

## CREED OF A GOVERNMENT ANTHROPOLOGIST<sup>1</sup>

The application of anthropology has been much under discussion at recent meetings of this Section. 'To-day', as J. B. S. Haldane has said, 'science is important because it is applied, and it is only the applicable portions of science which are reasonably sure of survival'.<sup>2</sup> It is well, then, to try to convince ourselves, as well as others, that our particular science can have some importance and that it does possess some applicable portions. There is only one danger. Anthropology as a science is still young, and some of the materials which call for its application are fading away faster than it grows. There is therefore some need for haste, and the danger is that we may try to apply our science prematurely, to begin eating our pudding before it is really cooked to an applicable turn. In fact, I think this has already happened.

The present address embodies some of the views of one who is expected to be *ex officio* concerned with anthropology on its useful side. Government anthropologists (with the stress on the first word) are still unfortunately rare birds among that large genus of queer birds to which anthropologists in general are admitted to belong. And any government anthropologist may, by virtue of a more or less close touch with administration, develop a somewhat distinct point of view. It is that point of view, developed during nearly seventeen years of work and play in this capacity, which I shall endeavour to present to you.

But I must begin with three qualifications. In the first place I do not pretend that this paper is a fully-rounded exposition. It should have been called merely 'Some Views of a Government Anthropologist'. The incautious word 'creed', to be frank, was chosen simply because it makes a more effective title. Secondly, it is a personal statement. I do not presume to nail it on the head of any other government anthropologist. And thirdly, it is unofficial. In some particulars the views here expressed may be at variance with those of the government that employs me. But happily that government is not of the totalitarian variety; and, while it may not share all the opinions of a semi-technical adviser, it raises no objection to their publication, and even goes to the generous length of paying for it. One could certainly ask no more.

## I

*The Applicable Portion of Anthropology*

The appointment of Government Anthropologist in Papua falls under the Native Taxation scheme. You are possibly familiar with that scheme's guiding principle. All the taxes gathered from the natives are paid into a Trust Fund which is kept strictly separate from general revenue; and this fund is expended solely on objects of native welfare. It is divided into an Education Fund and a Benefits Fund; and from the latter, which is devoted to purposes having for their object 'the direct benefit of the natives of Papua', are derived the salary and expenses of the Government Anthropologist. This for a start places that functionary in a somewhat embarrassing position. My worst enemies, I believe, are ready to concede that I am moderately conscientious; and such a person in such a situation must occasionally be visited by qualms of doubt.

To begin with he must recognize that, of the many branches of study embraced under the pretentious name of anthropology, some may, or must, be dispensed with as beyond his scope—either because no one researcher can attempt to be encyclopaedic, or, more importantly, because such departments have no demonstrable usefulness.

Thus the whole branch of Physical Anthropology in the narrower, more conventional, sense may perhaps be lopped off his tree of knowledge or research. No one would deny that in the wider sense of human biology it may be of immense practical importance; but that is a field which anthropology, except theoretically perhaps, does not pretend to cover, and few practising anthropologists have had the training which would fit them to study it. In the narrower sense, however, despite the inexhaustible scope which a country like Papua provides, physical anthropology is, to say the least, of obscure value to its inhabitants. To be autobiographical, I have long since laid aside my callipers.

Then again there is the department of Prehistory, which has cast such a spell not only over its specialists but over the lay public. There is scope enough for this study also in Papua, with its stone implements and weapons, its buried pottery, its scattered megaliths and rock carvings, and its mysterious pestles and mortars. All these provide ample food for theory and speculation. But without going so far as to say that such theory and speculation are perfectly fruitless, I feel confident that they find no proper place under the Native Benefits Fund. The stone age in Papua simply crumbles at the touch of steel; and a new Sheffield hoe in the hand of a native

gardener is to a government anthropologist at least as interesting as an adze of stone, and much more significant.

Thirdly, there is that branch of our science commonly known as Ethnology. Few countries can be more closely packed with opportunity for this study than is Papua, with its endless diversity of cultures. There is scope there for many anthropological lifetimes in the sorting out of identities, resemblances, and differences, in the investigation of development and diffusion, in the tracing of migrations, cultural and human, and in the game of historical reconstruction. But while recognizing (and I speak from experience) the fascination of such studies in general, one cannot but conclude that the data are too multiplex, too confusing, and too unreliable to permit of really safe conclusions. The most ambitious and seemingly important are liable to be pricked into collapse; and one cannot fail to be impressed by the irreconcilability of conclusions reached by independent and equally painstaking investigators in one and the same field. It might be—though I hardly imagine it is—some consolation to such investigators to reflect that, whatever the outcome of their search, right or wrong, sound or unsound, it does not in any practical sense really matter. This at any rate is true as far as the native is concerned and it will provide a government anthropologist with an excuse for considering that part of his work (if he obeys the temptation to go in for it) to be inessential.

Fourthly, I may mention the handmaid of ethnology, viz., Museum Collecting. This part of my duties (if it is such) I have performed in a manner which can at best be called perfunctory. One realizes the great importance of ethnological museums, not only for those who pursue ethnology as a science, but for the public to whose education they make a highly valuable contribution. But a government anthropologist may well feel that in this connection his first duty is towards the native artists and craftsmen who make the things which fill the museum cases; and it cannot be denied that in some instances collecting has done serious, even irreparable, harm to the art or craft in its living state. This is a theme I have elaborated elsewhere. It will be enough to say that my own sympathies are only secondarily with the museum. They are first and foremost with the encouragement, adaptation, and development of artistry and hand-work in the native village. What is of real value is not the product, but the skill and the will.

These departments of study which I have enumerated are to a government anthropologist rather in the nature of side-lines. They may perhaps be his hobbies, encouraged or winked at by a generous employer; but they are not his real work. I fear this is a very blunt expression of my opinion. To pay such scant respect to the chosen

provinces of perhaps a majority of this audience may seem a tactless beginning, and almost calls for apology. I may have trampled on some corns already; but even if privilege (as I am glad to think) denies you the opportunity of kicking out to-day, I hope your subjects will receive their due in subsequent discussions. As for the man in the street (who has his own idea of anthropology), we may well imagine him wondering, after such a list of disclaimers, whether anything is left at all. 'If you have no interest in skulls', he might exclaim, 'or in stone implements and potsherds, or in describing, discussing, and collecting fishhooks, jew's-harps, and the like, what in the name of Anthropology do you get your money for?'

Now some of you will perceive that up to this point I have been, following the earlier lines of the notable address given by Professor Radcliffe Brown before the British Association in 1931. And, as he has made sufficiently clear, there still remains a kind of anthropology which is of real importance in theory, and which, in its application is by far the most valuable of all. There remains in fact the study of cultures and societies as they exist at present, whether virtually unchanged or in process of changing.

It is well recognized that in this sphere the most productive method consists in the intensive study, lasting over long periods, of certain specimen societies; and it should be possible for the government anthropologist to pursue this method in just the same way as his unofficial colleagues. He may indeed be gratified by official requests for his opinion—they keep his pecker up while they consume his time—but his best, and in the end most useful, work will be done in the field, where there are no messenger boys and no ringing of telephones. And I should not miss this opportunity of recording my appreciation of the ideal conditions which the Papuan Government has provided for my own work.

An anthropologist's specific knowledge of one society should obviously be useful in dealing with specific problems within that society, and probably, by analogy, with similar problems in others. But his work may have a more general value as well; for he has contributed a specimen study towards that general science which Radcliffe Brown so aptly calls Comparative Sociology. It is from this science that its students hope to derive general conclusions regarding social relations in the abstract, or culture in the abstract. And these conclusions, since the question is essentially one of how human beings contrive to live successfully together, must be one of unsurpassed importance, not only in regard to the backward peoples, but in regard to the world at large. It is sufficiently obvious that anthropology, whatever its achievements hitherto, is at least striving after something of real consequence.

This modern method of anthropological research resolves itself into a patient and largely humdrum investigation. It is not, we may be thankful, without its high-lights and its juicy morsels; but (Professor Malinowski has used some such words) it is no longer devoted expressly to the discovery and recording of the quaint, amusing, obscene, and bloodthirsty. It was just this preoccupation which condemned anthropologists in public estimation to appear slightly more ridiculous than, say, geologists. The work of the modern school may perhaps dispel that atmosphere. It is somewhat drier work, but much more serious; for it studies the given society in every aspect of its relations, in the endeavour to see it in the round or through and through, as far as such a penetrating or pervasive view is possible. In this way subjects like kinship and economics, which at first might seem dry fare indeed, become essential and, with skilful treatment, even attractive courses in a meal that never ends.

It is primarily to the Functional school that we owe this revolutionary advance in method; and it is this improved method which affords the best promise of application. Indeed, if any kind of anthropology can claim to be of practical use, it is this which we call the functional; for its subject of study is just what we have recognized as our real problem, viz. how people, whether black or white or black-*cum*-white, contrive to live together in society.

Now it so happens, for whatever reason, that I do not, as far as I can discover, belong to any modern 'school' of anthropological thought. Such independence or isolation, while I have at times found myself regretting it, has at any rate some advantages. Not the least among them is that it absolves one from any sense of loyalty—and loyalty in the intellectual sphere is plainly no virtue, but the worst of vices. If, then, I venture to criticize the functional school in respect of its primary postulate, I can do so with a pleasant sense of freedom. What I shall say may be deemed unorthodox, because functionalism holds the field. It may even be deemed presumptuous, because of the great eminence of that school's principal exponents. But it cannot be disloyal, because I have never owed the school any allegiance.

To proceed, then: while readily acknowledging the great debt of anthropology, and particularly applied anthropology, to functionalism, I feel prepared to accept that discipline in only a restricted degree. The prime postulate of functionalism lies in the conception of social or cultural integration. To quote Radcliffe Brown: 'The newer social anthropology looks at any culture as an integrated system, and studies the functions of social institutions, customs and beliefs of all kinds as parts of such a system'<sup>2</sup>; and Malinowski:

'The functional view of culture insists therefore upon the principle that in every type of civilization, every custom, material object, idea and belief fulfils some vital function, has some task to accomplish, represents an indispensable part within a working whole'.<sup>4</sup> These quotations could be amplified by many others from the pupils of these distinguished leaders. What they have in common, to repeat, is the conception of culture as an 'integrated system' or a 'working whole'.

Now, when it comes to the application of anthropology, there is undoubtedly discernible in the work of many functionalists a tendency to champion existing primitive customs against interference by Europeans. The rationale of this attitude is expressed in a moderate utterance of Professor Malinowski: 'The functional method, by showing what a culture does for a primitive community, establishes its value and thus utters a warning against too hasty interference with native belief and institutions'.<sup>5</sup> But elsewhere in the literature of functionalism we find evidence of a much more uncompromising attitude. It is as if the writers in question felt some sentimental bias in favour of the old against the new; for they are prone to rise in indignation if anyone ventures to condemn some feature of primitive life—sorcery, for instance—while on the other hand they may sometimes be heard to speak of things as they find them with praise and admiration. Surely, if it is unscientific to condemn, it is also unscientific to praise; each is an offence, whether conscious or unconscious, against the stern rule of objectivity. It is as if these writers adopted the assumption that 'all things work together for good' in primitive culture; and so deep and engrossing has been their study of it that it appears to have risen in their estimation to the status of an end in itself. Thus culture comes to be invested with a kind of sacrosanctity; and in its extreme form this view or attitude would seem to forbid all positive interference in the name of good government or philanthropy.

To a government anthropologist this conclusion will seem so drastic as to suggest the possibility of a fallacy somewhere in the premises; and the greater part of this address will be devoted to an endeavour to show that there is one.

## II

### *The Question of Cultural Integration*

The ultimate aim of social or cultural anthropology in its modern form is, as we have seen, to discover social laws, or more generally to reach a progressively truer conception of the nature of culture itself. That word, as necessary to anthropologists as it is sometimes

irritating to outsiders, may be defined provisionally as 'the "system" of beliefs, customs, techniques, sentiments and values, which certain people hold more or less in common, being thereby enabled to live as a society in the broadest sense of that term'.

This is obviously a hazy conception, one to which it is impossible to set clear boundaries. Not only may one culture fade imperceptibly into another, but within itself it is riddled with diversity, as between the major groupings, the minor groupings, and the very individuals to whom it belongs, or who belong to it. These considerations for a start suggest that the systematism of culture may have been exaggerated. And it is this exaggeration, I shall contend, which represents the fallacy in the functional premises.

Seventeen years of experience have in fact made me more and more dubious regarding this fundamental claim that cultures are integrated systems. In 1922, when the flags of the functional method were first unfurling themselves, I emerged from my training with the new idea (amongst others) duly implanted in my mind. Almost my first work was among the Elema people of the Gulf of Papua (a district where I have since done further periods in a much more intensive style), and almost my first publication was a pamphlet called *The Vailala Madness*. At that time (1923) I was grievously alarmed at the threatened extinction of certain native ceremonies. It still seems that the continuance of these ceremonies is threatened, a situation which one does not cease to regret, though it is possible now to view it with more philosophy. But what I wish to mention is the subsequent modification of the views I then formed (or perhaps accepted) regarding both Elema culture and culture at large. In 1923 I wrote that 'You cannot delete any part of the social life of a primitive people and leave the other parts unaffected'; and, more graphically, '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.'<sup>6</sup>

The first of these two statements I should not quarrel with to-day. But the second, which might have been written by the most zealous disciple of functionalism, I would, if I could, disown. For in the light of subsequent events and subsequent reflection I think those words represent a wholly exaggerated view and a false prophecy. I cannot now regard Elema culture, or any other, as a thing so easily wrecked or brought to a stop by interference or by the loss of any of its parts. And I have come round to my present more moderate view partly as a result of a much deeper study of the Elema themselves and their ceremonies than was possible when I uttered those premature opinions.<sup>7</sup>

The principal ceremonies are those of the *Hevehe*, or *Sevese*, cult,

and resolve themselves into a tremendous cycle which continues, on and off, for anything between five and twenty-five years. They surround certain gigantic masks which come, ostensibly from the sea, to the men's house in rudimentary form. There they remain throughout this long period, being gradually built up, until at the end of it they descend for a month of brilliant masquerade. Then, their dancing over, they are destroyed and their spirits return to their element, eventually to be summoned again when the whole cycle recommences.

Owing to the fact that various independent cycles are in progress, each at a different stage, in various men's houses, it is possible to piece the episodes together and see this remarkable cycle in its sequence and as a whole. But close examination of the cycle has convinced me that it is a composite one; that certain parts of it, by no means unimportant in themselves, are interpolations; that they are inessential to the general scheme; that they merely adhere. In short I see in the *Hevehe* cycle partly a system, and partly a haphazard agglomeration. Parts of it could be dropped; and in fact in different performances parts of it are dropped. It is at best a semi-integrated system.

Now from the *Hevehe* cycle as part of Elema culture I think it is possible to argue (if only by analogy) to Elema culture as a whole. And here I think I see sufficient evidence that the larger whole also is only partly integrated. I have indeed seen junks of it disappear in the course of the last fifteen years, and this without the effects which on the functional hypothesis might be expected to follow. Witness the imposing and once universally practised custom of secluding youths. It has now virtually dropped out of existence, even in those communities which set their faces against change most firmly and which still carry the great *Hevehe* cycle through from end to end.

This, of course, is not a situation which need sting anyone into a fury, least of all a properly cold-hearted anthropologist. It is merely a phenomenon which demands our attention. It goes without saying that such a disappearance has its due causes, though I cannot enter into them here; and needless to say it cannot be without some effects. All I wish to say is that those effects on the totality of the culture seem remarkably small, if not negligible. Considering its dimensions as an institution the effects of the disappearance of seclusion seem much smaller than a functionalist interpretation would have led us to expect. My own explanation is that this institution is not deeply impacted in the general mass of the culture; it is one of those features bulky, imposing, intrinsically important as they may be, which can be deleted without creating any but a slight disturbance. Just



like the *Hevehe* cycle, therefore, which is only a portion or feature of it, so Elema culture as a whole is no more than semi-integrated or partially systematized. It remains in part a haphazard agglomeration.

Now having gone from an institution to a culture, I shall carry the argument a stage further and—ambitiously indeed—essay to speak of culture in the abstract.

While anthropology is discovering, or at any rate seeking, the general laws of culture, it is at liberty to form a provisional picture of the whole thing. And since it is recognized to be *sui generis*, these pictures (for quite a number have been hung before us) must take the form of analogies. Thus, for example, we hear of structures or frameworks: 'The material economy is dovetailed into the framework of the whole social structure' (a phrase of Dr. Firth's)<sup>8</sup>; or again of mechanisms or machines: 'Culture is merely a very complicated piece of machinery. All the different parts of the mechanism interlock and have to work together, or the machinery is of no use' (Driberg)<sup>9</sup> (and I might have quoted again my own similes of the watch and the building in ruins). These are, of course, analogies, and we need not do their authors the injustice of taking them too literally. But they nevertheless imply an over-stressing of the systematism of culture which I think amounts to error, even serious error.

And the same may be said of that other familiar analogy, though it comes nearer the mark, viz. of the organism: 'Every custom and belief of a primitive society plays some determinate part in the social life of the community, just as every organ of a living body plays some part in the general life of the organism' (Radcliffe Brown).<sup>10</sup> Although so explicitly stated this also is only an analogy and presumably should not be pressed too far. I would submit the opinion, however, that the degree of integration revealed by any organism is wholly beyond that achieved by any culture.

I shall now go on to suggest an analogy or simile of my own which goes to the opposite extreme. It amounts to gross exaggeration and is intended to be provocative, so that I am almost nervous of making it public. But I shall compare culture to the heap of rubbish in the corner of your back yard. This, I can well imagine, verges on blasphemy. Let me hasten to explain.

It is a familiar experience in our own modern world that action or change in one sphere, e.g., of politics or economics, may have wide, unforeseen, and sometimes disastrous results in other spheres. That it must have some effects is of course elementary. If we drop a pin in this room the reverberations of that tiny impact should, in theory at any rate, reach the antipodes. Similarly, if we disturb one

Analogies

part of a culture, however insignificant, it may be admitted that we disturb the whole. But it does not follow from this that the culture is a fully integrated whole or system. Similar effects might be observed in our pile of rubbish. Poke it with a stick, add or remove one empty jam-tin, and, however slight the change, you have affected the whole mass, through and through. Remove, let us say from its midst, a thing so great as an empty kerosene-tin, and you may create a disturbance of almost volcanic proportions. Yet this is no system. The figure is deliberately chosen to represent the opposite.

Our scandalous simile, however, is meant merely as a counterblast. I do not for one moment suggest that culture is devoid of system. My point is that it is only in part a system. It always remains to some extent a hotch-potch and a sorry tangle.

If one had to bring forward a more serious analogy one might compare culture to a human mind or personality. This is not to resuscitate the notion of a group-mind. It is merely a comparison, with special regard to the respective degrees of organization in the two things compared. Each has its gradations. Some cultures, like some minds, are organized to a relatively high degree; some on the other hand to a notably less degree. And just as a mind may harbour inconsistent beliefs, division of loyalties, emotional conflicts, etc., and yet contrive to function with reasonable or average success, so may a culture contrive to function even though it be far from fully organized.

I would submit, however, that the integration of a culture is of lower degree than the integration of an ordinary mind. And how could it be otherwise? The individual's mind is the product of a few paltry years of limited experience acting upon a quantum of inherited physical material. The culture in which he lives (and of which, indeed, he probably assimilates only a fraction) is a vague accumulation of factors contributed by countless minds in the past and present, the product of an age-long history of chance.

This analogy with the individual mind might be pushed a good deal further; but I will leave it and give you yet another—and here, I think, we draw close to a real comparison. Every human establishment—for specific example let us take an individual's house and property—is a culture in little, a culture microcosm. It is sufficiently obvious that some households are well, others ill, and none completely organized. And yet in all cases (or at least we hope so) there is some definite attempt at organization—a more rational purposive attempt than has ever been possible in the case of culture at large. If then, there is any lack of organization in household, department-store, battalion, or whatever you please, how much

greater that lack is likely to be in a whole culture which to a large extent has just happened to be what it is.

Much hinges upon our interpretation of those often intrinsically unimportant things called 'survivals'. The functionalist, one understands, simply does not recognize them as such: when they cease to fulfil some function they cease to exist. Now I have a friend of some eminence in the legal profession and of undoubted domestic virtue who agrees with me (and no doubt with you) that many of us accumulate too much property. And when it comes to occasional house-cleanings he is confronted by certain domestic survivals which he calls by the name—it is one which might even find a place in our own scientific vocabulary—of *tooglies*. He does not cast them out, either because they are endeared by some association, or because they might come in handy some day, or because it would be too much trouble to get rid of them, or simply because they have been there so long that they might as well stay. I cannot help thinking that culture at large, like our own houses, is full of tooglies; in fact that it is more or less clogged by an accumulation of the superfluous, or what might be called cultural junk. (If we chose to recall the culture-mind analogy we could speak of them as miner cultural habits, habits which we still retain though they have outlasted their original significance.) All such things are undoubtedly parts of the culture as a mass, but it is surely another thing to say they are parts of a system.

The view I have expressed is intended to apply to every kind of culture, having regard to the fact (I think it obviously such) that some are better organized than others. It is true that Radcliffe Brown states explicitly that 'Occasionally the unity of a culture may be seriously disturbed by the impact of some very different culture, and so may perhaps even be destroyed or replaced'; and he observes that 'such disorganised cultures are very common at the present day all over the world'.<sup>11</sup> This would seem to be all too true, and not least of our own. But the lack of organization of which I speak is, as I see it, in greater or less degree inherent in every culture even those which seem to be in a relatively stable condition. The complete unity or systematism which functionalism postulates could belong only to society in some ideal world.

### III

#### *Culture Measured by Value Standards*

So far I have endeavoured to consider the material of this discussion, viz. human culture, in an objective manner—as it is, or as it seems to be. But I should find it extremely difficult to pursue

my work as a government anthropologist without also adopting from time to time that other method of viewing it, viz. as it should be, or as one thinks it should be. The government anthropologist, by reason of his contact with official colleagues and superiors who have on their hands the responsibilities of good government, as well as with those others who have at heart the cause of native welfare, is perhaps more liable than other anthropologists to develop and use this point of view, i. e. to think in terms of ends and values. One of the fairest of my fellow-workers—and I mean fairest in the gallant rather than the judicial sense—once accused me of showing an 'administrative streak'. It would be difficult indeed for any government anthropologist not to acquire one. He is almost inevitably a Jekyll and a Hyde. On the one hand he should be an objective observer. But on the other he may, I maintain, be a critic and even—if he is built that way—a reformer. I do not know in which capacity he is the Hyde and which the Jekyll; but all we need demand of him is that he should be able at will to keep his two personalities separate.

Nevertheless, when it comes to social problems, it is impossible to solve them in any practical way without appeal to ethics. As Professor Ginsberg has recently said, the social problems of deepest interest are 'just those in which questions of value and questions of fact are closely interwoven'<sup>12</sup>; and their effective handling involves, not indeed a fusion, but a synthesis of social science and social philosophy.<sup>13</sup>

I would now invite you, therefore, to look at human culture, particularly at the advanced culture to which we ourselves belong, with the eye of criticism. Is it not possible to see in its vast, baffling complexity some *confusion* as well as system? I use this word with emphasis. If we study a highly involved subject in which to common sense there is apparent confusion, must we say that the confusion is unreal, only showing the limitations of our understanding; that it is all really system, however complicated, and that a deep enough study would reveal it as such? Or may we say that the confusion actually exists? If we grant that there is any such thing as confusion anywhere, then I would submit that by every standard of order and efficiency we find it present, in greater or less degree, in every existent human culture—from the sorry social mess in which we, the civilized, find ourselves at present down to the relatively simple and static cultures which we mostly study as anthropologists.

It seems *a priori* inevitable. For, if I may be permitted to repeat myself, culture is a man-made thing, and, even at that, has had but little rational control or purposive selection. It is the product of innumerable minds, subject to innumerable chances. Things which have been shot together have somehow got stuck together. The

utmost that could be expected, therefore, is some approximation to a system; and the most highly organized of cultures does no more than bungle through.

I trust this part of my address has not appeared in the light of destructive criticism only. If my point is sound, then we shall have a truer, if a less clear and artistically satisfying, picture of culture in the abstract, the thing with which as social anthropologists we are ultimately concerned; and furthermore we shall have done something to clear the way for the positive action which I believe administration is sometimes called upon to take.

After arguing the matter at such length I should be mildly content to amend our provisional definition of culture by calling in an 'approximation to a system'. Or perhaps it would meet the case to dispense with the word 'system' and speak of a 'complex', if this can convey the idea of a vast complexity of factors which is by no means devoid of system on the one hand, or of confusion and entanglement on the other.<sup>14</sup> As for the fallacy which, it seems to me, exists in the premises of functionalism, it is a fallacy of overstatement. The integration of culture is not a principle but merely a good idea which has been ridden too hard.

Now I am not concerned here to attack any of the specific conclusions to which, I think, the over-stressing of cultural integration has led, e.g., in the realm of primitive law, or even kinship. What I would take exception to is rather the general attitude (already referred to) which some at any rate of the functionalists have adopted when it comes to the application of anthropology. In the conservation or protection of primitive culture their work has been inestimable; for, to repeat the words of Professor Malinowski, they have 'established its value', and they have made and are making what is up to the present the most important of all contributions to applied anthropology by showing how it 'works'. But, assuming that the point of view I have expounded has something in it, I suggest they might now spend some time, and not less profitably, in discovering to what extent cultures do not work, or to what extent they work badly.

#### IV

### *Anthropology and Trusteeship*

I shall now attempt to discuss—though still, I fear, in abstract terms—how anthropology may be applied in a somewhat more positive manner. We may presumably dispense with the idea of culture as something to be preserved for its own sake. I have sought

to show that it is at best only partially organized; and if this be granted it would seem to follow that it is in some degree inefficient. And we may go further. It is also laden with unhappiness no less than with happiness. For if man is born to sorrow it is largely sorrow of his own making, and he is far from being solely responsible as an individual. Many at least of his sorrows are prepared for him by the culture into which he is born; he is condemned thereby to some suffering, and the luckiest of the lucky will not escape entirely. And I should go further still. Culture is plainly a thing which has nowhere reached its potential limits of development. Some, notably those which we study as anthropologists, are more backward, more restricted, than others. It is notorious that within our own society there are individuals who do not get their fair chance; but, more than this, there are whole societies which have not had their chance. As I see it, then, the best of cultures is not devoid of muddlement; it carries the seeds of unhappiness; and it is only the embryo of what it might be.

Now according to the modern notion of trusteeship it is the duty of the administrator, as it has long been the self-appointed duty of the missionary, to try to improve things. In view of the extreme difficulty and danger of deciding for other people what is good for them, it is a duty which we trust they will always face with proper humility; but it is one which they are not likely to shirk. It becomes necessary for anthropologists, therefore, to recognize this obligation on the part of others even if they decline to participate in it themselves. As for a government anthropologist, he might even be expected as part of his duty to participate. At any rate I think he would make himself more useful if, besides observing and recording things merely as they are, he could also, in his other character, consider them with respect to their value. He might even feel called upon to set things right himself, though I feel sure he would approach that task with all the reluctance of Hamlet. But fortunately for everyone, perhaps, the actual responsibility is not his. His advice may be taken or left.

Assuming, however, the practical necessity for judgments of value, I should begin by declaring an article of faith, viz. that in the application of anthropology, as in any other phase of social work, the primary, indefeasible values are those of the individual human personality. To the administrator, trustee for their welfare, the human animals under his care, both European and native, represent the end; their various cultures are merely means, good, bad, or indifferent, for the satisfaction of their needs and the expression of their potentialities.

This, which seems to me a fundamental postulate, provides him

with his charter. For cultures, obviously imperfect and changeable things, are no more than the best means evolved hitherto by the societies to which they belong; and there can be no denying that they stand in need of tidying-up, purging, reconciling, blending, and developing. To this task, tremendous both in difficulty and responsibility, the administrator and the missionary are already actually addressing themselves. The extent to which their interference is justifiable is certainly debatable, and to that point I shall return. But it falls in with the view I am trying to expound that they have some right at least, indeed that some interference amounts to a necessity. And, whether this be so or not, the policy of interference has come without doubt to stay, so that the anthropologist, even if he disapproves, might bow gracefully to the inevitable and do his best service by criticism, constructive as well as destructive, of its methods.

I have elsewhere stated<sup>15</sup> what seem to me the three general tasks of native education in the broadest sense of that word—which might indeed be taken to embrace all the essentials of a native policy. They are the tasks of Maintenance, Expurgation, and Expansion—not perfectly suitable words, but the best I could think of. I shall go over these briefly and in the reverse order.

First, then, regarding Expansion, by which I mean the enrichment of a culture both by development and by the introduction of new factors. There are, of course, arguments against the introduction of new things—so-called gifts of Western civilization—or at least cautions to be observed. For they may do more harm than good. But I am bound to think that it is the duty of the educator, and through him of the administrator, to give the native a chance of fuller development than has hitherto been possible for him. To take literacy for a concrete example, I cannot think the arguments against it, though they may dictate caution, can absolve us from the responsibility of giving it ultimately to the native as his right. And there are many possible advances in the spheres of economics, politics, art, and religion towards which we might assist him. I would dare say of morality also, except for its suggestion of the pot and the kettle and the fear that anthropologists might think I was thrusting this unfamiliar burden on them. Ideally speaking, however, it 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.

Now for the more ticklish and contentious subject of Expurgation.

↙ Allow me first to point out that the theory of culture as a semi-integrated, imperfect whole will allow for the process of expurgation (as well as expansion) in a way that seems hardly possible if we postulate a full, or even a very high, degree of integration. Experience surely shows that cultures possess a good deal of plasticity; that they possess the power to change, to slough or forget old things on the one hand, and to absorb or find room for new things on the other. It is only necessary to give due heed to the warnings which the functionalists have uttered regarding the danger of disruption, the upsetting of balance, and so on, without going so far as to admit such perfection of balance or integration as would seem to make any interference a disaster. For culture as I now see it is the kind of watch that does not necessarily stop for the removal of a reasonably small wheel, but may on the contrary go all the better.

It is true that some things are so deeply embedded and possess so many ramifications that they may justly be called 'indispensable' or 'vital'. And here, unless adequate substitutes can be provided, our interference is likely to bring about serious dislocation—a prospect which should certainly give us pause. But I cannot concede the functionalist plea that everything is vital. There are many things for which no such claim can be made and which would probably be better away. When we seek to eliminate them we may perhaps trust to the adaptive or recuperative powers of the culture to enable it to heal over the breach and survive, when it will be all the better for the change.

While I believe it justifiable to eliminate some things from the primitive cultures that lie, so to speak, at our mercy, I should not dream of suggesting that we should do so merely because they 'outraged civilised notions of propriety'. That common argument is itself an outrage on propriety. But there may be good reasons of other kinds. Our much wider experience and scientific knowledge may enable us to see defects which remain hidden from the native himself. It may be something that hinders the satisfactory living-together of black man and white man which we have to aim at and which certainly requires some adjustment on both sides—for it must be remembered that the white man also has his rights in applied anthropology. But what concerns us more obviously are the defects within the bounds of the primitive culture itself. A time-honoured but mistaken method of agriculture or stock-raising, for example, may be eating into a community's resources; an equally time-honoured method of sanitation may be a danger to its health. Such things are fit subjects for expurgation.

In these cases, however, it is the whole community that suffers through its own age-long mistake embodied in its culture; and I



want to draw your attention to a sort of defect that may not be quite so obvious. I have declared my own belief in the primary rights of the human personality, and I think accordingly that wherever we detect the existence of abuse, injustice, exploitation, repression, pain, and suffering—in short, the victimization of the individual by the society—then once more we are called upon to interfere. I should say from my own observations that sorcery (to use a somewhat threadbare subject for illustration) despite its functional connections is responsible for much more harm than good. It is the prime source of suspicion, fear, dissension, and strife—things which seem the very negation of satisfactory living-together and which undoubtedly entail unhappiness. I think we are called upon to remove this form of victimization by the best means in our power.

Similarly with head-hunting, by way of a more extreme and equally hackneyed example. A good defence on functional lines can be made out for this also; no one will deny that it may play a highly important part in a general way of living on the Middle Fly.<sup>16</sup> But, to adopt the individual's rights as a criterion, what of those unfortunates who play the less desirable part of the two roles necessary to a head-hunting scene? Can any more drastic infringement of a man's rights be conceived than to fall on him in his sleep and cut off his head?

Whether, then, in the interests of the whole community or of certain individuals within it, I am bound to think that some interference may be justified. And if it is I should regard it as good service on the part of anthropologists in general, and even as the duty of government anthropologists, to lend their aid. For once again they are in a very favourable position to detect abuses. While it is happily beyond their scope to perform cultural excisions or amputations, they should not hesitate to recommend them where they think fit; for they, in theory at least, are the best qualified not only to diagnose the complaint but to judge whether the general constitution of the patient will stand an operation.

Thirdly, we come to the task of Maintenance. In this anthropologists have always willingly lent their assistance, and the primitive peoples of the world, if they realized it, might perhaps be grateful to those field-workers who must so insufferably have bored them. In fact I repeat that this providing of argument for maintaining existent cultures has been the greatest contribution hitherto made by applied anthropology. And incidentally I think it the best general result of a training in our science that it should broaden the student's mind, teaching him liberality and tolerance, so that he realizes there are other ways than our own, possibly as good and possibly better.

The anthropologist's tendency to cherish the old cultures is so common and so strong that one suspects, as I have mentioned already, a sentimental bias in their favour—for anthropologists are seldom so cold-hearted as they would like to be. I do not imagine that I am wholly free from this bias myself. But there are some very good reasons for maintenance other than sentimental ones.

In the first place there is the general argument of the functionalist that culture represents a working whole in which interference may bring about stoppage or dislocation. One may appreciate the value of this argument without following it to a logical extreme.

The second reason lies in the intrinsic merits of backward cultures as we find them. Those researchers who have cut themselves off from their own world for long periods and immersed themselves in the strangely different world of the so-called primitives always, I believe, find much therein that is truly admirable. They admire it more than do outsiders for the simple reason that they know it better; and they are not necessarily cranks for doing so. Further than this, the sharp comparison which all are able to make between Western civilization and primitive culture is not in the eyes of anthropologists, who see both sides, so unquestionably favourable to the former. In short, primitive cultures may seem worthy of preservation, as far as may be, for their own sakes.

## V

### *Cultural Self-Determination*

But there is still another reason for preserving them—or, to put it more cautiously, for letting them be—and this brings me to my final point, in which perhaps we step right out of the accepted sphere of anthropology as a science.

We may in wisdom or in arrogance believe that the native and his culture stand in need of reform. But let us never forget that he is himself and his culture is his own. The very fact that we may feel bound to provide scope for a fuller development of the native's personality should imply, one presumes, a genuine respect for that personality. And this means first and foremost a recognition of his right to freedom. By this, of course, I mean nothing so crudely obvious as the denial of slavery. I mean the right to live as he himself thinks good; and this implies also the right of a primitive society as such to enjoy its own culture.

I can conjure up only two justifications for repressive or destructive interference. One is that the culture itself contains abuses which stifle or frustrate the human personality. The other is that in its

wider relations it may infringe the rights of others, whether native or European, with whose interests it must be reconciled. Granted, however, that liberty of individual or group must stop short of making itself a nuisance to others, it remains a principle which we choose to regard as sacred. If this is really so, then the native's liberty is no less sacred than our own. He also should have that right, which we prize so highly, of self-determination.

It is mainly on these ethical grounds that I would protest against any definite policy of moulding the native after our own pattern. This policy is sometimes justified on the assumption that we are all moving in the direction of a single united world civilization, to which is added the further tacit assumption that our civilization will provide its model. Even if this be the case I cannot see how it is compatible with the principle of freedom to set about deliberately working for conformity—though to be sure, if the native chooses in the long run to copy our model, then we shall all no doubt be satisfied. There may, however, be quite a different and perhaps more satisfactory future in store for us, viz. one of unity in diversity; and if the vast native populations of the world choose to remain something very different from us it is doubtful whether we should question their right—as it is wholly doubtful whether we should question their taste.

Nevertheless there is a widespread campaign, explicit or inexplicit, direct or indirect, to do away with the native's old way of life and substitute our own. Needless to say it may be motivated by good intentions, even by altruism. But it often appears that the native may have but little say in his own future; for though coercion may be absent, he is nevertheless carried helplessly along with the tide of propaganda and suggestion. In so far as the choice lies between the two extremes of remaining as he is or becoming Europeanized I think that, under certain conditions at present in existence, he is bound to veer strongly towards the latter because the two alternatives are not placed before him fairly.

Let us for a moment try the boots on our own feet and see how we should like to wear them. It is a fact unquestioned that we are deeply and strongly attached to the institutions of our own culture, e.g., private ownership, democracy, and individual liberty. Each one of these institutions or ideals is now subject to attack by rival systems to whose propagandists we should be unjust if we denied their true missionary zeal. Thus we find Fascist on one side and Communist on the other both pouring scorn on the outworn system of democracy.

It is happily unnecessary to declare one's personal opinions upon any of these rival systems, though it seems obvious that our present

civilization is so far from being a satisfactorily working whole as to demand some fundamental readjustments. Whatever these may be, however, it is certain that we shall fight hard against any interference with the system we are used to.

I ask you now to imagine hypothetically a band of missionaries, whether Fascist or Communist, in our midst. They are armed with overpowering influence and prestige; and they have sole control of the weapons of education and propaganda. Picture our initial resentment and indignation, but recognize that these in due course would die down; that certain of our cherished ideals would disappear; and that our children would eventually embrace the new order with open arms, convinced that it was their free choice to do so. This hypothetical parallel may throw some light on the justice of similar methods in so far as they involve the displacement of primitive cultures.

The Devil may quote Scripture to his purpose, and I give you another parallel. I recently listened to a sermon on the following text: 'Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that you are ready to die'. It was taken from St. John's inspired admonition to the church in Sardis, and the preacher succeeded in giving this somewhat obscure utterance a plausible interpretation. The Church, which had forgotten the essentials of the Christian faith, was to hold fast, pending its rejuvenation, to the superficialities, the mere rites, material emblems, and so forth, which had their value and which were themselves threatened with extinction. An inattentive anthropologist might well reflect that this advice was applicable in a wider sphere. Nearly 2,000 years have passed since the shrewd apostle wrote those words; and by now, in some widely represented opinions, the essentials of Christian faith have themselves become superficialities, trimmings on the face of civilization—something which it might, if it wished, cast off. Indeed revolution in one country and another is at this moment engaged in casting it off.

Once again it is happily unnecessary to declare one's own opinion as to whether a changing civilization could fittingly dispense with the Christian faith; though I would go so far as to assume that that faith has no divine protection to ensure its continuance. That, or its decay and extinction, must depend solely on the present and future generations of humanity; and one may prophesy a long struggle between those who are for it and those who, with perhaps equal sincerity, are against it.

Its vast importance, historically and now, both in our civilization and those of other so-called Christian nations, goes without saying. Nor need I draw attention to the place it holds in the people's affections and all their conservative sentiments. Its maintenance or

otherwise is therefore a burning question of applied anthropology—though somewhat bigger than we are accustomed to tackle—and a functionalist from Mars could hardly do other than echo the apostle's words, 'Strengthen the things which remain'. Whatever their religion or lack of it, that is a policy which most anthropologists, if they could transfer their spirit of championship from primitive cultures to advanced civilization, might feel bound to endorse.

But let us imagine once again a situation in which the enemies of Christianity were politically dominant and in absolute control of education and propaganda. They would possibly succeed in blotting Christian belief out of the people's mind; and strange to say the generation which saw it disappear would believe that they had freely willed its disappearance.

Now this would be cultural displacement; it would at least create a serious void; it would be the end of a great human achievement for which no one, whatever his beliefs, would deny admiration; and—which is my point—it would be a denial of self-determination. The ordinary citizen, so strong a champion of his own institutions, might therefore, if he could change places in imagination, question the methods which are sometimes brought to bear against the weaker, more defenceless, cultures of the backward peoples.

All our positive efforts for the welfare of native peoples, therefore, have to reckon with this right to personal freedom and self-determination. I do not think it is a solid wall against which they must all dash themselves to pieces. I believe on the other hand that our scientific knowledge and our wider experience of social rights and obligations should qualify us to help, advise, and perhaps to guide; though the very experience which gives us such an advantage should have taught us how hard it is to know what is good for ourselves, and how more than hard to know what is good for others.

Freedom, the right to think for ourselves and to do what seems good to us, we regard as the highest prize of our civilization. But the possession of it, as we know too well, is insecure: it depends on two complementary factors. On one hand, as we are told, the price of freedom is eternal vigilance; and no one deserves to keep it who has not the courage to fight for it. On the other hand, it can only live by tolerance; and this, in the present connection, is plainly the aspect which we have to consider. The limits which we impose on native liberties are not to be dictated by our own arbitrary sense of propriety, but by consideration for the rights, in fact the liberties, of others, whether individuals or societies. While, then, we undertake the high-sounding obligations of trusteeship, we should impose

those limits with a hand as light as it is firm, recognizing that the native's way of living is his own, that he is much devoted to it, and that, if it does nobody any harm, he has a right to it.

If, as I suggested earlier, the native chooses in the long run to conform to our pattern, we should of course be prepared to abide by his choice. It seems wholly probable that he will conform to greater or less extent; and while it would be unfair to lead him deliberately away from a path that might suit him better. I think we should not deny him the opportunity of conforming. Our course then—and it seems to me the most vital part of a native policy—is to educate him. And by education I mean far more than is meant by the word in popular currency; in fact the sort of liberal education which relates itself both to the new things of Western civilization and to the existent things of his native condition. It would well become the anthropologist to co-operate with the educator in formulating the ideal methods which would make, not for any specific type of our own choosing, but rather for straight and independent thinking, critical appreciation, and, in the spheres of action and conduct, vigour, efficiency, and consideration for others. However distant and idealistic these may sound, it is only as the native advances along the path towards them that he will become fit, or indeed able, to choose his future for himself.

Should anyone ask, 'What are you aiming at? What are you trying to make of the native?' I think the only proper way to answer this at-first-staggering question is to side-step it. Our purpose need be no more than to give him, by education and by respect for his rights, a chance to make something of himself. Provided he plays the game by respecting others' right, then he can make of himself just what he pleases.

It may seem as if what was said in the earlier parts of this address has been unsaid in the last. But I do not think this is the case. I was at pains to show that things may be far from right in any primitive culture. It needs no pains to show that they are far from right in the world at large. Administrators engage in a bigger field of operations than, as a rule, do anthropologists; they have a wider variety of factors to consider than may occur to us: they recognize that the native problem is only part of a larger one; and they are pledged to the everlasting, if not hopeless, task of reconciling rights. While, then, we might be only too glad to let the native go his own way, it is not wholly possible. His way of life must somehow enter into relation with the affairs of the world. It is to be hoped that we may leave him his fair share of freedom; but to leave him entirely to himself would be to funk the issue and neglect our duty.