will put me in again, but at any rate I've cracked a few ones and twos. It will be my contribution to the side.' In deference to his captains he cushioned suggestions with such lines as: 'I do not propose to butt in...'.

Sometimes however, almost as though Murray had suddenly rediscovered a discarded toy, the Lieutenant-Governor would devise a 'problem' for Williams to solve or a task to perform. Having done so, Murray usually gave great publicity to the result and particularly to the part he had played in procuring it. A typical instance was his request for a report on 'sentiments' influencing Papuan social behaviour. At Murray's direction, Williams's published report on the subject was conspicuously preceded by a minute from the Lieutenant-Governor. 'Ever since the days of Sir William MacGregor', Murray wrote, 'it has been the policy of the Government to preserve native custom so far as possible... but it has occurred to me that there may be certain delicate and almost impalpable sentiments pervading a native community, which cannot be classed as customs, but which have an influence for good upon native life, and the disappearance of which would be a distinct loss.' That this had taken well over twenty years either to 'occur' to him or for him to act upon, apparently did not strike Murray as at all amazing. 'What I should like Mr. Williams to do', he told the Government Secretary, 'is to assist me by drafting a notice which might be sent out to Resident Magistrates, inviting their attention to sentiments or influences of this kind, and suggesting means by which [they] may be encouraged and preserved.' From the beginning the project was purely academic; Murray admitted that he did not see how such sentiments could

10 Williams to Paul [Constance Fairhall?], 4 December 1940, WP 5/13-108.
11 Williams to G.S., 19 August 1940, WP 5/13-108.
12 Minute from Murray to G.S., 31 August 1931, published in Williams, Sentiments and Leading Ideas in Native Society, Papua Anthropology Report No. 12, (1932).
13 Murray to G.S., 31 August 1931, ibid.
possibly be 'weld[ed] ... into a scheme of practical administration'.

A further instance of this type of contrived problem, though this time one which incidentally bore more directly on native welfare, concerned the relationship between certain customs and practices, and health. Inspiration for the project struck Murray not as a result of observation of the actual Papuan situation, nor of reflection upon it; it came almost accidentally when he was reading a journal article. Again his interest was essentially theoretical rather than practical. He sent Williams's report on the matter to the Prime Minister, pointing out his own part in initiating it.

Williams, unlike Chinnery, was never expected to comment on the underlying causes of 'native disturbances'. Even the occasional requests of various natures which did come from the Administration, he more than once privately assessed to be pointless. Often they were for information of a purely antiquarian nature or curiosity value, frequently for people outside the Territory whom Murray wished to oblige. Nonetheless, he usually carried them out resignedly and without comment. Of one instance Williams wrote to his administrative friend A.C. Rentoul, 'in a couple of days

14 Ibid.
15 Murray to G.S., 18 April 1931, copy in CAO CRS A518-L840/1/5; Murray to Prime Minister, 5 April 1932, ibid. Williams's report on the Hornbill Feather in the Abau District also resulted from one of Murray's suddenly devised 'problems'. See Williams, 'Report on the Hornbill Feather...', where he mentions that Murray casually asked him to 'think over the question'. The disruption, related to the feather's use as a homicidal emblem, had been occurring for years when Murray, for no apparent reason, asked Williams to consider the matter.
16 'Natives - Native Disturbances - Kambisi District - Papua', CAO CRS A1 25/22141.
17 See, for example: Williams to G.S., 11 May 1933, WP 5/2-20/75-77; Williams to G.S., 26 March 1935, WP 5/13-108; Leonard Murray (on behalf of Murray) to Williams, 29 October 1931, WP 5/10-85; Murray to Williams, 21 December 1935, with enclosure: Patrol Report by Leo Austen, 18-20 October 1935, WP 5/15-145.
I have to go to Sangara - rather a wild goose chase I think, but H.E. wants it done'.\(^{18}\) And when in 1936 he was asked to accompany the party making the aerial reconnaissance of the recently discovered Highlands, he was 'from the start uncertain what useful part I could play', peering down from a 'plane window at subjects he was accustomed to studying at rather closer range.\(^{19}\) But the projected flight was attracting considerable publicity and Murray was keen for his Government Anthropologist to go.\(^{20}\)

PUBLICLY, Williams accepted his subordinate role in the Administration. He often recited, in a convincing parrot fashion, the 'creed' which had been unofficially laid down for him.\(^{21}\) One version, however, is particularly revealing of his private feelings towards the Administration.

> I do not take it upon myself to make recommendations. It is not really part of an anthropologist's work to make them (unless of course expressly asked for.... He merely presents facts and considerations for the help of those greater and more highly paid people whose responsibility it is to make the decision. \(^{22}\)

His words, written only for the eyes of a close friend, although

\(^{18}\) Williams to Rentoul, 16 December 1932, WP 5/1-4.  
\(^{19}\) Williams, 'Aerial Reconnaissance of the Hides-O'Malley Area', submitted 1 March 1936, typescript WP 5/16-153; G.A. to G.S., 3 March 1936, ibid.; O.S. to Williams, 6 November 1935, ibid.  
\(^{20}\) Murray to G.S., copy forwarded to Williams, 2 November 1935, ibid.  
\(^{22}\) Williams to Paul ? [Constance Fairhall?], 4 December 1940, WP 5/13-108.
tinged with humour, also carry some bitterness. Williams was frustrated by the passive role he was expected to play. And he came to feel increasingly that his expertise was not being fully utilized. Usually he had little trouble confining himself to the bounds laid down for him by Murray, his natural stoicism coming readily to his aid. But on at least two occasions his ire was definitely aroused.

When the aerial reconnaissance of the Highlands was being planned, Williams was asked whether he thought the Native Taxation Fund might be validly drawn on to help finance the excursion. At first he politely refused to comment, saying it was not his prerogative to do so: 'since I have no part in the administration of the Fund I do not care to give an opinion'. But he did have a very strong opinion, and in this instance he chose to overreach his bounds. 'At the last minute' he decided to give his view, 'which is that such a course would be entirely unjustified.' If the Administration's idea of what constituted 'native welfare' had become rather clouded, Williams's still retained vestiges of clarity.

On the second occasion, he was angered by the Administration's failure to seek his opinion on a matter he felt came particularly into his field of expertise. In 1940 the Papuan Government was investigating the causes of tuberculosis in the Territory. Although 'deeply uninstructed in the science of germs', in respect of village life Williams believed he could 'pose as a professional'; and, as the problem was sociological as well as medical, he felt it 'all to the good that I should have a say'. 'What makes me so b... wild', he told Constance Fairhall, 'is that no one in this Government had the grace or the intelligence to realize that.'

Although admittedly this second instance occurred after Murray's death, the virtually identical natures of the administration

24 Ibid.; see also a comment, possibly from Williams's magisterial friend Leo Austen, that the G.S.'s suggestion amounted to 'disgraceful economy', note on ibid., 29 January 1936.
of his immediate successors and his own, validates the example as one of a more general state of affairs: Williams's advice was seldom asked for. In the tuberculosis case he decided to conduct his own, independent inquiry into the problem; it was sanctioned by the Administration almost as an afterthought, when he politely pointed out that he had views on the subject. This approach characterized the majority of Williams's work. He was usually responsible for choosing the topics or problems of his investigations. And although he paid lip-service to the contrary, he often chose to volunteer his findings and recommendations to the Administration, instead of waiting for requests which might never come.

He was unimpressed by the way the Administration operated but generally kept this to himself. In particular he disapproved of the inefficiency of the Government's approach to matters which might have been most successfully dealt with through co-operation between departments. And in this he was joined by Constance Fairhall.

The poverty of the Papuan Administration also appalled him, making his working conditions spartan and - to his far greater concern - constantly, he believed, reducing the possibility of the implementation of any of his recommendations. 'We are not wealthy here', he told a friend. 'I should think the Papuan administration must be one of the most economical that ever existed.' He remarked to Murray once that he was surprised by the high standard of Papuan officers, considering their meagre salaries, the unattractive conditions under which they were employed and lived, and the absence of any set course of training.

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27 Williams to Paul [Constance Fairhall?], 4 December 1940, WP 5/13-108; Paul [Constance Fairhall?] to Williams, 29 November 1940, ibid.

28 Williams to F. Wylie, 17 May 1925, Williams's file, Rhodes House.

29 Williams to Murray, 27 April 1925, CAO CRS G69-16/42.
Williams's own financial conditions were even worse than those of regular Papuan officers, because of the anomaly of his payment from the Native Taxation Fund and his inferior superannuation arrangements. After twenty years of Papuan service, his salary and allowances, including that for editing the *Papuan Villager*, amounted to only £738 per annum. This was far less than senior magisterial and administrative officers were receiving. Money, and his family's financial security continued to be nagging worries to him. He hoped that a Pacific Civil Service might eventually be established placing Papuan Officers on a better financial footing and, ideally, including him. He went to great lengths to insure his life before the aerial reconnaissance of the Highlands. And he frequently contributed both light and serious articles to popular magazines, newspapers and journals in an attempt to bring in a little more money. He made no profit from his own book publications. His insubstantial salary was eaten away by the expense of his blind child's education and Constance Williams's frequent trips to England.

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30 J.R. Halligan to Williams, 19 February 1943, CAO A452-59/5972; Williams to Halligan, 25 February 1943, ibid.; see also expenditure on anthropology, in 'Native Taxation: Summary of Revenue and Expenditure from Inception of Scheme', *Papua Government Gazette*, No. 13 of 5 November 1930 and ibid., No. 17 of 4 December 1935; and 'Papua - Native Taxation', in CAO CRS A518-1840/1/5.


32 Williams to Murray, 2 April 1925, CAO CRS G69-16/42.

33 Williams to G.S., 28 January 1936, copy in WP 5/16-153; Acting Lieutenant-Governor to G.S., 28 January 1936, ibid.

34 See, for example: Williams, 'An Election in Papua' (1929), which was rejected by the magazine to which it was submitted, copy in WP 5/13-108; Williams, 'Caddies Day in Papua', *London Illustrated News*, 11 March 1933; Williams, 'Boe Vagi', *P.I.M.*, referred to in Williams to G.S., 26 March 1935, WP 5/13-108. See also Williams to G.S., 8 May 1936, WP 5/16-153 and G.S. to Williams, 14 May 1936, ibid., concerning a request for permission to submit an article.

35 Memorandum from O.S. to Secretary, Department of Treasury, Canberra, 19 October 1928, CAO CRS A518 B806/1/5.
At least twice, once in 1926 and '27 and again in 1931, Williams tried to leave Papua for work elsewhere. It was not for dislike of the actual anthropological work; that kept him 'very much engaged' and he 'enjoy[ed] it thoroughly'. Money was, of course, a major consideration. But he was also beginning to feel 'too old' for the rugged, active life of the field-worker; as early as 1926 'a growing stiffness in my limbs' called for 'a more comfortable job'. A year later, newly wed, he had a further reason for wishing to leave. The job had 'had its advantages for the young and unmarried, but now I am beginning to feel that it is not altogether satisfactory'. And, by 1929, 'being now a family man, I would rather live in a temperate clime'. A desire to be near his son while he was being educated was partly responsible for the second attempt to leave Papua. But it is possible too that Williams was already becoming tired of a working situation in which his opinions were quietly but persistently ignored. He 'experienced a feeling of severe deflation on getting back to Papua', after one of his infrequent periods of leave, but 'slowly [got his] wind back'. As matters eventuated, a job did not appear and he stayed on.

WILLIAMS's relations with administrative officers, particularly those in the field, were generally excellent. His own experiences enabled

36 Williams to F. Wylie, 7 February 1926 and ibid., 1 May 1927, Rhodes House; Murray, open reference concerning Williams, 5 May 1931, copy in CAO CRS G69-28/9; Williams to Murray, 6 May 1931, ibid.
37 Williams to Wylie, 15 May 1923, Rhodes House; see also: ibid., 17 May 1925; ibid., 7 February 1926.
38 Williams to Wylie, 7 February 1926, Williams's file, Rhodes House.
39 Williams to Wylie, 1 May 1927, Rhodes House.
40 Williams to Wylie, 1 February 1929, Rhodes House.
41 Williams to C.K. Allen, 14 March 1935, Rhodes House.
42 See, for example, L. Austen to Williams, 6 May 1936, WP 5/15-145; I. Champion to Williams, 11 January 1938, WP 5/6-56; Williams to I. Champion, 12 June 1929, WP 5/14-125; C.T.J. Adamson to Williams, 18 January 1940, WP 5/6-56; R.A. Woodward to Williams, 31 May 1933, WP 5/3-36; and numerous others in Williams Papers.
him to sympathize with some of his magistrate friends who were dissatisfied with the treatment they received from the Papuan Service. As with the missionaries, he corresponded with a number of administrative officers on ethnological matters and received willing responses to his calls for data from regions he was unable to visit personally at particular times.

Occasionally officers asked Williams to support them in negotiations with their superiors in the administrative hierarchy. He did so, but with extreme caution and detachment. In 1940 the A.R.M. of Kutubu asked him to back up his request for permission to restore the head of a man who had died at the tuberculosis hospital on Gemo Island, to the dead man's people. The officer believed that 'it would probably ease things for the Government here [at Kutubu] if they did'. The death had 'caused a stir' and the relatives had been dissatisfied with the 'pay' they received from the A.R.M. in compensation for their loss.

Williams explained the particular group's practice of retrieving the head from the mortuary platform, and the social and economic significance attached to the procedure, to the Administration. He mentioned, too, the possible advantage of satisfying the parties involved; and the possible drawbacks: of upsetting 'missionary feeling', or detracting from 'missionary authority' in the eyes of other Papuans. Overall he thought, with the mission's sanction, the head might be returned. If the Government chose to grant permission, he 'should be ready to give my assistance'. But, he was 'certainly not urging the matter'.

To their superiors Williams praised those officers who

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43 See, for example, L. Austen to Williams, 6 May 1936, WP 5/15-145, complaining about the Government's promotion policy; and C.T.J. Adamson to Williams, 18 January 1940, WP 5/6-56, who, referring to Murray and Leonard Murray, wrote: 'I don't think they really take the slightest interest in things up here [at Kutubu] at all.'

44 C.T.J. Adamson to Williams, 18 January 1940, WP 5/6-56.

45 Ibid.

46 Williams to G.S., 21 March 1940, WP 5/6-56.
pursued their own anthropological research and remarked that it was greatly to their benefit to do so, bound as it was to increase their working effectiveness. Officers, in their turn, praised Williams. The Officer-in-Charge at Lake Kutubu told the Government Secretary that, 'excluding the value of his anthropological work is his work in bringing these peoples under control'; in the course of performing his own task, Williams 'has gained the confidence of the natives, and has been able to make for a better understanding between the Government and the people'.

Not all administrative officers of course were happy to have a Government Anthropologist working beside them. There was an undercurrent of what was perhaps partly jealousy where some of the older and more senior officers were concerned, reflected in Bensted's letters to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. There was perhaps an element of it, too, in Champion's generally negative or obstructive attitude to Williams's proposals, in particular those regarding education. There was also the underlying view, so well expressed by Bensted, that 'the limitations of the native mind' had to be recognized; this, he promised, *he* did, 'even if the anthropologist did not'. But fortunately, in day-to-day matters, this resentment was not apparent.

MOST of Williams's findings and recommendations first reached the Administration in the form of reports and were subsequently published either by it in Port Moresby, or by Oxford University Press with Papuan financial assistance; the latter group of publications included *Drama of Orokolo*, *Orokaiva Society*, *Orokaiva Magic* and *Papuans of the Trans-Fly*. Murray took great pleasure in distributing the reports to administrators, politicians and anthropologists throughout the

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47 Williams to G.S., 31 July 1939, WP 5/15-147.
48 Officer-in-Charge at Kutubu to Government Secretary, quoted in Minute from G.S. to Williams, 16 May 1939, WP 5/6-56.
49 J.T. Bensted to Editor, *S.M.H.*, 24 September 1932.
world, though his own reading of them was, at least sometimes, cursory. Publication was financed from the Native Education Fund and all proceeds of sales were returned to it. Additional suggestions occasionally found their way from Williams to Murray or the Government Secretary in the form of minutes or letters.

Williams was fortunate in the attitude of the Administration to the publication of his works. With one exception, they arrived at the printer's with their recommendations and criticism intact. All that was demanded was a note explaining that the views expressed were not necessarily those of the Government. Chinnery's reports, in contrast, were heavily censored by the Administrator of the Mandated Territory before publication. Informing it of his censorship of a number of the reports, and the decision not to publish one at all, the Administrator of New Guinea told the Prime Minister's Department: 'Reports (which are intended for publication) should be limited to the purely Anthropological, and all Administrative matters should be

50 Murray's comments on Williams's Vailala Madness report indicate that the former apparently failed to comprehend Williams's very clearly presented views on Christianity: 'I note that Mr Williams seems to doubt that Christianity is a sufficient substitute for the old ritual.... It is not clear what he would recommend as a substitute.' Anything more than the most perfunctory reading would have left Murray with no doubt that it was not Christianity per se, but the type of Christianity to which Williams objected in his report. See Memorandum from the Lieutenant-Governor to the Government Anthropologist [Dr Strong], n.d., reprinted in Williams, *The Vailala Madness and the Destruction of Native Ceremonies in the Gulf Division*, Papua Anthropology Report No. 4, (1923), p. iii; and Williams, *ibid.*, pp. 61-2 and passim.

51 T.V. Lowney, A/O.S., to Clerk-in-Charge, Territories Branch, Department of Home and Territories, 30 August 1928, CAO CRS A518 B806/1/5.

52 The exception, discussed above in Chapter VI, concerned the suggestion of importing Asian labourers.

53 See, for example, Williams, *Orokaiva Magic*, p. v.

54 See, for example, draft of E.W.P. Chinnery, 'Studies of the Native Population of the East Coast of New Ireland' (eventually published, in a severely modified form, as New Guinea Anthropology Report No. 6), on which the alterations of the censor are noted, CAO CRS A518-0(A) 806/1/3.
eliminated, especially such as is controversial.55 But although Chinnery's suggestions were veiled from the gaze of the League of Nations, compared with Williams's they received a far better hearing from the Administration, a consolation which Williams, given the choice, would probably happily have accepted.56

55 E.A. Wisdom, Minute, 2 April 1930, CAO CRS A518 0806/1/3; see also Wisdom to J.R. Halligan, 8 March 1930, ibid.
56 Chinnery to J.S. McLaren, 10 December 1924, CAO CP 637071D.
CHAPTER X

Advice and Opinions:

'The Anthropologist suggests ...'

Mr Williams's duties ... are to advise the Government on questions of practical administration, and so assist us in our task of fitting or, as it were, dovetailing existing customs into the new civilisation which we are introducing.

J.H.P. Murray

ONCE having examined them in the functionalist manner with the aim of assessing their purpose and importance to the society as a whole, Williams assumed it his right to pass judgement on customs and other aspects of Papuan life. In doing so, he attempted to apply particular criteria as the basis of his evaluations. He asked, first, did the custom victimize the individual, the most important factor to be considered; and secondly, did it have the sanction of the society in which it existed - as opposed to the sanction of any other society, which was irrelevant? Some mortuary rites for example, particularly those described by Malinowski, Williams found 'extremely repellent'. Yet, 'however disgusting', at least in theory - because according to medical opinion they were not intrinsically dangerous - he did not believe they should be punished.

These criteria differed markedly from those sometimes applied - often perhaps unconsciously - by the Administration itself. Despite Murray's frequent boasts to the contrary, there were instances in which administrative officers disregarded Papuan custom or habit in their actions. Occasionally, simply for administrative convenience,

1 J.H.P. Murray, Foreword to F.E. Williams, The Natives of the Purari Delta, Papua Anthropology Report No. 5, (Port Moresby, 1924) p. iii.


3 Williams, 'Hygienic Improvements and Native Customs, Etc.', 16 June 1931, copy in CAO CRS A518/ L840/1/5. He had in mind particularly those mortuary rites described by Malinowski in Sexual Life of Savages, (New York, 1929) p. 133.
they took measures to alter Papuan arrangements which had victimised no-one. One officer, for example, persuaded the people of an inland village near Goodenough Bay 'to come and live on the beach' where they would be more easily accessible to patrol officers. Williams volunteered that, 'if they have their gardens and spend most of their time in the mountains, I should think they would prefer to live there altogether, as before. They would probably be better off for food'.

Some administrative officers were even less concerned with the acceptability or otherwise of a custom or practice to the Papuan society which exhibited it. The deciding factor on some occasions was whether, by comparison with European fashions, it was acceptable. The suppression of Trobriand mortuary practices was seen by Bronislaw Malinowski as a prime example of this. 'This irrelevant precaution', he told Murray, 'strikes at the root of the whole institution of mortuary duties, extremely important in the Trobriands ... That it was with a sense of deep grievance and of a sacrilege perpetuated against their customs that they gave up exhumation I can assure you, from personal experience'. Medical opinion held that the practices were not health hazards, though this was Murray's public justification for their suppression.

Sexual practices were even more likely to meet with administrative disapproval. Murray himself wrote to Williams while the latter was in the field, asking him to discover whether there were any 'sexual abominations', such as sodomy, practiced in the Gulf district. 'Of course' if there were, he told Williams pointedly, 'you would not encourage them'; though here, as often elsewhere, Murray's concern was as much with the press as with either 'native welfare' or questions of morality. The Administration would become a laughing-stock if word got around that it was condoning sodomy in one part of the Territory, while suppressing it 'with a long term of imprisonment' in another. And to an extent, although he consciously attempted to avoid

4 Williams to G.S., 23 March 1931, WP 5/15-147.
5 B. Malinowski to Murray, 19 June 1929, CAO CRS G69-16/14.
6 Murray to Williams, 30 March 1937, CAO CRS G69-16/14.
judging it or judged it liberally, the consideration of 'morality'
probably sometimes influenced Williams's evaluations too.

There was one 'tool' which, if Bensted's words are to be
accepted, Williams always used in common with administrative officers.
For him, 'common sense' was the ultimate yard-stick in the work of
evaluating aspects of Papuan life, or the likely effects of administrative
proposals upon them.7

THE subjects to which Williams applied his evaluative yard-sticks
varied widely. Education apart, his investigations usually centered on,
and drew their inspiration from, either a particular people; a
specific custom or institution; or an individual 'problem'. His
recommendations were often co- incidental to the original subject of
study. His advice on communication between the Government and Papuans
is particularly distinctive in retrospect, because it was one of the
rare instances in which Murray actually attempted to implement his
recommendations.

Not only did Europeans and Papuans not 'understand each other',
Williams observed in 1925, but Papuans did not understand what the
Government 'was driving at'.8 Sometimes magistrates were 'too brusque'.
Patrols were conducted too hurriedly and Village Councillors and
Constables were not used as fully as they might have been, to convey
the Government's views to villagers. There was a failure also to 'win
over' other influential villagers by way of flattery, in order to use
them as 'mouthpieces of Government Propaganda'.9

Soon after Williams made these observations and almost
certainly as a result of his urgings, Murray distributed a circular to
all administrative officers stressing the need for mutual comprehension
between rulers and ruled if administration were to be successful.
He called for a concerted effort to achieve this. The circular followed
Williams's recommendations almost verbatim - a fact which Murray

7 Williams, 'Creed of a Government Anthropologist'.
8 Williams to Murray, 27 April 1925, CAO CRS G69-
16/42. This was in response to Murray's single,
nebulous, blanket invitation.
9 Ibid.
omitted to mention when proudly relating the measure to his Minister. Canberra was impressed by the document and forwarded it to the Mandated Territory to be drawn to the attention of all New Guinea officers.

Eight years later, the interest which Williams had aroused in Murray in the communication problem suddenly revived. But Murray treated it almost in the manner of an academic exercise. 'For a long time', he told his brother, the 'natives' had 'seemed to be utterly indifferent' to his efforts to explain things to them. Of late however, he observed with some apparent surprise, they had 'wakened up and appear to understand what we tell them'. This had encouraged him to have printed in English and a number of 'native' languages, a paper 'trying to explain' what the Administration's work was all about. Murray seemed to think the campaign might 'catch on' though it was bound to be 'a long job, and one cannot expect to do much in a single life time'. Even if it failed it could do no harm, besides which it would 'be interesting from a philological point of view'.

Williams also provided Murray with a virtual handbook for administrative officers on how 'the native mind' worked - *Sentiments and Leading Ideas in Native Society*. These included 'native conservatism' or the attachment to tradition; a 'sense of shame'; group loyalty; pride in culture; self-dignity; intra-group sentiment, or 'the sympathetic sanction', which generally prevented one member of a group from injuring another; the retention of economic balance through 'reciprocity'; the cult of food; respect for seniority, and sentiments towards the dead. Each played some part in governing the operation of Papuan societies. Williams's own preference for 'individualism' clearly influenced his attitude towards some Papuan sentiments; there was little regret in his conviction that the growth of individualism, and the accompanying decline in communal feeling, 'as a result of contact with Europeans, is probably inevitable'. Nonetheless he saw much to commend in most sentiments and stressed that

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10 'Circular to administrative officers', undated copy appended to Murray to Minister for Home and Territories, 6 June 1925, CAO CRS AI 25/18516.

11 J.S. McLaren to Deputy Administrator, Rabaul, 24 July 1925, CAO CRS AI 25/18516.

12 Murray to Gilbert Murray, 2 January 1933, MFP 565/453.
they formed an important though not indispensable part of the social fabric. Personally he probably believed the ideal attitude towards 'sentiments' and 'leading ideas' was one of encouragement and appreciation. But in his report he remarked that, as it was not the Administration's aim to preserve native society in its present condition, 'each must be judged upon its merits or upon the measure in which it contributes towards what we envisage as the new ideal'. Whatever practical policy decision was taken by administrative officers Williams concluded, Papuan sentiments 'certainly deserve all the consideration we can give them'. His 'sentiments handbook' was written in an exaggeratedly simple style, apparently aimed at administrative officers of fifth-form mentality. It too was circulated to all members of the Administration and rapidly found its way to the Mandated Territory.

Whether either the 'communication' circular or the 'sentiments' handbook had any influence on the approach of administrative officers to their work is virtually impossible to assess. Probably those such as Williams's magisterial friends, who were inclined to employ an anthropological outlook in their work would not have needed them. Officers not so inclined would have had little interest in the productions.

Williams passed judgements on marriage payments, homicidal emblems, incest, 'wife prostitution', sodomy, various forms of sorcery, and cultist activities. One example of the latter provides a particularly lucid illustration of his methods of evaluation. His investigation of the bull-roarer cult in the Gulf District was sparked off, in 1936, by a clash between villagers and a Papuan evangelist who was threatening to expose the 'secret' of the bull-roarer to the women of the village. In this case the Administration did ask Williams to report on the matter.

He described the cult in detail and, in the best functionalist

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14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
fashion, examined the part which it played in the culture. Then, considering the people's psychological attitudes towards it, he showed that initiation into the cult was one of a series of social steps taken by every male in the society; it was a special means of maintaining the sexual dichotomy - of keeping women in the position where men believed they rightly belonged; it was also quite obviously made to provide a pretext for the feast and the interchange of ornaments, from which were derived a vast amount of fun, festivity and excitement - features of 'immense importance' in 'native' life. Further, it provided a means of communicating with the world of spiritual beings, who it was believed could influence for good or evil the lives of present-day Papuans. Williams asserted that the Gulf people had a real reverence for the bull-roarer, that they might actually pray to it; and finally, that it fulfilled a political function - it was made to guard the prestige of certain powerful individuals or 'chiefs'; and a legal one: it could be invoked to prevent strife and to punish offenders. In short, he presented a powerful, carefully argued case for the importance of the cult to the society and, by implication, against its suppression.16

Williams was always at his best when arguing for the preservation of any Papuan institution or custom well endowed with ceremonial or aesthetic elements. And he argued for the bull-roarer and a number of similar subjects as enthusiastically as for Hevehe.17

But he regarded the bull-roarer case as his greatest coup, for after reading his report on it, 'H.E. minuted "no action need be taken"'. And, as Williams saw it, as a result of his efforts 'the bull-roarer in the Gulf of Papua was saved'.18

Without intending to deny Williams the shred of gratification which the bull-roarer 'success' must have given him, it would be

16 Williams, Bull-Roarers in the Papuan Gulf, Papua Anthropology Report No. 17, (1936); see also Williams, 'Address to the Anthropological Society, Honolulu', August 1936, copy in WP 5/1-2.

17 See, for example, Williams on the Soi ceremony, in Depopulation of the Suau District, Papua Anthropology Report No. 13 (Port Moresby, 1933) pp. 49-55.

18 Williams, 'Address to Anthropological Society, Honolulu'.
misleading to portray it as a great victory. The bull-roarer, and similar cases where his advice was apparently taken, usually related to the non-suppression or toleration of a custom or practice, and thus did not entail the Administration's taking any action. Most of his recommendations for positive steps to be taken were ignored. Although Williams should perhaps be credited with some influence, the decisive factor in most of these instances was probably simply that it was easiest to do nothing at all.

He returned frequently to the questions of ceremonial life and the feast, the subjects raising themselves in his minutes and reports with what must for the Administration have been monotonous regularity. In his report on the hornbill feather in the Abau District Williams reminded the Government of his warnings regarding the Orokolo ceremonial cycle, its aesthetic worth, and the vital interest it generated in the society. 'On general grounds', he wrote, 'I am strongly against the suppression of feasts'. In the Abau case he believed it was the Administration rather than the mission which had suppressed the feast at one stage. The administrative officer in charge had told the people that until they ceased to harbour the 'murderers' he was looking for, their feasts must stop. The punishment of a whole community in this way was unacceptable, especially as homicide did not, as Williams discovered, have social sanction at Abau. The people there he had found aimless; they told him they no longer had anything to do. 'It need hardly be said' he told the Administration, 'that the suppression of feasts involves great hardship'.

There were many other occasions on which Williams argued against the abolition of a custom or practice, or for moderation in its treatment. After a 'war-like display' in connection with a marriage payment in the Kairuku district led to injuries, the

20 Williams, 'The Hornbill Feather ...'.
21 Ibid.
Administration was considering passing a regulation against such ceremonies. Williams, asked only for information about the type of practice, volunteered his opinion too. The displays should *not* be forbidden in law; they were 'surely not in themselves a bad thing', on the contrary the people probably found 'some much-needed fun and excitement in them'. But he was not suggesting, he stressed, that 'personal violence should be condoned because it may occur in connection with some native custom'. If it were serious enough to amount to victimization, it could always be dealt with by police authority. Preferably, preventative measures could be taken to begin with, administrative officers encouraging the parties concerned to 'at least see that they have the payment ready so as to avoid unpleasantness'.

But Williams by no means always decided in favour of a custom or practice. On one occasion Murray became interested in the question of 'wife prostitution'. He asked Williams whether he believed it existed in Papua, on what grounds if any it might be opposed, and in what manner it could best be stopped. Something like it, Williams replied, known among one group as *amina*, did exist in some areas of Papua. For his own part, he 'would not attack it on grounds of morality' as it was 'a recognized part of the sexual life of the old society, and as such, with the sanction of complete social approval it could not be stigmatised as immoral'. Nor, 'in the absence of individual victimisation', would it be easy to show that the practice did any harm. Despite this, Williams insisted that *amina*, and indeed any sexual promiscuity, ritual or otherwise, should be suppressed. Venereal disease now made them impermissable. But he was not optimistic that *amina* could be stopped by direct Government action; 'the people no doubt regard it as great fun and would try to do it on the sly'. Possibly mission influence could be encouraged to combat the practice.

Again, in the case of a particular homicidal emblem, he recommended that administrative action be taken. Having discovered

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22 Williams to G.S., 17 December 1937, WP 5/14-125.
23 Williams to Murray, 27 August 1936, WP 5/1-4.
ample evidence that 'the present custom of wearing the hornbill feather among the Nemea provides some incentive for killing', he suggested a series of alternative possible ways of depriving the feather of its unsavoury significance. Characteristically, Williams's aesthetic considerations came to the fore; but there was probably also a measure of concern for the Papuan's 'pride of race' in his disinclination to ban the feather completely. Personally, he 'should be loath to see [it] disappear'. It was 'a kind of ornament which is very effective and is widely used in other parts of the Territory'. Whichever alternative, if any, the Administration chose to apply Williams stressed, it was desirable that 'the general support of the natives themselves' be obtained. Interestingly, one alternative—that of substituting a pig for the human victim in its relation to the homicidal emblem—was similar to a successfully implemented measure of Chinnery's in the Mandated Territory.

For many of the customs and institutions on which Williams commented, regardless of whether or not his views differed from those of the Administration, the results were foregone conclusions. One Papuan institution about which Murray had particularly set views long before Williams's arrival, was that of sorcery. It was also the subject over which Murray and his Administration most frequently drew the wrath and derision of the anthropological world—Malinowski, Pitt-Rivers and Fortune being three cases in point. Sorcerers, Murray often tried to explain, 'become the tyrants of the village by blackmailing and terrorising the inhabitants'; and, by encouraging retaliation, sorcery also lead to many murders. 'Black magic' had long been outlawed under the Native Regulations.

In purely functionalist terms, Williams was forced to admit

24 Williams, 'The Hornbill Feather in the Abau District', unpublished report, 1935, copy in WP 5/14-129; this is apparently the only one of Williams's longer reports that was not published. An abridged version was included in Papua Annual Report, 1935-36.


26 Murray, Papua or British New Guinea, pp.204-205.
that sorcery had 'social value', otherwise it would not survive as it did in social life.\textsuperscript{27} He also believed it had something else to commend it; in \textit{Orokaiva Society} he referred to its role as a guardian of individual rights. One man might refrain from harming another for example, through fear of retaliation by sorcery.\textsuperscript{28} Murray was a trifle taken back when he read this and asked Williams if he had really meant it.\textsuperscript{29} He need not have been alarmed. In culture, even an element that was in general 'undeniably bad' was almost bound to have \textit{some} good point, Williams reassured him frankly. In the case of sorcery he believed, in contrast to most of his contemporaries, 'infinitely more harm than good' was done.\textsuperscript{30} Individual rights were only guarded by it 'for reasons of the superstitious fear it inspires'.\textsuperscript{31} Although education was still the only ultimate solution, he recommended a short-term measure for dealing with specific cases of alleged sorcery - one which would have horrified Fortune and his ilk - practitioners were to be publicly treated with derision by administrative officers with the aim of reducing them to laughing stocks.\textsuperscript{32}

Williams proved a useful 'witness' at a 'command performance' of the \textit{vada} method of killing by sorcery, held at Murray's invitation at Government House in 1931. The aim of the exercise was to discredit sorcerers in the eyes of their fellows. After the visiting sorcerers had failed to fulfil their promise to revive a dead dog, Williams interviewed both them and local spectators. He was confident that 'the inevitable failure' would 'make some useful impression on those who

\begin{enumerate}
\item[27] Williams to Murray, 3 October 1930, CAO CRS G69-16/17.
\item[29] Murray to Williams, 2 October 1930, copy in CAO CRS G69-16/17.
\item[30] Williams to Murray, 3 October 1930; See also Williams, 'Address to Anthropology Society, Adelaide', 1930, copy in WP 5/1-2; Williams, 'Address to Pan Pacific Union, Hawaii', 1936, copy in \textit{ibid}.
\item[32] Williams to Murray, 27 June 1928, CAO CRS G69-16/41.
\end{enumerate}
continually imagine themselves victims of the vada men', and would also provide 'further evidence to the natives that they may obtain a sympathetic hearing for their customs and even the most extreme of their beliefs'. His views on sorcery proved extremely convenient to Murray who cited and quoted them with abandon in his numerous publications and addresses, as though Williams were the ultimate authority on the subject. Needless to say, Murray did not quote him on those subjects about which they disagreed.

'NATIVE welfare' being a central preoccupation of Murray's administration, health was frequently a subject of Williams's deliberations. After Murray read in 1931 that it was 'becoming fashionable' in native administration to have officers from different departments consult with one another, he asked Williams and Strong to discuss and report upon the relationships between hygiene and custom. There were, Murray believed, 'many native customs and prejudices which militate against hygienic improvements'.

Williams outlined the various customs which might have some bearing on health and explained their social significance. Although he agreed with Murray that some were obstructive to hygienic improvements, he did not believe that they presented 'the most serious obstacle'. Three others were greater: native prejudice, ignorance about the meaning and importance of sanitation and finally, 'the common attitude

33 Williams, article written for Papuan Courier, September 1931, copy in WP 5/14-126; see also Williams, 'Report on the Vada men's "killing" of the dog at Government House on Saturday, September 12th, 1931', copy in WP 5/14-126. Williams also discussed a type of medicinal sorcery at Murray's request; see Williams to G.S., 26 June 1931, WP 5/13-108; Murray to G.S., 19 June 1931, copy in CAO CRS G69-16/17.

34 See, for example, Murray, 'Manuscript of book on Papua', MP Vol II ML MSS A3138-2, pp. 137 and 141; Murray, Papua of To-Day.

35 Murray to G.S., 18 April 1931, CAO CRS A518 L840/1/5; Murray to Prime Minister, 5 April 1932, ibid.

36 Murray, quoted by Williams in 'Hygienic Improvements and Native Customs, Etc.', 16 June 1931, copy in CAO CRS A518 L840/1/5.
of apathy, carelessness and laziness'. Ignorance would be 'partly and gradually dispelled' through constant 'drumming in' of elementary health lessons by the missionaries; and, he hoped, through the *Papuan Villager*. But apathy was the most difficult problem. Disciplinary measures should be taken by magistrates whenever 'grossly insanitary practices' were detected. Ultimately however, the habituation of young Papuans, preferably through Garden Boarding Schools, was the best way to achieve lasting results; it was far preferable to 'direct prohibition'.

Customs, Williams recommended, should not be over-ridden in the interests of better hygiene 'unless they involve more or less serious danger'. Strong suggested that mortuary rituals should only be prohibited in cases where communicable disease was present, and even then the doctor did not think they should be specifically declared punishable by law. Williams, in contrast, and probably more realistically, recommended that all mortuary rites involving physical contact with the deceased should be banned. Doubtless he had in mind the likelihood of the Papuan layman failing to recognise the presence of disease, a possibility which Strong had apparently failed to consider.

Other cases, Williams urged, should be judged on their merits, the social value of the custom being weighed against the seriousness of the objection to it on hygienic grounds. Ritual prohibition of washing, and the wearing of elaborate though inadvertently unclean headdresses were customs 'dear to the natives' heart' which should not be interfered with unless absolutely necessary for health reasons.

Housing too had to be considered in relation to health and hygiene. It was one of Murray's much publicised 'native policies' to interfere as little as possible with Papuan architecture and methods.

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37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Strong to G.S., 25 June 1931, CAO CRS A518 L840/1/5.
40 Williams, 'Hygienic Improvements ...'.
In 1931 Williams urged that if interference were considered necessary for health reasons, reforms should be adaptations of existing styles. Magistrates, he recommended, should order 'natives' to pull down and rebuild collapsing houses. Villagers would not mind this he confidently assured the Administration, except in so far as it would cost them extra work. As for improving the houses in general, technical training by the missionaries should do some good.

Both Murray and Williams, at different times, did consider greater interference with Papuan housing and village planning. Murray was impressed by the drastic changes carried out in Dutch Western New Guinea, among the Marind Anim. The total re-ordering of almost every aspect of village life there, physical and cultural, according to the German anthropologist P. Wirz, had been unduly harsh and had led to resentment and despair. But Murray was interested in the beneficial results particularly the reduction in venereal disease - the problem which had precipitated the Dutch action - and the arrest of depopulation. He would have liked to attempt the same type of experiment in Papua, but did not publicise the fact. To the Prime Minister he confided: 'I lack the courage to follow the lead of this very progressive administration'.

It was 'tuberculosis' which prompted Williams, a decade later, to reconsider the housing question. The greater and 'hardest' part of the work of his 'self-imposed' investigation into Poreporena health conditions, concerned housing; and 'not so much the individual house as a reshaping of the village'. He devised a detailed plan specifying spacing between buildings, location and type of sanitary amenities, and room and window sizes. But the essential Papuan styles and materials were again to be incorporated. He was proved right however in his personal prediction about the Administration's reaction to the scheme: 'I doubt whether the Government would ever

41 Murray to Prime Minister, 17 December 1930, CAO CRS A518 A840/1/5.
42 Williams to Paul? [Constance Fairhall?], 4 December 1940, WP 5/13-108; see also Williams to G.S., 24 October 1940, ibid.
have the guts to attempt it, or any alternative'.

Not only customs and housing, but routine matters of daily life had to be considered in relation to health. Williams's suggestions for improving the Papuan diet have been discussed already, in connection with practical education. He made further similar recommendations concerning the control of malnutrition in Poreporena, in 1940. And when the Administration was considering banning pigs from the same village, because of the possibility that they might be responsible for tuberculosis, Williams suggested that the matter be shelved entirely until the suspicion were proved, but that appropriate scientific tests be made immediately; in these views he was in agreement with the Resident Magistrate of the Division. But even if it were proved that pigs did transmit tuberculosis to humans, he told the Government, he 'should strongly deprecate ... the idea of exterminating them'. Instead they could perhaps be moved outside the village; it must surely be possible to control the matter 'as in other countries' without going to the length of wiping out the highly prized, socially and economically significant beasts.

The psychological well-being of the individual Papuan and indeed of each society, were also immensely important. The 'native craving for excitement' had, Williams believed, been left unquenched following the demise of warfare, cannibalism and, in some areas, the loss of ceremonial life, the feast and the dance. The influence of

43 Williams to Paul, ibid. Fittingly, this prediction was voiced to Constance Fairhall who was at the time agonizing over a decision to abandon work on leprosy in order to concentrate all resources on tuberculosis because the Administration had recently informed her it could not provide an adequate subsidy. C. Fairhall, 'Report on the L.M.S. Hospital, Gemo Island, 1940', copy in WP 5/13-108; see also ibid. for 1939; and Fairhall, Where Two Tides Meet: Letters from Gemo, New Guinea, (London, 1945).

44 See Williams, 'Health Conditions in Poreporena', Report submitted 11 December 1940, WP 5/13-108. See also below, Chapter VI.

45 Williams to G.S., 5 December 1940, WP 5/13-108; see also Williams's discussion of the subject in 'Health Conditions in Poreporena'; (Central Division).

46 Williams to G.S., 5 December 1940, WP 5/13-108.
W.H.R. Rivers's theories was recognisable in his suspicion that depopulation was partly a result of the loss of traditional interests. Christianity had been readily embraced in some areas as a much-needed 'substitute'; cargo cults had arisen elsewhere for similar reasons. But neither of these did Williams consider completely satisfactory, and the Administration certainly did not find the latter so. 'Games' could go a long way towards solving the problem.

Williams told Murray in 1925 that soccer and other sports should be encouraged as 'substitutes'. He recommended the introduction of Association Football into every village that could 'muster a team'; and of badges or uniforms and the playing of games in front of Resident Magistrates, to invest them with due pomp and circumstance. Championships carrying trophies and prizes should be organized, and matches accompanied by feasts. In these ways, Williams told Murray, the Papuan would be able to 'let off steam'. He foresaw 'plenty of fights' arising from such competitive games, but no great harm. As a practical measure he suggested that money to provide villages with footballs be appropriated from the Native Taxation Fund. He repeated his views about sport in a subsequent report on depopulation.

When Williams made these suggestions, sport was already being encouraged by missions and some administrative officers, and


48 Williams to Murray, 27 April 1925, CAO CRS G69-16/42.

had been for a considerable time. Murray was himself familiar with Rivers's theories and had indeed made similar observations himself. In following years, up to 1941, almost four hundred pounds were expended on village games, under the Benefits section of the Native Taxation Fund. In this instance, as in those of the communication circular and the crafts subsidy, Murray apparently took Williams's advice and put it into action; in doing so however, he was barely departing from previous practice and was not occasioning any vast expense. Nonetheless, in 1930 Williams could tell an Australian audience that sport was flourishing in Papua and that the Government was assisting excursions by teams to other areas, to play competition football and cricket. And later again, to his former Rhodes Scholar fellows, he could describe with enthusiasm the increasing success of sport as a 'legitimate means' of fun and excitement for Papuans.

Of the two major 'specific problems' that Williams investigated at the Administration's explicit request, the cargo cult was one, 'depopulation' the other. Occasionally he received queries about particular instances of the latter, such as one concerning infanticide and abortion in Goodenough Bay, in 1931. In this case he replied that the only practical prevention he could think of was 'that of surveillance - the reporting of pregnancies by V.C.s'. Although little could be done to prevent abortions, this would probably reduce infanticide.

His general investigation of depopulation in the Suau

51 Murray, Papua of To-Day, p. 237; Murray to Gilbert Murray, 27 June 1905, MFP 565/316.
52 Territory of Papua, Government Gazette, Vol. 37, No. 1, 7 January 1942, p. 13; £377 were spent which totalled .1% of net revenue.
54 Williams, 'Native Welfare in Papua', (article contributed to first number of Rhodes Scholar periodical, Australia, 1932), copy in CAO CRS G69-16/36; see also Williams to O.S., 5 July 1932, ibid.
55 Williams to G.S., 23 March 1931, WP 5/15-147.
district, however, was inconclusive. He examined every physical factor which he believed might possibly militate against a stable or expanding population, including disease, purposive restriction of the birth rate, sterility, infant mortality, inbreeding and cross breeding and recruiting. And he called for a scientific investigation of possible medical reasons to be carried out by a doctor living in the field for a protracted period. But the most important factors, he believed, were the psychological one which he had considered in relation to health and sport, and that of diet. He stressed again the need for suitable 'substitutes' for lost aspects of social and cultural life, to retain the Papuan's 'interest'. However, he came to think finally that better food and a greater 'interest' in gardening and thus in life, would 'do more than anything else to revive a failing population'. At the same time, nonetheless, the Administration must attempt to deal with every other possible cause of the problem, no matter how minor. Williams's practical education report provided the details of how the reform of horticulture was to be put into practice. But, as has already been mentioned, its recommendations were never utilised.

The other 'problem', the 'cargo cult', was always a matter of great concern to the Administration. Both the violence and economic disruption which sometimes resulted from it were deprecated; and no doubt the potential threat to European safety was born in mind.  

56 Williams, Depopulation of the Suau District, Papua Anthropology Report No. 13 (1933). See also Williams to Murray, 27 June 1928, CAO CRS G69-16/41; Williams, FN, 'Notes Concerning Suau Island', 1925-1926, WP 5/15-138-139.

57 Williams, Depopulation ..., pp. 11-12.

58 Williams, 'Depopulation and Administration', p. 226.

59 Murray, Papua Annual Report 1919-20, pp. 9, 29, 117 and 'Appendix', ibid., pp. 116-118 (Reports by G.H. Murray, A.R.M. Gulf Division); Murray, Papua Annual Report, 1920-21, pp. 6, 11. See also: Williams, The Vailala Madness and the Destruction of Native Ceremonies in the Gulf Division, Papua Anthropology Report No. 4 (1923); Williams, 'The Vailala Madness in Retrospect', in E.E. Evans-

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His explanation has been discussed in the context of anthropological theory, but his suggestions to the Administration about how to deal with cults should be examined here.

'Suppressing the Vailala Madness', Williams assured the Government, 'is not at all parallel with suppressing native customs'. Administrative officers would be justified in 'every reasonable effort to check it'. His view was strongly influenced by his own passion for the Orokoľo ceremonial life; officers would be particularly advised to suppress cargo cults 'involv[ing] the destruction of old customs'. It was partly through the cult leaders that the problem was to be solved. As with sorcerers, Williams suggested that 'Government officers, and the white men in general, made it their business to ridicule and discredit these men'. And, in the case of the Taro cult he recommended a term in 'hospital'. He repeated this 'solution' in 1929 for a revival of the 'Valiala Madness' in the Mekeo and Roro Districts and again, as noted earlier, in 1941. These measures seem strikingly callous in comparison with more recent approaches to cargo cults. An administrative officer who worked later for many years in New Guinea expressed the view that, if the belief in 'cargo' were to be replaced, 'then it must be approached with basic sympathy'. This latter was to a large extent the approach Williams took to, for example, 'sentiments and leading ideas'. But on cargo cults, as with sorcery, his approach was different. He perceived that

59 [contd from previous page]

60 Williams to G.S., 17 September 1929, CAO CRS G69-16/14.
61 Williams, The Vailala Madness ..., p. 63.
62 Williams, Orokaiva Magic, pp. 91-92.
63 Williams to G.S., 17 September 1929, CAO CRS G69-16/14; see also G.S. to Williams, 14 September 1929, ibid.
the former matters, and even sorcery, were related to recognisable 'belief systems' of which he believed the Papuan mind had to be 'disabused', but he failed to do so in the case of cults. To him these were almost a 'madness', an irrationality to be dealt with as mental disorders. In this he was not quite as extreme as one frustrated administrative officer who, while commenting: 'really it requires an alienist and not a Magistrate to deal with these silly people', put the cultists in gaol. 65 Although it was not the solution he would have chosen himself, Williams condoned the officer's use of 'forcible measures'.66

Merely to imprison or mock the cult leaders, however, was not enough. Administrative officers must also 'drive out of the heads of the people the idea that their ceremonies are wrong or disapproved of; and ... urge and encourage a revival of them'. If they did so, Williams believed Papuan cultures would 'struggle back to life and health', and the cults would be undermined.67 Whether any administrative officer ever attempted to apply his suggested 'psychological approach' to cult leaders is not known. One at least, continued to deal with 'outbreaks' using the usual methods of threatened and applied compulsion.68 And, as previously observed, Murray bluntly refused to let his officers positively encourage the old ceremonial life.69

WILLIAMS believed that the Papuan's 'future rests upon a better use

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66 Williams to G.S., 17 September 1929, op. cit.; Williams to G.S., 30 May 1941, op. cit.
67 Williams, The Vailala Madness ..., p. 63.
68 Report by W.H.H. Thompson, A.R.M. Kairuku, 2 September 1929, (on an instance of cargo cult activity in the Mekeo and Roro districts in 1929), CAO CRS A518 A840/1/5; Thompson, A.R.M. Kairuku, to G.S., 19 February 1941, WP 5/14-125; Williams to G.S., 30 May 1941, Ibid.
69 Murray to Williams, undated Memorandum, published with Williams, The Vailala Madness ..., (1923), p. iii.
of his own land'. His recommendations concerning improved land use have already been discussed, as an aspect of practical education but the question of ownership is considered here. Murray's 'Dual Mandate' saw Papuans working for themselves on their own land, as well as being labourers to European planters. On annexing the Territory, the British Government had vowed to protect Papuan land rights and Australia had continued the promise. Privately however, Murray regretted the commitment because of the restrictions it placed on economic development through controlled European investment; 'I have always thought it a mistake', he told his brother, to make 'so solemn a promise'. But the question was decided, and consequently 'land ownership' with regard to Europeans was never a matter which Williams had to worry about. He did however concern himself with the type of 'native' ownership of land, his anti-communalism prejudicing him against traditional forms of ownership. With time he hoped to see a transition to individual holdings, the replacement of the immemorial clan-ownership with peasant proprietorship. As he explained when recommending horticultural reform, he thought this would encourage Papuans to work harder at their gardening. This personal predilection tended to dictate his stance when making recommendations about particular cases. When, for example, he suggested that some of the Nemea be encouraged to grow their own crops to raise taxation money, he dismissed an objection which the villagers themselves had made to him. 'They object, that there would be land quarrels' he recorded, 'but surely this could be overcome'.

70 Williams, 'Address to the Pan Pacific Union', Hawaii, August 1939, copy in WP 5/1-2.
71 See above, Chapter VI.
72 Murray, Papua of To-Day, p. 114.
73 Commodore Erskine's promise is quoted by Murray in Papua or British New Guinea, p. 74; The Land Ordinance of 1906 is cited by Murray in ibid., p. 342.
74 Murray to Gilbert Murray, 11 June 1933, MFP 565/456; see also Murray, Papua or British New Guinea, pp. 343-344.
75 Williams, Practical Education ..., p. 13; see also Williams, Orokaiva Magic, pp. 152-165.
76 Williams, FN, Dorobubu, Abau District, December 1935, WP 5/14-136.
Very occasionally Williams was called on to investigate such quarrels. This was in marked contrast to Chinnery, for whom the task was a frequent one. Indeed the latter made his sudden metamorphosis from Government Anthropologist to Commissioner for Native Affairs at a time when there was a vast backlog of European applications for land to be dealt with. As Commissioner, the review of land matters rapidly became one of Chinnery's major occupations.  

For Williams it was from Leonard Murray, after Hubert's death, that a query about a land case came. The Administration required land for an airfield at Kilakila in the Central Division and during its negotiations a dispute arose among the Koita owners. The Government wanted to know who really owned the land and the best method of payment for it. After talking to the people, Williams listed the criteria on which land ownership in the area was worked out and the parts of clans and other social groups the particular piece of land belonged to, describing the descent system of the Koita in detail.

But his conclusions must only have come as an additional mystification to the Administration. 'The method of payment which appealed to a large group of informants', he reported, 'was to hand the whole price to the *idihu rohi* who would distribute it to the claimants'. On the basis of the social and familial structure he had outlined, he listed 'the claimants' under a number of group headings. He was less than confident however that the matter could be easily settled, concluding for the Administration's information: 'This means the whole bang lot, probably everyone in Kilakila and some who live in other villages'.

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77 Chinnery to Currudos, 20 February 1928, CAO CRS A518 N806/1/3; W.R. McNicoll, Administrator of New Guinea, to Secretary, P.M.'s Department, 25 January 1936, ibid., B8-8/1/1.

78 Williams, 'Report to the Administration on Land Tenure at Kilakila, for Appeal in Aerodrome case', 1 May 1941, WP 5/14-124. The *idihu rohi* was the senior male representative of the group in the direct patrilineal line, the *iduhu* being the units into which the Koita 'tribes' were divided. Williams, ibid.

79 Ibid.
GENERALLY, Williams and Murray shared the same attitude towards and perception of law in Papua. Before the arrival of Europeans, Williams wrote in 1931, 'there seems to have been an almost entire absence of any judicial mechanism by virtue of which the individual could be sure of justice'. The individual, as in all his considerations, was paramount. He agreed with Murray then, up to a point, that there was no authority which could enforce customary law or give any judicial decision. After reading an article by Lugard claiming the existence of certain forms of 'native customary law' which operated secretly in Africa, Murray asked Williams if he had ever detected anything of the sort in Papua.

Williams referred to the 'Principle of Compensation' which was very general in the Territory, and ventured the possibility of treating some instances of assault as civil rather than criminal matters; natives might, according to custom, be ordered to reimburse wronged parties with, for example, pigs. Some ceremonies in the Orokolo area were used for making peace between feuding parties; there was a possibility of incorporating such procedures into a judicial system. But the main form of social control, Williams asserted, was the moral sanction. There would be difficulty in including any customs in the legal system, he implied, as Magistrates would have neither the time nor perhaps techniques to learn about them.

Williams's own preconceptions precluded him from recognising the full extent of existing judicial mechanisms in Papua, although he did perceive some parts of them. His suggestion to Murray that these might be taken advantage of were ignored and British Justice continued in the Territory unviolated, 'native assessors' being about

80 Williams to G.S., 11 February 1931, CAO CRS G69-16/36.
81 Murray to Williams, 23 January 1931, CAO CRS G69-16/36.
82 Williams to Murray, 10 February 1931, Ibid.
83 Williams, Orokaiva Society, pp. 308-310; Williams to Murray, 10 February 1931, CAO CRS G69-16/36.
84 Williams to Murray, 10 February 1931.
the only concession Murray was able to make. 85

PAPUAN 'political development' would be a misnomer for what occurred under Murray's thirty-odd years of Administration. 'Indirect Rule', the government by a colonial power of a 'native' race through the people's own institutions, used extensively in Africa at the time, he dismissed as inapplicable to Papua. 86 His Territory, Murray claimed correctly, had few chiefs; there were some in the Trobriands. His Village Constables and, later in some places Village Councillors, supposedly filled the gap. Nothing else was possible.

Murray's own severely limited view of the aims and potential of the Village Council system, and his patronising interpretation of 'recent progress', were conveyed in an explanation of these to his brother. 'We have appointed people whom we call Village Councillors, to try to educate the natives into some idea of self-Government - it will be a long job'. But it was not completely hopeless; Murray had recently received one of those rare 'gleams of encouragement' which sometimes came to soften the 'disappointments' of which Native Administration was full. A Hanuabada Village Councillor had told him 'with evident indignation' that some of the villagers 'actually kept pigs under their houses - "they live just like animals" he said (in English)'. To Murray this seemed to show 'a sense of decency and self respect' that Papuans simply 'could not have felt a few years ago'. 87

Williams's interpretation of the situation was similar to


87 Murray to Gilbert Murray, 1 March 1928, MFP 565/420; see also Murray to Prime Minister, 23 May 1935, CAO CRS A518 A840/1/5.
Murrays, although not identical. He was capable of presenting the official line in public as though in full concurrence with it. 'Even the most advanced of the many and various Papuan cultures' he informed former Rhodes Scholars in 1932, 'are in a very backward state'.

The Administration 'would have been ready to govern the people through themselves, or more especially through their chiefs', but there were very few of these. And, while it was 'definite policy' to use what there were of chiefly systems, there was as yet no possibility of entrusting the 'chiefs' with local government. Nonetheless, through the introduction of Village Councillors, some progress was being made with 'the political development of the Papuan Native'.

Not everyone agreed with Murray that 'Indirect Rule' was completely out of the question. A.C. Rentoul told Williams he regretted the Trobriand chiefs had not been utilised by the Administration but that it was too late to do so now. Dr Bellamy 'looked upon the loss in prestige of the chief with its effect upon the whole village life as a retrograde step'. And the new edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica asserted that the appointment of 'Government chiefs' in Papua had upset the existing system of administration. Murray told his Minister that he regretted the diminution of the Chief's power too, but feared it was 'the inevitable result of contact with our civilization'. But at the same time he seems to have been struck by the slender though ghastly possibility after all those years that he might have been wrong; perhaps the Trobriand Chiefs might, after all,

88 Williams, 'Native Welfare in Papua', (article for Rhodes Scholars' journal).
89 Ibid.
90 Williams to G.S., 11 February 1931, CAO CRS G69-16/36.
91 Dr Bellamy, T.G.M.O., 'Enquiry into Vital Statistics - Trobriand Group', 20 December 1926, copy in CAO CRS A518 L840/1/5.
92 Encyclopaedia Britannica, 13th edition (London, 1926) p. 141, cited in Murray to G.S., 21 January 1931, CAO CRS G69-16/36; this article was probably written by Malinowski.
93 Murray to Minister for Home and Territories, 11 February 1927, CAO CRS A518 L840/1/5.
have been used as a medium of 'Indirect Rule'. He turned to Williams for reassurance.\(^9^4\)

But Williams had to agree with Rentoul that the Trobriand chiefly system could have been employed. There were other areas of Papua where such systems existed, though he did not know what use the Administration had made of them in the past. And there was 'always' he thought 'the leadership of hereditary headmen' in Papuan societies. There were also systems of discussion and consensus where 'Councils of Elders' made decisions. 'I should say', he told Murray, 'that we have in the past belittled the power of existing "chiefs", especially in the Trobriands'.\(^9^5\)

Williams did not believe, however, that any effective system of administration had been consequently upset. But his reason for this was illogical and based solely on his own prejudice concerning 'the individual'. It was that 'the chiefly power was evidently used almost entirely in its own interests', and the rights of the individual Papuan were not protected by it. It apparently failed to occur to him that such a system, and an 'effective system of administration', were not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Practically, Williams told Murray, he did not think it was too late to 'do our most to take advantage of any existing system of chieftainship'. Where there were Village Councillors, he recommended, their selection should have 'a very definite regard' to any existing chiefly system, even if it meant some sacrifice of individual merit or 'progressiveness'.\(^9^6\) And although he personally disliked what he saw as the 'stagnant state of leaderless democracy', even where something more amorphous than actual chieftainship existed 'Indirect Rule' could be attempted. It might require close enquiry to discover the appropriate men, but to win their sympathy was to go a long way towards winning that of the people at large. In conclusion, Williams smoothed any ruffled feathers with the substantially baseless

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\(^9^4\) Murray to G.S., 21 January 1931, CAO CRS G69 16/36; Williams to G.S., 11 February 1931, ibid.

95 Williams to G.S., 11 February 1931.

96 Ibid.
remark: 'I have no doubt that in fact the appointment of Councillors usually follows these lines, but I do not know whether the principle is recognized'.

Murray could rest assured. It was already his official claim that chiefly systems were paid all due respect by his Administration. And the idea of harnessing anything as nebulous as a 'system of discussion and consensus' would never have borne his consideration for one moment.

On the whole, Williams believed, the system of Village Constables acting as go-betweens for the Government 'worked well'. He considered the Constables, he once told Murray, to be more like 'Vice-Consuls' than anything else. And the parallel system of Village Councillors he saw as 'an important step in what we may call political development'. The Councillors were in an even fuller sense, 'go-betweens', acting as a medium through which the opinions and aspirations of 'natives' and Europeans could be made known to one another. Progress was indeed being made by 1932, for 'nowadays a Magistrate addressed himself particularly to the Village Councillor', and Councillors could even be 'invited to attend Magistrates' Courts as "Assessors"'.

In practice and privately however, Williams found faults in the system. At Kapakapa, south-west of Port Moresby, in 1927, he found that some villagers were dissatisfied with the Councillors who had been chosen for them. They had other claimants in mind who were important members of their particular social group. Williams pondered to himself: 'why not have one councillor from each Iduhu [distinct social group]', the chief man of each if possible or any representative? Councillors, he believed, 'should not be chosen by the Government or any outside agency - they are meant to express the will and desire of the people - not to be a [Christ]ian character or any other character'. They should also be 'made use of' at 'Periodical
Conferences' held, for example, at administrative station 'Christmas'.

But he apparently told none of this to the Government, perhaps partly because he was at the time still a fairly recent and subordinate appointee.

He was understandably pleased however when 'elections' were introduced, and acted as scrutineer and assistant to a Resident Magistrate at one of the first. But he had misgivings about the resultant election of young, 'progressive' councillors at the expense of the old Administration appointees. One who lost his place was Ahuia Ova, one of Murray's earliest 'native assistants' described by the Lieutenant-Governor as probably the most intelligent native in Papua, who had also been 'informant' to a number of visiting anthropologists. Williams himself had commissioned and edited an autobiography from Ahuia on behalf of the Administration and was particularly sorry to see the old man go. His own anti-Europeanization-ism affected his views on the Councillors. He was horrified to see a young Councillor wearing trousers, bowing and raising a hat on meeting Europeans. It was, he feared, a portent. For it was 'not in the mind of the Government', as it certainly was not in Williams's own, that the Papuan Councillor 'should be too inflated with European ideas, but rather that he should be, in the true sense of the word, a representative'. Even once elected, he 'is a native still'.

As with the Councillor, so with the style of local government. It must not follow European lines. Something like the African *palaver*

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102 Ibid.
105 Williams, 'Report on the Election ...'
106 Williams, 'An Election in Papua'.
Williams's aesthetic preferences, too, influenced his outlook on the subject. He told the Administration that

at the opposite end of the village [from] the room with the long table, where the councillors sit under their 'chairman' like the Members of Parliament, stands the picturesque old *dubu* [meeting house], neglected. That is the old Hanuabada, and it is not mere sentiment to say that it ought to be in some way or other kept alive and worked into this very valuable innovation of the Village Council.108

Political development on a wider and higher level bore even less consideration for both Murray and Williams than it did at the local level. 'In the Mandated Territory', Murray remarked in 1939, 'the object is to train up the natives so that eventually they may be independent ... It may seem rather ridiculous that New Guinea natives should ever be independent - yet we contemplate the independence of the Philippines, and in a hundred years the New Guinea natives might easily be the equal of the Philippinos of to-day'.109 Given Murray's presumptions about the capabilities of New Guineans to develop politically, it was not surprising that he also felt relieved by his belief that the same question would never have to be considered for Papua. In 'an ordinary territory' such as his own, he was happy to 'know', the 'aim is not independence but closer relationship with the mother country'. In Papua therefore, the 'ultimate fate of the natives' was as 'part of an Australian State'.110

Williams, too, saw no possibility of general political development in the near future. And he was relieved as well that nothing resembling industrial organisation had appeared in Papua. Thinking doubtless of the recent strike in Rabaul he commented that in Papua there had 'not yet [been] a general strike, and we have not yet developed' a trade union. Speaking on behalf, or perhaps merely

107 Williams, 'Report on the Election ...'
108 Williams, Ibid.
109 Murray to Gilbert Murray, 17 March 1939, MFP 565/483.
110 Ibid.
for the benefit of the Administration and other Europeans in Papua he added, 'we certainly do not want either of them'. But, for those who would argue against encouraging 'the habit of organisation' in Papua altogether, Williams promoted the idea of village self-government as a desirable development; 'we cannot allow bogies to scare us off the track ... it is a risk which we must be prepared to face'.

The speed of 'development', both political and general, was a matter of complete agreement between Williams and Murray. Of political development, Williams wrote in 1932, 'it is a good job perhaps that the progress is necessarily slow'. But perhaps nowhere did he reveal more clearly the degree of his conservative paternalism and his own lack of confidence in the potential of Papuans, than in his statement, directed no doubt at potential critics of the Papuan Administration and his own part in it, that

we shall best study native welfare and happiness ... by hastening slowly. There is always the need for sober Toryism in our guardianship of the native. We should rein in our enthusiastic steeds and go sedately, instead of bolting and perhaps trampling.

Change must be gradual in order to avoid 'disruption' and 'bewilderment'. If Papuans were to be Europeanized and industrialized, then perhaps the quicker the better. But these were not Williams's aims. He wanted Papuans to live 'an improved and elevated life, but still a native life'; and to achieve this, he believed, 'we have eternity ahead of us'.

Although it has been possible to document the nature of his attempts to guide the Papuan Administration, the actual extent of Williams's influence upon it is extremely difficult to assess; much of the

111 Williams, 'An Election in Papua'. The Rabaul Strike took place on 2 January 1929.
112 Ibid.
113 Williams, 'Native Welfare in Papua'; see also Williams on the need for extremely gradual development in horticultural reform, Practical Education ..., p. 9.
114 Williams, Practical Education ..., p. 28.
115 Ibid., p. 9.
evidence is merely negative. Bensted declared that the complete absence of any alteration to the Native Regulations or the administrative system as a result of recommendations from anthropologists, supported his assertion that they had done nothing for Papua.\footnote{Bensted to Editor, \textit{S.M.H.}, 24 September 1932.} He was probably substantially correct; his facts certainly were.\footnote{See: \textit{Papua Annual Report}, for years 1922-1940, \emph{passim}; \textit{Territory of Papua Government Gazette}, for years 1922-1942, \emph{passim}; T. Fry (Ed.), \textit{Laws of the Territory of Papua, 1888-1945}, (5 vols.), \textit{Vol. I} and \emph{passim}.}

As far as the secondary motive for employing a Government Anthropologist - that of encouraging administrative officers to pursue anthropological studies - was concerned, Williams may have had some effect. Leo Austen for example submitted a thesis on the Turama of the Delta region to Sydney University in 1929.\footnote{\textquoteleft Notes and News\textquoteright, \textit{Oceania}, Vol. 1, No. 1, (April 1930), p. 121.} It seems probable, however, that officers who were inclined to study anthropology would have done so whether Williams had been in Papua or not. There was perhaps the incidental benefit to the Administration of having a 'roving ambassador' in the field, whom villagers might sometimes look upon as less foreboding than the average Government representative, consequently, as one magisterial officer believed, greatly improving Administration - 'native' relations.

The purported primary reason for having a Government Anthropologist - that of obtaining information and insights about customs and societies in order to aid the transition from the Stone Age to the present - was partly fulfilled; the information was generously provided by Williams, and with it a bonus of often relatively sound and informed, although generally conservative, suggestions and recommendations. But the further necessary step of 'applying' this knowledge and advice was seldom realised, rendering the entire proceeding of employing a Government Anthropologist largely futile and empty. Murray cited Williams's authority when it suited his publicity requirements, but only in support of views he already held.

There is a possibility that Williams's campaign to preserve
Papuan ceremonial life, and selected customs, had a slight bearing on administration - that it may have tempered the approach of some administrative officers to them. But it is likely that most officers' actions continued in basically the same vein as they would have done without Williams's advice and had done in the past.

Most of Murray's views on matters of 'Native Affairs' pre-dated Williams's arrival in Papua by a long time. But because of their shared conservativism, racial attitudes and paternalism, Williams naturally assumed many of them to at least a degree; this was particularly so with regard to law and political development and, to an extent, to the acceptance of coercion as a valid method of 'native administration'. In the case of 'native institutions' such as sorcery, where the two men were of broadly similar opinions, no friction arose. But in instances such as the Orokolo ceremonial cycle, where they disagreed about the desirable administrative approach, Williams was repeatedly frustrated. His opinions on matters of this kind were totally superfluous as Murray had no intention of altering his approach to them.

In such cases as horticultural reform and education, Williams was constantly obstructed by the financial inadequacy of the Territory. Champion proved his main and most obstinate opponent in these matters. But Murray's complete lack of confidence in the intellectual and developmental potential of Papuans - even more extreme than Williams's own - added a further complication.

The assertions that Williams was a great influence on Murray and was consulted by him frequently are not borne out by the evidence. Most of Williams's recommendations were unsolicited, unwelcome and ignored. Their occasional 'application' usually took a negative rather than positive form and would probably in most instances have occurred anyway.

After Murray's death, Marett told Gilbert Murray that

While I knew many administrators in high places up and down the Empire who have tried to do their best by the natives, I would have put your brother ahead of all the rest for the intelligent way he set about it; and that though his natives were almost hopelessly incapable of meeting our type of
civilization half way ... It is well that he will live on as an example of British rule at its best.\footnote{Marett to Gilbert Murray, 6 March 1940, MFP 565/555.}

But it was largely from Murray himself that Marett derived both his information about Papuan capabilities and his knowledge of how 'intelligently' they were dealt with by his Administration. And Marett was perhaps slightly naive, or simply uninformed, in his general estimation of how anthropology was 'applied'. He saw Sir Everard im Thurn, a governor of Fiji, as another prime example of the administrator successfully applying anthropology.\footnote{Marett, 'Sir Everard im Thurn, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., C.B.', in Marett, (Ed.), Thoughts Talks and Tramps: A Collection of Papers by Sir Everard im Thurn, (Great Britain, 1934), pp. ix-xxiii.} But im Thurn believed that Fijians were inevitably dying out and that they should be turned as quickly as possible into an English-style, individually land-owning peasantry.\footnote{D.A. Scarr, Fragments of Empire: A History of the Western Pacific High Commission, 1877-1914 (Canberra, 1967), p. 292.} It was certainly no mere coincidence that Marett should have chosen Williams to be Murray's Government Anthropologist.

Murray's general attitude to Williams's suggestions incidentally does much to discredit a claim that the Lieutenant-Governor, unlike a number of notable African administrators who were his contemporaries, had the capacity 'to receive new ideas and assess them'.\footnote{F. West, Hubert Murray: The Australian Pro-Consul, p. 267; see also ibid., pp. 265-276.} On the contrary, Williams's twenty-year experience strongly indicates that Murray had a closed mind. Those of Williams's fellow anthropologists who saw the Papuan Government Anthropologist as a handmaiden of colonialism, worried unnecessarily; for when he assured anthropological readers in 1929 that an anthropologist in his Territory need have no fear that 'those in authority' would 'misuse' the information he gave them, Williams might almost as accurately have said 'use it at all'.\footnote{Williams, Orokaiva Society, p. ix.}
Map of part of the Northern Division of Papua showing tribal divisions of the Orokaiva
 CHAPTER XI

The Second World War and an Evaluation of a Government Anthropologist

The Second World War gradually though drastically re-cast Williams's role in Papua. One of the few men in the Territory with a sufficiently broad education to perform the task, he was appointed official censor soon after the War broke out; it became his job to read all mail, including that of the Lieutenant-Governor or Administrator, before it left Papua. He was also placed in charge of Air Raid Precautions, a position which entailed drafting plans of action to be taken in the event of a raid, including evacuation details; methods for the disposal of the dead; the ordering of equipment from Australia—all acting in supposedly close co-operation with the Army; and the regular explanation of his arrangements both to the Administration and the Inter-Services Committee, to which he was appointed as the Papuan Government's representative.¹

All of these were thankless and thoroughly frustrating tasks. Williams soon found that most members of Papua's European population were totally disinterested in his preparations, being themselves preoccupied with the making of money. One member of the Legislative Council had even commented that the arrangements were 'all hooey!'; this, Williams remarked, was 'a most mistaken attitude!'² Indeed, he found 'the interest shown by the Government, Army and public ..., in the order named, reluctant, spasmodic and feeble'.³ In the face of the severe reduction of personnel, as younger men left Papua for the war, he urged that all other Administration work be set aside until his precautionary measures were completed and asked for a deputy to share his workload.⁴ Simultaneously, he had the task of drilling the

¹ Memorandum by F.G. Shedden for Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 28 November 1941, CAO CRS G69-17/20; G.S. to Administrator of Papua, 10 April 1941, ibid.
³ Williams, 'Report on A.R.P. ...
⁴ Ibid.
European 'soldier boys' of the Papuan Constabulary.\(^5\)

The disruption to his anthropological routine, not surprisingly, was almost total: 'The academic calm of my office has been cluttered up with tools, sandbags and steel helmets, and on Saturday mornings, when we weigh out individual rations for casual labourers, it resembles nothing so much as a retail grocery'.\(^6\) Despite all of this, Williams managed early in 1940 to fit in his final prolonged field-trip - the disappointing visit to the Keveri Valley - and, in 1941, when a minor operation on the foot laid him up, to snatch 'a delightful week's interlude ... renewing the fray with Mr Humphries on Marriage Payments'.\(^7\)

During the initial war years there were still occasional requests for his advice from the Administration, sometimes of a markedly different nature from those he was accustomed to. In April 1941 Leonard Murray, as Acting Administrator, called for his views on a complaint lodged by the Bishop of Papua. While war raged and men and women died in other parts of the world, the Bishop was worrying that his Papuans might have their morals corrupted by American servicemen introducing them to the use of contraceptives.\(^8\) In his typically dispassionate fashion, Williams examined the pros and cons of the matter. 'French letters', he assured the Administration, were unlikely to be handed out in bulk to Papuans by soldiers; if Papuans used them it would probably only be once, the novelty quickly wearing off they would no doubt abandon them. For the soldiers themselves to employ the devices was probably a good thing. Soldiers being alike the world over, and Williams confident that they would take some sexual exercise in Papua, there was a strong possibility that 'French letters' would help to reduce the spread of venereal

\(^5\) Williams to I. Champion, 23 April 1940, WP 5/6-56; Williams, 'Report on A.R.P. ...
\(^6\) Williams, 'Report on A.R.P. ...
\(^7\) Williams, 'Report on Visit to the Keveri Valley, copy in WP 5/14-133, p. 1; Williams, 'Report on A.R.P. ...
\(^8\) Williams to Administrator, 16 April 1941, CAO CRS G69-16/54.
disease. Whether these reassuring remarks ever reached the ears of the Bishop is not known. The War, as mentioned earlier, also provided Williams with a further opportunity to advise the Government on the 'Vailala Madness'. He was informed of an outbreak in February 1941 in the Mekeo district; and he recommended the same treatment - of making the cult leaders look fools in the eyes of their fellow villagers, or sending them to 'hospital' - as he had done in past cases. His advice was superfluous; suppressive action had already been taken.

The outbreak of war upset Williams's personal plans. His twenty-years long-service leave was fast approaching and he had hoped to spend it in England visiting his son, for what would be the first time in almost ten years. The twenty-year point also promised a desperately needed improvement in his financial situation, as it would bring with it a pension for him when he retired, or for his family when he died, rather than a final lump sum. At first he tried to get to England to be near the boy. He was perfectly willing to fight in the front line again, if only a man of his age - he was then forty-seven - would be permitted to. He could 'claim to be in very good nick for that age' and 'felt certain' he could still do 'some useful soldiering'. Failing this, he wanted any job which would classify as 'war duty'; if he left the Papuan Government's service for any other reason his inferior superannuation arrangements would become severely affected and his finances even grimmer.

His attempts to reach England failed. There were, he was told, thousands of unemployed middle-aged men in the country; his prospects were no better than theirs. Reluctantly accepting this, he asked that his long-service leave pay and furlough be held pending the end of the war, when he would immediately make the

9 Ibid.
10 See above, Chapter VIII.
11 Williams to C.K. Allen, 30 May 1940, Rhodes House.
12 Williams to Halligan, 26 February 1943, CAO CRS A452-59/5972.
13 Williams to Allen, 30 May 1940.
14 Allen to Williams, 27 August 1940, Rhodes House.
15 Ibid.
anxiously awaited visit to England.16

His search for employment in Australia was more successful. In November 1941 Williams handed over his air raid precautions work and he and Constance Williams left their Ela Beach home for Brisbane and the Australian Army.17 Though he departed predicting 'a great public howl at our lack of preparedness if ever the Japanese bomb us', his A.R.P. work left his own conscience clear.18 Three months later the first Japanese air raid on Port Moresby was made.19 And on 14 February 1942 civilian government of the Territory was suspended and Australian military control assumed.

In Brisbane, Williams was employed in Military Intelligence, most of his time being spent in the Allied Geographical Section compiling maps of the familiar Papuan terrain, and descriptions of the physical hazards and people of each area, for the use of the Army.20 He wrote, too, a general handbook for soldiers living in the Papuan jungle, a guide which was to be used by many before Kokoda ended. His work on these publications placed him in what, under more normal circumstances, might have been considered a compromised position for a Government Anthropologist. Now he was advising European soldiers of the best ways to 'make use of the native' in the bush. 'Allow friendly natives to walk in front of you on the track', he advised. 'They have sharp eyes for pitfalls, snakes, hornets and stinging plants. They will cut the lianas and thorny trailers. They like to do it'.21 Like most of his countrymen and their allies, his concern

16 Williams to Halligan, 26 February 1943.
17 Constance Williams to Secretary Department of External Territories, quoted in H.G. Alderman to Assistant Secretary Department of External Territories, 14 September 1943, CAO CRS A452-59/5972.
18 Williams, 'Report on A.R.P. ...'
19 D. McCarthy, Australia in the War of 1939-1945: Series One, Army, Vol. V., South-West Pacific Area - First Year: Kokoda to Wau, (Canberra, 1959), pp. 139-140.
20 See, for example, Allied Geographical Section, South-west Pacific Area, Terrain Studies Nos. 23, 27, 29 and 42, (Australia, 1941-43).
was now totally engaged in winning the war; the interests and welfare of the Papuan - without intentional ruthlessness - were relegated to a very minor relative status.

But desk work in Australia soon frustrated Williams and he longed to be back in Papua serving some more active purpose. When the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU), the administrative arm of the Australian forces in the Territories, was established in April 1942, his chances of returning to Papua gradually improved. ANGAU was to comprise a team of experts in colonial and 'native' administration, with an eye to the post-war futures of the Territories and, in particular, their indigenes. Williams was finally seconded to the Unit, 'with whom I would have liked to have been long ago', in March 1943. Before returning to Papua in this new capacity, he outlined his personal ideas about the post-war future at the request of a senior ANGAU officer.

The future which he envisaged for Papuans was to center on agriculture. The European was to play a part too, but mainly as advisor and 'helper' in an official capacity; private enterprise was not to feature prominently. Post-war world opinion, Williams felt sure, would 'not be prepared to suffer the notion of New Guinea as a stamping ground for Australian capitalists'. Again he presented his suggestion of the controlled introduction of Asian Labour so that the Papuan would not be obliged to work for those Europeans who did remain. In addition to Garden Boarding Schools and an active Agricultural Department he recommended that Papuan co-operative agricultural enterprises be established. This was not however, as on first consideration it might appear, a denial of his belief in the paramount importance of the individual, whom he continued to see as the preferable land-title holder. Departing to a degree from his earlier views expressed with regard to the missions, he even went so far as to suggest that 'natives

22 Williams to Secretary Prime Minister's Department, 13 February 1942, CAO CRS A452 59/5972; Williams to Halligan, 14 February 1943, WP 5/1-2.
24 Williams to Halligan, 27 March 1943, WP 5/1-2.
could be induced to leave their small, scattered villages and draw together in larger communities, without sacrificing their group-identity, in order to engage in [a] more intensive kind of agriculture'.

The post-war period also offered the opportunity for 'a great experiment in socialisation'. Human interests were to constitute 'the most important consideration of Government'. Williams now desired to help the Papuan 'enter the fray of world affairs', but his overall tone remained extremely parternalistic. The only other departure from the policies he had advocated fairly consistently for two decades — perhaps reflecting after all some influence by the Honolulu Conference — was his recommendation that vernacular languages should be used in the initial years of education.

The work Williams performed as an ANGAU officer in Papua cannot be documented in detail as it was recorded in military sources. One of his tasks was to help establish 'a school for young officers in Papuan and native affairs', and another, to enquire into 'the effect on the natives of the war (including our own military occupation)'. It is likely, however, that most of his time was spent as a liaison officer between the Army and Pauans. Whatever its nature, his ANGAU work was short-lived.

Williams did not see his son again; and he narrowly missed completing his twenty years' service. On 12 May 1943, in 'terrible flying weather', the military aircraft in which he was travelling crashed into the Owen Stanley Range and all its crew and passengers were killed. The 'plane was bound for the Northern Division where

25 Williams, 'Notes on the Future Development of New Guinea and its Peoples', 14 March 1943 (written at Townsville the night before his departure to join ANGAU in Papua); see also Williams to Halligan, 14 March 1943, copies in WP 5/1-2.
26 A.P. Elkin, 'F.E. Williams ...', p. 91.
27 Ibid.; A.G. Nicoll, C.I.B., Brisbane, to Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs, 1 July 1943, CAO CRS A452 59/5972.
there had been unrest amongst the Papuan population. In August 1942, in the Gona area, recently invaded by the Japanese, a group of missionaries had been betrayed by Papuans and murdered; a second group was betrayed soon afterwards and killed by the Japanese. The capture of the Papuans concerned, once the allies regained control of the district from the Japanese, had been followed by their execution. It is highly probable that Williams was on his way to the Division to talk to its bewildered people.

As a new widow, Constance Williams wrote: 'it is a pity that in war there must be accidents as well'. She spent the rest of her life struggling to support her son and herself and to complete the boys' education, finally moving to Canada when she was unable to find work elsewhere. Williams's worst expectations for his family's financial security were amply fulfilled; his widow received a little over £1,000, including long-service pay, and nothing more. One of Constance Williams's last-ditch attempts to raise money was by selling her husband's papers for an unspectacular sum to a library. The month after he died she was writing to the Department of Territories for assistance; she was still writing late in 1967 and died not long afterwards.

28 Constance Williams to Halligan, 15 June 1943, CAO CRS A452 59/5972.
29 D. McCarthy, Australia in the War ..., pp. 139-140; H. Nelson, Black Unity ..., p. 84.
30 Ibid.
31 Constance Williams to Halligan, 15 June 1943, CAO CRS A452 59/5972.
32 'File of John Francis B. (Jackie) Williams', in Records of the Royal National Institute for the Blind, United Kingdom.
33 Memorandum, Department of External Territories, 19 June 1943, CAO CRS A452 59/5972.
34 See, for examples, Constance Williams to Halligan, 3 July 1943, ibid., and Constance Williams to Halligan, 13 February 1945, ibid. Mrs Williams succeeded in educating her blind son. He graduated from the University of Vancouver with a B.A. (hons.) in 1950. 'File of Francis B. (Jackie) Williams'.
IT is impossible to say what Williams's part in a post-war Papua would have been had he lived, though it has been suggested that he was being thought of as a possible candidate for Administrator. It is more fruitful to consider the part he played while he lived, and the influence of his views after his death.

War changed many things in Papua and New Guinea; it certainly snapped Australia out of the daze in which she had barely cared to acknowledge the Territories' existence. But most of the views Williams had promoted were not radically departed from for another twenty years. Out of the chaos came changes to education of which he would have heartily approved. The missions were brought under firmer supervision, more money was channelled into education and related fields, Government participation increased and Williams's friend W.C. Groves was appointed Director of Education. In many ways, Groves's approach to education was similar to that of Williams; in particular he promoted agricultural training and the 'Blending of Cultures'. He quickly had Williams's award-winning essay on the approach republished, as the first post-war official publication, and another 'native newspaper' - The Papua and New Guinea Villager - very similar to its predecessor, began to appear. Groves did not, however, believe in developing an élite of educated Papuans as Williams might have attempted to do, but preferred, like Murray, to expend resources advancing primary education across a broad, universal front, an approach which was later criticised by many commentators on Papua and New Guinea. On the economic side, co-operatives such as Williams had recommended, were introduced, though their importance was diminished when a change of Government in Australia took place five years after the war.

But both the 'Blending of Cultures' and the emphasis on horticulture, were ultimately failures. They were judged undesirable by Papuans and New Guineans - those in whose judgement Williams,


Murray and other Europeans had had so little confidence - who demanded scholastic and sophisticated technical, not agricultural education for their children. And although attempts to continue ceremonial life are still being made, both technology and cultures have continually been modified by Papuans in the direction of Europeanism. Despite this, Williams's approaches to education and agriculture were picked up and used by the Honourable Paul (later Sir Paul) Hasluck, the Australian Liberal Minister responsible for Papua and New Guinea in the 'fifties and early 'sixties, almost a decade after Williams's death; the positive encouragement of ceremonial life advocated, on the other hand, was never carried out. Today Williams's publications still appear on the reading lists of education courses at the University of Papua and New Guinea.

The contrasts between Williams and the 'progressives' who followed him immediately after the war in Papua, and even more recently, are not immense. Williams's paternalism was almost matched by that of some ANGAU officers. Camilla H. Wedgewood for example, who, with Groves, was deeply involved in Papuan and New Guinea education after the war, was in favour of a number of parternalistic measures including the controlled saving of a percentage of the indigenous worker's earnings; and she believed that the views of Papuans and New Guineans should sometimes be ignored for their own good. ANGAU and the Australian civilian authorities that succeeded it, did not have speedy advancement in mind any more than Williams or Murray had done. Hasluck in particular, in the 1950s, echoed Williams's


earlier belief exactly when he declared that extreme gradualism was vital and that perhaps a century would bring Papuans and New Guineans to a stage of advancement where they might be capable of looking after themselves. His regime proved almost as direct and compulsion-based as Murray's had been, although, like Murray, Hasluck was a true humanitarian and a determined opponent of exploitative racism. It is questionable whether even Williams would have held these views about gradualism unaltered had he survived the war. Constance Williams certainly recognised the changed circumstances, remarking to J.R. Halligan before the war was over: 'The house will eventually return to the owners I suppose? But I think the Papuans must be prepared for Americanisation perhaps and swift post-war development?' Williams would certainly not have condoned the encouragement which was given to development by European private enterprise by Hasluck and his Government. Hasluck, a layman, but of the same legal bent as Murray, also ensured finally that Papuan judicial processes would never be incorporated into Papuan law and that customs would not be given legal recognition. Williams, although he believed it would be extremely difficult to write custom into the law, had at least considered these two measures worthwhile attempting, as he had done a degree of 'Indirect Rule'. For all his conservatism, the Papuan Government Anthropologist had been willing to experiment cautiously in an attempt to further Papuan welfare. In this, Williams, like one or two of his magisterial friends, was - in the Papuan context - far ahead of his time.

He was buried in the presence of a number of the Papuan administrative officers in a military cemetery, as befits a soldier of two wars, not twenty miles from his old

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41 Constance Williams to Halligan, 10 January 1944, CAO CRS A452 59/5972.

Papuan home, and among the hills of the country and people to whom he gave twenty years of his best work - appreciating and appreciated.

Obituary of F.E. Williams, by A.P. Elkin.43

I  Works of F.E. Williams

(i)  Manuscript
(ii) Printed
(iii) Published

II  Manuscript

(i)  Official
   (a) Commonwealth Archives Office (now Australian Archives) MS Series
   (b) Other
(ii) Private

III  Parliamentary and Other Official Papers

IV  Unpublished Theses and Other Works

V  Published Works

(i)  Periodicals and Newspapers
(ii) Books and Articles

* * * * * * *
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