F. E. WILLIAMS: The Dilemmas of a Government Anthropologist. Papua, 1922 - 1943.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

My aim in this thesis has not been to euligize F. E. Williams; rather it has been to illuminate fragments of the time's impact on him, and the man's impact upon his time. Within the first of these categories I have focused on the development of Williams' ideas in the culture-contact situation in Papua, when as a Government anthropologist, he was caught between loyalty to his administrative position and his anthropological discipline. The consequent dilemmas and compromises that arose from this twin loyalty provide the backbone of the thesis. The second category - his impact on the times - while equally valid, has necessarily been explored in a negative way. Since Williams in his term of Government anthropologist had little practical effect on the Papuan Government the question of why he did not have a greater impact has assumed importance over the question of what impact he did have. To this end, a discussion of the impasse between anthropology and administration in general, and Williams and Murray in particular has been given emphasis.

Chapter one provides a background in both colonial administrative policy and anthropological direction of the period prior to Williams' appointment in 1922. The central question posed - Why did Murray appoint a Government anthropologist? - examines the unique situation in Papua with regard to the emerging clash between colonial ruling philosophy and the new functional anthropological outlook.

Chapters two, three, four and six scrutinize Williams in the position of Government anthropologist. Three time divisions have been utilized.

The first of these, 1922 to 1928, deals with Williams in the temporary position of assistant Government anthropologist. Chapter two describes the early life of Williams in an effort to expose the capabilities

of the man who accepted such a nondescript position.

The period 1928 to 1938, covered in chapters three and four, details the core of Williams' investigation and advice to the Murray administration on Papuan welfare. His own thesis - 'The Blending of Cultures' - forms the nucleus of this work. This decade also focuses on Williams' attempt to grapel with the problem of being a social philosopher by appointment and a social scientist by training.

The final and sixth chapter serves only as an illustration of how Williams, in the last five years of his life (1938-1943), reacted to his Administration's indifference to his work. Hopefully other researchers will examine that which is beyond the limits of this thesis - the impact of Williams' work after his death.

The intervening fifth chapter examines the mystery of why Murray after appointing a Government anthropologist chose to ignore his advice. This necessitates an elaboration of the inter-related roles of the Administration and Missions in their mutual aim of the destruction of the Papuan culture.

Apart from Williams the principal actors in this thesis are the Missions and Murray. Although no claim can be made to have comprehensively examined these actors, the thesis does add a new perspective to an historical understanding of each. Murray's attitude to the Papuan culture is exposed through his admissions on anthropology and his non-acceptance of Williams' thesis, while Williams' abundant writings sketch a clear picture of the important part the Missions played in the onslaught on the Papuan culture.

NOTE: It is necessary to differentiate between the words "society" and "culture" which I have used throughout this thesis. The former is made up of human beings. The latter exists essentially in the mental sphere; i.e. it is composed of mental habits, and the material objects which subserve those habits. Thus I speak of a society and the culture associated with it, viz. the more or less organized system of institutions, beliefs, and sentiments which its members hold in common.

CHAPTER I

THE MURRAY POLICY.

Historically Papua can be viewed, in the period of Hubert Murray's Administration, as the focus of a clash between the emergence of applied anthropology and the philosophy of British Imperial Rule. The basis for this clash stemmed from the British Colonialists' responsibility to civilize the world, by imposing their own superior culture, coming into sharp collision with the scientific conclusion of the anthropologists, that primitive culture was as valid as any other. It is my intention to show in this chapter, that Murray's decision to appoint a Government anthropologist was the result of this collision, within the unique circumstances of Papua; and that it followed primarily, not from a genuine respect for the anthropological findings, but from a superficial compromise between Murray's administrative views and the need to achieve a scientific basis for those views.

The Imperial philosophy of rule, which Murray inherited, was a philosophy which was continually developing and causing the machinery of rule to change with it. In the 1860's a dominant British attitude was to regard the colonies as 'millstones round our neck', but gradually this view changed, with increased British rivalry from Germany and France, and they became symbols of national prestige, and avenues for the spread of the English Civilization.[1] Cecil Rhodes termed Oxford 'the centre of the universe', and it was this spirit of prestige and superiority that must be emphasized in trying to understand the nucleus of British Colonial policy, because this spirit allowed for both responsibility and paternalism in the treatment of subject peoples. Spurred on by the growth of a strong humanitarian movement these feelings, characterized by the phrase 'the white man's burden', had their reflection in the machinery of rule with the recognition of a dual Mandate of protection and development, and the approval of the Indirect Method of Administration.

1. R. B. Joyce, "Sir William MacGregor" (Melbourne, 1971), pp. x-xii.

In his Review of Australian Administration in Papua Murray, by going into the development within the British Empire of the conception of duty towards native races, gave clear evidence of his inheritance of the British philosophy of Empire.[2] Moreover, there were numerous examples in Murray's writings of his perception of himself as the representative of a superior culture; for example, in a paper written in 1929 Murray posed himself the question - What are the outstanding differences between the European and Papuan cultures? He answered:

> Well of course ours is a grander and finer culture altogether; our civilization is more stately; more spacious and more massive than anything the Papuan could possibly conceive; our national and political ideas cannot be comprehended by him, his art is rudimentary in the extreme, science for him is magic, and for him literature does not exist.[3]

The sense of duty and responsibility that was so prevalent in the tradition of British Imperial philosophy was also clearly evident in Murray. In the 1919-20 Annual Report, Murray wrote of the 'White Man's burden' and argued that as natives had no nationality or patriotism it was desirable, even in the interests of the natives themselves, to be under European domination, so that they too could reap the benefits of a superior civilization.[4]

Murray might be labelled a social evolutionist; it was his view that primitive society was simply a very retarded one, which still had to pass through numerous evolutionary stages to reach the level of European civilization. The Papuan society held no validity except as a transitory stage in development; it was Murray's duty not to be content with the 'stone age' culture of the Papuans, but to give the Papuan the opportunity of raising himself, eventually, to a higher place in the 'scale of humanity'.[5] In fact the cultural inferiority of the Papuans was to Murray so clear, that he viewed

2. J. H. P. Murray, Review of Australian Administration in Papua, (Port Moresby, 1921), p. ix.
3. J. H. P. Murray, Response of Papuans to Western Civilization, (Port Moresby, 1929), p. 4.
4. Papuan Annual Report, 1919/20, p. 104.
5. J. H. P. Murray, The Scientific Method as Applied to Native Labour Problems in Papua, (Port Moresby, 1931), p. 5.

it as 'inevitable' that the Papuan would abandon his old customs and beliefs and, consequently, Europeans had a duty to impose their higher culture.[6]

The two principal ways that a European civilization could be imposed by an Administration were subjugation and association. The differences in these were highlighted by the protection aspect of the Dual Mandate given to the English colonialists. Subjugation was the process of direct Europeanization; it held no regard for the native culture at all. This method was crudely applied in Papua in the earliest part of the Murray era, when European penetration was encouraged. Development and the well being of the native were not viewed as being incompatible; on the contrary, Murray in this early phase regarded the two as complementary.[7] Economic penetration would encourage the Papuan to work and, to Murray, this was to offer them a solution to racial doom. Moreover, each European would become a 'focus of civilization', influencing the Papuan to change and accept the benefits of the superior civilization.[8] The failure of this method stemmed largely from the failure of the economic boom which Murray had hoped would follow from an influx of Europeans. In fact, the European population growth in Papua was virtually static; in June 1910 there were 879 European residents and in June 1915 only 1,037.[9] Consequently, Murray recognized that Papua would never be a white man's country - in the sense that white men would marry and settle down in any numbers;[10] hence, the focii of civilization on which he had relied to impose European culture would not be created. Moreover, he began to doubt the desirability of giving the general European population this important function. They were apparently unaware of the responsibilities of European superiority.

In 1914 he wrote to his brother George, that he wished to stay in Papua "for the sake of the natives. - it is not so much that our white settlers are cruel, as that they are utterly indifferent to native life and

6. J. H. P. Murray, Papua or British New Guinea, (London, 1912), p. 9.
7. Gilbert Murray, Private Papers, Australian National Library. Letter dated 14 November, 1908.
8. J. H. P. Murray, Papua or British New Guinea, (etc.), pp. 362-364
9. Papuan Annual Reports, 1910/11 and 1914/15.
10. J. H. P. Murray, Review of Australian Administration, (etc.), p. 1.

suffering - far more so than they are e.g. in the case of a horse."[11] Clearly the duty of civilizing the native was now a task of Administration. Whereas Murray's Administration had previously held no concrete policy on the welfare of the native, it now had to find one.[12] Furthermore, it had to be a policy that would survive the jury of public popularity, and be true to the principles of the philosophy of British Imperial rule.

The indirect method of Colonial Administration had been pioneered by Sir Arthur Gordon in Fiji and Lord Lugard in Africa. MacGregor, Murray's predecessor, had been in Gordon's service in Fiji and had tried to institute this method of administration in Papua. He failed, as Murray did at a later date, but, the implications of his failure were in the world's eyes not great, as the Indirect method had not then won wide popular approval. At the close of the 19th Century, the Indirect method was increasing in popularity through the growth of a strong humanitarian influence on Administration. When Murray assumed control of Papua in 1906 it was recognized by the Colonial Service as being the method of colonial rule. Its popularity reached a peak with the publication, in 1922, of Lugard's The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa. In essence, the method was that of association: it recognized that there was much in the native culture which was of value in the period of cultural change, if not permanently, and that these features should be allowed to co-exist with features of the European culture. In practice, Lugard successfully applied this principle, by retaining the native authority structure and allowing this structure to supervize the change towards civilization.[13]

The functional school of applied anthropology had its public airing with the publication in the same year, 1922, of the books of the two founders of this school - Malinowski's Argonauts of the Western Pacific and Radcliffe-Brown's Andaman Islanders. This school stressed the validity and functional value of native culture. It urged the full preservation of native culture, for to change one aspect would destroy the system by which

11. Gilbert Murray, Private Papers, letter dated 22 April, 1914.
12. Murray admitted this in Papua of Today (etc.), p. viii.
13. M. Perham: Lugard: The Years of Authority. (London 1960), pp. 138 - 173.

man had won mastery over his environment.

> The functional analysis makes us regard culture primarily as an outfit which gives man the mastery of his environment, allows him to maintain the species, the integrity of the individual, and the cohesion of his tribe.[14]

By preserving native authority as a working system Indirect Rule complemented the functional theory, or to be more specific, was far more complementary than the Direct method of administration which aimed at the complete and ready destruction of native culture, by directly imposing European systems of authority and culture. This harmony between functionalism and Indirect Rule became more evident with the re-definition of Lugard's theory by later administrators, who placed emphasis on preservation of native culture, and not on change, as Lugard had intended.[15] Murray was one of these administrators who incorrectly interpreted Lugard's theory. In a 1928 paper he defined Indirect Rule:

> you retain as much as possible of native life, and endeavour to use it for the purpose of administration.[16]

Clearly Murray's stress was on preservation, and not, as Lugard had intended, on gradual change.[17]

It was unfortunate for Murray, that at the very time he was searching for an adequate policy towards the natives, that public discussion of the theory of Indirect Rule had coincided with the elaboration of the functional anthropological views on native society. The two appeared to complement each other. The problem for Murray was that the method of Indirect Rule was not applicable in Papua, and so in falling out with one school, Murray provoked the wrath of the other.

14. B. Malinowski and others (eds.), Culture: A Symposium, (Cambridge, 1928), p. 36.
15. F. West pointed this out in Sir Hubert Murray - The Australian Pro-Consol, (Oxford, 1968), p. 219
16. J. H. P. Murray, Indirect Rule in Papua, 1928. p. 329.
17. Murray was not alone in this: Governor Cameron in Tanganyika did the same.

The essential reason why Murray could not accept an application of the Indirect method as it was, was simply because of his view that it was unsuited to Papua. Unlike Nigeria, there existed no system of chiefly heirarchy or authority structure, which could be left in control of native society and its culture. Murray reported, "The chiefs in Papua are merely the Napoleons of the village, the Mussolinis of an hour".[18] It was, therefore, necessary for Murray to modify and re-interpret the method of Indirect Rule; he hoped to rule indirectly through a system of village constables, first initiated by MacGregor, and later through village councillors. In doing this Murray destroyed native authority, the basis of the theory that he hoped to institute. As Francis West pointed out:

> A chief who had his own treasury and administered his own customary law in his own courts was a very different thing from a chief who was appointed to government office, because in the former case he visibly exercised a traditional authority, in the latter he occupied an untraditional office supported by government sanctions.[19]

Murray was aware of this criticism himself; it was the reason that he claimed only to rule in the 'spirit of indirect rule', and admitted that his Administration 'could not fulfill the letter of indirect rule'.[20] Given, then, this acceptance by Murray of the unsuitability of this method why did he hope to give the appearance of adopting the principles of the Indirect Method?

The answer to this question lies partly in the allegiance of Murray to the philosophy of the British Colonial Service. This philosophy stressed a responsibility on the part of an administrator to the welfare of the subject people. The Indirect method fulfilled this obligation, and had the additional advantage of being supported by the new anthropological analysis of native society. Murray no doubt wanted to be true to this responsibility, and at the same time, avoid the scientific criticisms of applied anthropology,

18. J. H. P. Murray, Indirect Rule in Papua, (etc.), p. 330
19. F. West, op. cit., p. 219
20. J. H. P. Murray, Indirect Rule in Papua, (etc.), p. 336

which centred around the policy of interfering with valid native cultures. Moreover, he was an ambitious man. From as early as 1912 he contemplated resigning from Papua and joining the Imperial Colonial Service;[21] he could not afford to have his administration fall out of step with the progressive views of the Service. Finally, Murray's already present sense of responsibility was further strengthened by the statement of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which insisted that Colonialists had a 'sacred duty' to safeguard the welfare of the primitive people under their control. In short, he was forced into employing the 'spirit of indirect rule', because this method was popularly approved, as the method that best safeguarded the welfare of the Papuans.

The difficulty in discussing Murray's Administrative policy, towards the Papuans and their culture, is that it was never a static or concrete policy; it depended entirely on what Murray thought was the wisest and most responsible stance to take on a particular native issue or crisis, when viewed in isolation. Murray justified this extremely fluid policy in a 1932 paper:

> In native administration we are really exploring a new field of human activity and our advance must be gradual. We must halt from time to time and take our bearings and consider the direction of our next advance, and a course that was rigidly fixed beforehand might lead us astray.[22]

Perhaps the closest definition of the so called 'Murray Policy' was given by a former officer in Murray's Administration, when he described it in very general terms as "A long-range humane plan of indirect rule applied with commonsense".[23] This definition highlighted the great weakness of the 'Murray Policy' from a scientific, critical perspective - by employing commonsense, he was presuming full knowledge of the problems on which he would have to judge and decide.

21. Gilbert Murray: Private Papers, (etc.), letter dated 17 February, 1912
22. J. H. P. Murray, "The Scientific Aspect of the Pacification of Papua in The Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, Vol. XXI, 1932, pp. 25-26
23. J. I. Bensted, "Sir Hubert Murray in Papua", in South Pacific, Vol. 7 No. 4, 1953, p. 679

Murray did not possess full knowledge of native problems; in fact, he found many features of the Papuan culture puzzling. In Papua or British New Guinea, he cited many strange and incomprehensible customs of the Papuans; for example, in referring to the natives on the Purari Delta he observed that they had a fixed penalty for theft, "which they punished by the somewhat roundabout method of killing the woman who cooks the thief's food".[24] In fact, Murray's problem of having to assume full knowledge as an administrator, can be closely paralleled to his earlier problem of dispensing justice as Chief Judicial Officer, when neither the defendant nor the judge understood one another.[25] However, as an administrator Murray was more open to criticism in the application of his 'sacred duty'. It is my belief that Murray recognized the scientific weakness of his 'commonsense' policy, and that this motivated him to appoint a Government anthropologist, who by 'thinking black' could bridge the gap between understanding and incomprehension, or more importantly, appear to do this.[26]

It is important to note that Murray did not appoint an anthropologist to advise him on how best to preserve native custom, but rather to advise on how best to change those customs.

> It is clear that the Papuan cannot remain as he is; he must move along the path of civilization unless he is to die out altogether...still progress will be more willing, and consequently more rapid, if the Papuan understands and concurs in what we are doing, and for this reason a knowledge of manners and customs and Papuan mentality generally is very desirable.[27]

Clearly Murray's convictions on the necessity to civilize by change, and not to preserve for the sake of preserving, were still the basis for his administrative policy. This was the core of the clash between traditional Imperial philosophy with its duty to civilize, and the functional anthropologists with their duty to preserve. On a more specific level this clash can be seen in the relationship between Malinowski and Murray.

24. J. H. D. Murray, Papua or British New Guinea, (etc.), p. 202.
25. Papuan Annual Report, 1919/20, pp. 110-111.
26. J. H. P. Murray, "Anthropology and the Government of Subject Races", Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, Vol. XV 1921, pp. 2-3.
27. J. H. P. Murray, Review of Australian Administration, (etc.), p. 33.

By one of the ironies of history, it was Murray who sponsored Malinowski in his pioneer work in applied anthropology in Papua, during the First World War. Even their first meeting highlighted the clash between maintenance of British prestige, the soul of British Imperial philosophy, and the rational scientific usurper. Murray reported to his brother, George, on Malinowski:

> He is a very clever man, but I do not like him. it is not merely that he treats me with that strange mixture of patronage and intolerance which is the inseparable heritage of men of science there is something wrong about him though I do not know what it is.[28]

At a later date Murray's suspicions had grown:

> He is suspected of being likely to introduce habits among the natives which they are very much better without."[29]

Some of the animosity in this relationship would have been due to Malinowski being of German nationality, while Murray was an avid supporter of the Empire in the period of the Great War. However, Murray also disliked Pitt-Rivers, an Englishman belonging to the functional anthropological school. In a despatch to the Minister for Home and Territories Murray accused Pitt-Rivers of being prejudiced against his administration, an unpardonable sin, considering the help extended to him in his research in Papua.[30] The hostility can be better explained in terms of the arrogant scientific approach colliding with the equally arrogant British tradition and the duty to rule. This argument is further strengthened by Murray's own views on anthropology, and his preference for experience over training in regards to administrative officers.

Murray's views on anthropology were modelled by the academic climate of the period prior to World War I. During the latter years of

28. Gilbert Murray: Private Papers, (etc.), letter dated 5 October, 1914
29. ibid. letter dated 30 April, 1918.
30. Manuscript. Commonwealth Archives Office. AI Series, Item 20/692.

Victorian England, the dominant figure in anthropology was E. B. Tylor. He expounded a social evolutionary theory of development, which laid great stress on the unity of mankind, but at the same time believed that man passed through certain stages of cultural development. Tylor illustrated this through a comparison of a primitive culture to his Victorian culture of the more advanced man.[31] Murray's familiarity with these ideas stemmed from his own prolific reading and his close friendship with A. C. Haddon and R. A. Marett, who were both professional disciples of Tylor's views. Although Murray was very critical of academic anthropology, - for instance in 1908 he wrote, "It is a most fascinating study though, so far as I can see, purely fantastic; the alleged facts being unsupported by evidence and the inference forced."[32] - it still formed the basic premise in his thinking on social change. This is clearly evident in the very similar views of Murray and Tylor on the role of an anthropologist.

In his book Primitive Culture, Tylor proclaimed that an anthropologist's function was "to impress men's minds with a doctrine of development" and "to expose the remains of the crude old culture which have passed into superstition and to mark these out for destruction".[33] Murray's given reasons for the appointment of a Government anthropologist were that he would be able "to help us in reconciling an intelligent though very backward race to the inevitable march of civilization".[34] Murray justified the appointment by stressing the basic tenet of Tylor's theory, the unity of mankind.[35]

The important thing to note about Murray's early anthropological views is that they were not at variance with the concept of British prestige. Both regarded the European culture as a superior, or more highly evolved, form of primitive cultures, and both saw an apparent duty to raise the lower culture to the level of the higher. However, these two streams of thought were at

31. J. W. Burrow, Evolution and Society - A Study in Victorian Social Theory, (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 242-250.
32. Gilbert Murray: Private Papers, (etc.). letter dated 19 February, 1908.
33. Cited in Burrow, op. cit., P. 258.
34. J. H. P. Murray, "Anthropology and the Government of Subject Races", (etc.), p. 180.
35. ibid., p. 160.

variance with the later functional anthropological school and the vulgarized theory of Indirect Rule, both of which placed emphasis on preserving primitive culture as it was.

Murray was caught between these two factions. On the one hand he held an evolutionary view of primitive cultures, and was a loyal subject of the Empire. On the other hand he was conscious of his responsibility to the governed people and recognized that the Indirect Rule in Administration was the method which was popularly supported as best guaranteeing the protection of these people. It was in a sense a conflict between his beliefs and popular opinion. By appointing a Government anthropologist Murray compromised between the two.

The need for Murray to compromise arose, as has been shown, from the popular opinion that the Indirect Rulists and the Applied Anthropologists were most concerned with the question of native welfare, and also because of his untenable position of 'knowing all' in relation to native culture. However, the compromise must be seen as a superficial one. This is so because Murray's reasons for appointment were not in sympathy with the perceived value of applied anthropology, from a functionalist outlook. He employed an anthropologist to assist change, not to help preserve native culture. Moreover, Murray held a very low opinion of trained personnel. He argued, "surely it is better to get men who know nothing, and to train them yourself".[36] This view extended to anthropologists as is evidenced by his refusal to adopt a system of anthropological training for cadets to his staff, when a Chair in Anthropology was established in Sydney.[37] But by modifying his views a little and appointing an anthropologist to his staff he gave the appearance of valuing an anthropologist; a fact that he pointed to with some pride.

> ... It may be claimed for Papua that it was, perhaps the first, or at any rate, one of the first of the Colonies and Territories of the Empire to acknowledge the practical value of this science by the appointment of a Government Anthropologist."[38]

36. Cited in L. Lett, Sir Hubert Murray of Papua, (Sydney, 1949), p. 128.
37. E. W. P. Chinnery, "Applied Anthropology in New Guinea", Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Vol. XXI, 1932, p. 165.
38. J. H. P. Murray, "Australian Policy in Papua", in Campbell and others eds. Studies in Australian Affairs, (Melbourne, 1930), p. 254.

To Murray the Indirect Method was "the only policy that can be regarded as scientific or reconcilable with the principles of anthropology".[39] The underlying assumption being that if an anthropologist was appointed, then the administration must be employing the Indirect method. Thus the simple expedient of employing an anthropologist gave the Murray Administration the appearance of being in sympathy with both applied anthropology and the Indirect method of Administration.

The problem for Murray was to find a suitable anthropologist. The right man could be defined as a person who was in agreement with Murray's own anthropological views, a man who would not be overly critical of his administration, and above all, a man who would uphold the principle of British prestige. In his endeavour to find such an anthropologist Murray placed his trust in Marett and Haddon,[40] both of whom, we have noted were disciples of Tylor. Murray's preference for an 'Oxford Man' [41] may have stemmed from a strong personal attachment to his old University, or equally from that University's reputation as the home of 'civilized man'. Haddon's choice was E. W. D. Chinnery who had worked for some time in Papua before undertaking formal training at Cambridge; but Murray complained:

> He would not do at all - he is quite unreliable as to observation, collection of evidence, etc. - he will say any mortal thing in order to excite interest and attract attention.[42]

By 1920 Murray had decided to appoint his Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Strong, as Government anthropologist, a position he held without pay. He also appointed, as an assistant anthropologist, Armstrong, who was a Cambridge student doing research in Papua. When in 1921 Armstrong resigned to continue his studies, Murray replaced him with a man recommended by Marett - F. E. Williams. Williams who had studied under Marett, and had held a Rhodes Scholarship, with all its connotations of serving the Empire, appeared by Murray's criteria to be the right man.

39. Papuan Annual Report, 1919/20, p. 106.
40. Gilbert Murray: Private Papers, (etc.), letter date 2 December, 1919.
41. ibid., letter dated 17 July, 1919.
42. ibid., letter dated 2 December, 1919.

Thus the culmination of this clash between the British traditional philosophy of Rule and the new scientific approach of the functional anthropologists, in a climate of concern for native welfare, was a compromise by Murray in appointing a Government anthropologist. I have argued, that this compromise was a superficial one considering Murray's distrust and low opinion of the new school of anthropology, and a recognition of the factors that forced such an appointment.

It will be the purpose of subsequent chapters, to examine Williams in this position of compromise as a Government anthropologist, caught between loyalty to Administration, and a duty to his anthropological views and findings.

CHAPTER II.

FORMATIVE YEARS.

This chapter will superimpose Williams' life upon the framework of ruling philosophy and the scientific approach to the Administration of 'primitive' peoples, elaborated in the previous chapter. It will be shown that while Williams' upbringing was that of a 'born to govern' nature, he chose to study anthropology at a time when this vocation was depending more and more on scientific foundations, and which was bringing into question the superiority of Western civilization. Consequently I am faced with the problem of detailing Williams 'formative years' when, in retrospect, his chosen position as Government anthropologist in Papua represented almost a contradiction in terms between his upbringing and early education, and his decision to work as an anthropologist in the interests of native welfare.

Francis Edgar Williams was born in Adelaide on the 9th February 1893. He was the son of a well to do architect, David Williams, whose wealth enabled Francis to have a private school education. At Kyre College, (now Scotch College) he excelled throughout in both the academic and sporting fields. In the former, he topped his class every year except one in his eight years of schooling, and was awarded in his final year, 1910, the Tennyson Medal for English and a Government Bursary to attend University. In the latter, the sporting field, he in 1910 won the College Championship and Sports Cup for athletics, a gold medal for gymnastics and was captain of the school's football and cricket teams.[1]

Between 1911 and 1914 Williams, at University, continued in the same vein as he had at College. In his first year he won his 'sporting blue' for football, and throughout his time at Adelaide University he continually represented the University in top grade football and cricket. For his Classics

1. Rhodes Scholarship Application 1915: South Australian State Archives.

course Williams studied English Literature, Latin, Greek, Ethics, Logic and Psychology, and gained first division passes (distinctions) in all of them except Ethics. In final honours in Classics Williams again gained a First Class result, and to add to the Andrew Scott Prize for Latin, and the Roby Fletcher Prize for Psychology which he had earned previously, he was awarded the David Murray Scholarship for advanced work and original investigation.

It was not surprising, given Williams' prowess in the academic and sporting fields, that in 1915 he applied for the Rhodes Scholarship, nor was it surprising that his application was successful. W. Mitchell, Williams Philosophy teacher, commended him for the scholarship:

> He is naturally a thoughtful man and would do thorough justice to the philosophical part of the course at Oxford ... His record in Classics, in football and rowing, and in the Arts Association shows him a typical man for the rest of the life contemplated by the scholarship, and I hope that at last an Arts man may be found to deserve election.[2]

Mitchell's apparent belief that Williams, if successful, would use his scholarship to study Philosophy proved to be incorrect. In his application for the Rhodes Scholarship Williams detailed his ambitions:

> The choice of a Classics course has not occasioned me the least regret, though I now realize that from a practical standpoint, at least as far as wage-earning is concerned, it is likely to be of no great use. However, the aspiration after a literary career of some sort led me to avoid more remunerative vocations, and to stake my fortunes upon this course, hoping for a continuance of success as I proceed.[3]

The reason (s) why Williams decided to search for a literary career in the field of Anthropology remains somewhat of a mystery.

The Great War prevented Williams from immediately taking up his scholarship. In 1916 he enlisted in the Australian Army, and served for two

2. Rhodes Scholarship application 1915: (etc.)
3. ibid.

years in France as a transport officer with the rank of Lieutenant; later he was appointed a Captain in the "Dunsterforce" and served in Persia. Apparently he was well liked by the men under him, and was praised for being able to be both a leader and a friend.[4] During the war Williams unaccountably acquired the nickname of Toby, and it stayed with him until his death. At the war's end, he returned to Adelaide before going to Balliol College, Oxford on his Rhodes Scholarship in 1919.

At Oxford Williams gained a distinction in his work for the Diploma of Anthropology, under the supervision of Dr. R. R. Marett. One can only speculate on the anthropological influences that he came under at Oxford. However, it is known that Marett was a disciple of Tylor's views, so it can be safely predicted that Williams also was familiar with Tylor's thinking. Moreover, Williams admitted much later in his life that he was acquainted with the functionalist outlook. This functionalist influence might explain why, after using only two years of a possible three year scholarship, he was keen to find an avenue for field work in Anthropology. The functionalist emphasis on scientific proof, and the consequent necessity for field work may well have been the deciding factor between an academic career and a career 'in the field'.

Williams applied for anthropological work both in Cape Town and Papua. In the former case he was 'pipped for the job' by Radcliffe-Brown,[5] but in the latter he was accepted immediately. The reasons why his appointment in Papua was so ready, have previously been given in an elaboration of Murray's search for the 'right man'. Murray offered Williams £400 a year, £50 for an outfit and a first class fare to Port Moresby. He accepted and on the 9th March 1922, aged 29 years, he arrived to take up his duties.

Before examining Williams' early years in Papua, it is worth emphasizing some of the factors in his life up to 1922. Williams was, from all the evidence available, a gentleman; his private schooling, and for the

4. Williams: Private Papers: South Australian State Museum: letter of sympathy to Mrs. C. Williams, dated 28 May, 1943. Signed J. M. Cummings.
5. Williams: Private Papers: (etc.) letter by F. E. Williams to Marett dated 19 December, 1925.

time, extensive education, placed him above the vast majority of the population. This is evidenced in his automatically gaining rank in the Great War. Furthermore, his brilliant academic career and sporting achievements can present Williams as the epitome of the 'civilized man' that both Rhodes and Murray envisaged. He was a man of his time; and his times' circumstances, coupled with his own talent, had made him a member of a 'superior elite'. It was this superiority, with its consequent arrogance, that prompted Marett to tell Williams:

> If they offered you the job of the First Lord of the Admiralty, you would tell them, that you would hold it down for them.[6]

While I am not suggesting that Williams' elitist role was evident in his behaviour or writings, a case can be made out for it ensuring a paternalistic attitude to the Papuan culture.

It must have been a substantial environmental shock, though perhaps lessened by his anthropological studies, for Williams to have left Oxford and to have been plunged into the 'primitive' conditions of Papua. Mevlin Taylor, in his book The Heart of Black Papua (1926) gave a clear picture of how he reacted to the same 'primitive' conditions:

> Even now, thousands of miles from it all and with its evidence dimmed by time, I often find myself in the grasp of a nightmare in which I live over again those days and nights when inland Papua struck at the very core of my being.[7]

Murray, as if to test Williams, sent him immediately into the Purari Delta which he described as: "a hideous wilderness of mud, inhabited by ex-cannibals of villianous appearance and poor physique". Williams survived the test, spending six months in the Delta. Murray reported of him: "I think he will do very well. He is quite indifferent to discomfits".[8]

6. Williams: Private Papers, (etc.), Williams recalled this is letter to Marett, dated 19 December 1925.
7. M. M. Taylor, The Heart of Black Papua. (New York 1926). p. 1.
8. Gilbert Murray: Private Papers, (etc.), dated 7 November 1922.

The settling in process was not as easy for Williams as Murray apparently thought. E. W. P. Chinnery, who was at this time a District Officer, wrote to Marett observing that Williams' heart was not in his job, and suggested that Marett should write.[9] However, Williams' despondency was not rectified by Marett, but by the outbreak of the 'Vailala Madness', which he hurried off to study at firsthand, as it was from an anthropological viewpoint, an extremely interesting and exciting phenomenon.

The 'Vailala Madness', since Williams' time, has become recognized as one of the 'cargo cults' that were characteristic of social change. Resulting from European presence they were particularly evident in Melanesia. Although all the Cargo Cults were in themselves unique, certain common characteristics were discernible. They were all millenarian; i.e. there was an expectation of, and preparation for the coming of a period of supernatural bliss; hence the name 'cargo cults'. They all borrowed European rituals, both secular and religious, and grafted them to local beliefs; finally, they were all events of organized activity.[10] Interpretations of the Cargo Cults are extremely varied. Belshaw (1950), saw them as rational attempts to explain the white man, framed in a religious setting; Guiant (1956), saw them as examples of incipient nationalism; to Cohn (1957) and Berndt (1954), they were manifestations of social change brought on by the traumatic effect of the whites.[11]

Williams, in 1924, was the first observer to interpret a Cargo Cult. He described the building of platforms to receive the cargo from European ships and aircraft, the adoption of European manners and clothes, and the effect that this movement had on the Papuans:

> the natives ... were taking a few quick steps in front of them, and would then stand, jabber and gesticulate, at the same time swaying from side to side, also bending the body from side to side from the hips, the legs appearing to be held firm.[12]

9. Williams: Private Papers, (etc.), E. W. Chinnery to Marett, dated 24 August, 1922
10. P. Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound, (London, 1970), pp. 21-26
11. I. C. Jarvie "Theories of Cargo Cults", Oceania, Vol. XXXIV, (I), 1963, pp. 1 - 31 and 108 - 136.
12. F. E. Williams "The Vailala Madness and the Destruction of Native Ceremonies" Report issued by Government of Papua No. 4, p. 10

Williams argued, that the causes of the "Vailala Madness" were, firstly the effort to assimilate a body of new and difficult ideas, with a resultant mental confusion, secondly the loss of customary means of social excitement, and finally a general sense of inferiority.[13] Peter Worsley in The Trumpet Shall Sound, criticized Williams' interpretation because although he had paid special attention to the psychological aspects of the movement he had ignored their social, political and organizational aspects. This bias, Worsley continued, arose out of "Williams belief in the necessity and desirability of preserving as much as possible of tribal life", and he further contended that Williams expressed this desire in "crude colonial phraseology";[14] e.g. "they have ceased to be true natives".[15]

The greatest effect that Williams' study of the 'Vailala Madness' had on his anthropological views was that it convinced him that the functionalists' stress on the inter-relatedness of elements within primitive culture was correct. The 'Vailala Madness', because of its catalytic nature, allowed him to observe the impact of Europeans on the Papuan culture in a telescoped period of time. His observations, especially on the important role placed by the missions in the movement, provided first hand proof of the functionalist hypothesis that if one part of primitive culture was destroyed, for instance, the utilization of magic, then the rest would also decay. Consequently, Williams adopted a functionalist outlook in warning both the Missionaries and the Administration against interfering with Papuan culture:

> 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.[16]

This warning was principally directed at the Missionaries and their influence on the Papuans; in his official report Williams attacked them with some

13. F. E. Williams: "The Vailala Madness in Retrospect", in Essays Presented to C. C. Seligman, Ed., E. E. Evans-Pritchard and others, (London, 1934), p. 377.
14. P. Worsley, op. cit., pp 88-89.
15. F. E. Williams: The Vailala Madness, (Etc.), p. 60. (my emphasis).
16. ibid., p. 64.

vigour:

> It is a fundamental principal of ethics that no code or creed can be laid down without regard to the psychology of those for whom it is intended and it is justifiable to ask whether the Papuan is everywhere given a proper admixture of guidance and liberty, or whether he is not sometimes hustled by the scruff of the neck up the wrong path of righteousness. For presumably a man's soul should be his own - in a sense it is himself. Yet what with the zeal and energy of various reformers the natives soul has sometimes an ill time of it between the upper and nether millstones of Materialism and Christianity.[17]

This critique, while necessary, because of his new loyalty to the functionalist school, did mean that Williams had set himself up as an enemy of Missionary activity. In 1925 he wrote to Marett:

> I was dismayed to find that all the magnificent ceremonies originally practiced there had been wiped out by this ridiculous Vailala Madness. I think the missionaries are indirectly responsible for the iconoclastic part of the show ... I may find myself at variance with the L. M. S. - have my arguments hacked to pieces by the Sword of Faith.[18]

Williams' fear of a reaction from the Missionaries was misplaced. On the whole his report seemed to have been ignored by the Missionaries and the Administration, though the latter did carry out Williams' suggestion of ridiculing and discrediting, rather than arresting the 'Automaniacs' (the leaders of the Cult). Murray sent his brother,George, a copy of the report adding that he found it "quite interesting", and that "Williams was a very good man though I do not agree with him on all points."[19] Murray's admission of disagreement, undoubtedly referred to Williams' emphasis on the destructive role of the Missionaries, but this difference of opinion was not acted on; it remained simply a gentleman's disagreement.

17. F. E. Williams: The Vailala Madness, (Etc.), p. 45.
18. Williams: Private Papers, Letter to Marett dated, 25 March, 1923.
19. Gilbert Murray: Private Papers Letter to George (Gilbert) dated, 17 Novemebr, 1923.

Williams' ambitions did not allow him to envisage a lengthy stay in Papua; at the most it was to be a four or five year period in the service of Administration. He reasoned, that "the sort of wandering, bush-whacking life one has to lead in this job would be a killer in the long run."[20] Consequently he wrote to Marett, asking him to keep his eyes open for any opportunities for the advancement of a young anthropologist. In the meantime he was content to gain anthropological experience and carry out Murray's directions.

In 1925, Murray sent Williams to investigate the depopulation problem in the Suau District. His report, which was not published until 1933, continued the attack, already begun in his 1923 report on the 'Vailala Madness', on the factors causing the destruction of the Papuan Culture. To Williams depopulation was a sign of cultural deterioration:

> The lack of will to live is greatly increased when life seems not worth living, and the argument is that the imposition of new and unwelcome duties, and the restriction of former interests and activities, have really had this effect upon native life since the coming of the whiteman. The result is that the natives powers of resistance are impaired and he easily goes under to any kind of sickness.[21]

On a more specific level Williams argued that indentured labour was a "questionable practice"; it meant that for three years a wife had to be faithful or dispose through abortion, or infanticide, evidence of infidelity. Moreover, the quest for food was extremely difficult for a wife, especially if she had children. The solution in Williams' eyes was to either limit to one year the period a married man could be indentured for, or allow the wife to accompany him.[22]

Despite Williams' plea at the end of this report that the Administration and Missions "must do more than merely seek the cause of Depopulation; they must apply the result of scientific investigation,"[23]

20. Williams: Private Papers, (Etc.), letter to Marett, dated 14 July, 1923.
21. F. E. Williams, "Population and Education in Papua". Combined Anthropological Reports, Los. 13 and 14, 1933, p. 43.
22. ibid, pp. 34-35.
23. ibid, p. 57.

his findings and suggestions were ignored. Murray commenting on Williams' unpublished report in the Papuan Annual Report of 1925/26, stated that while Williams' objective was to find the true cause of decrease it had been "unfortunately without any definite result."[24] Further, in his paper "The Scientific Method as Applied to Native Labour Problems in Papua", Murray discounted the idea of women accompanying their husbands because:

> They would become a landless proletariat, dependent on the plantation for work and wages ... such a result could not be reconciled with 'the sacred trust'.[25]

Perhaps the ineffectiveness of his observations and suggestions on the Administration, or the difficulty of life in Papua, caused Williams to admit to Marett that, "I feel rather like a desert rose in Papua." And again, but this time more definitely, he asked Marett to find him another job:

> Yes, I should like an academic job, especially as I am hoping to marry a wife before long. For the present I am heartily sick of field-work, and I think I am growing a little stale on it. I should therefore be glad to place my name in your hands, or in that of any Appointment Committee.[26]

Williams' request was not successful. However, the unavailability of another appointment did allow him to put into practice a novel technique of investigation for anthropology.

Up to 1926 Williams' research had revealed to him an error in current anthropological belief, and the consequent necessity for a new technique of research. His study of the Vailala Madness had left him with "the unpleasant suspicion that the reputed simplicity of the savages' ideas is in part at least, due to the simplicity of investigation".[27] As a result Williams

24. Papuan Annual Report, 1925/26, p. 4. (my emphasis).
25. J. H. P. Murray: The Scientific Method as Applied to the Native Labour Problem, (etc.), pp. 12-13.
26. Williams: Private Papers, letter to Marett, dated 30 July, 1926. (Williams married Constance Deeness in 1926).
27. ibid., letter to Marett dated 25 March, 1923.

decided to concentrate his research:

> I think that by working intensively in one or two districts it is possible to get a very much sounder knowledge of native life and occasionally a practical idea regarding Government Policy, etc.[28]

During the years 1926 to 1928 Williams carried out his idea by examining Orokaiva society and its culture in great detail. This investigation yielded three separate reports. The first, "Tavo Cult" had many similarities to his earlier work on Cargo Cults, but this time studied its impact on a more specific level; the second "Orokaiva Garden Culture" examined the horticultural methods of the natives, and suggested that reform in this area by the Administration would have beneficial effects in native welfare; and finally "Orokaiva Magic" which was an anthropological treatise on the role of sorcery in the Orokaivans' traditional life style.

These reports were eventually published in book form under the title of Orokaiva Magic in 1928. The publication was made possible by the Administration advancing a sum towards its initial publication, on the condition that when the remaining cost of publication had been defrayed it would receive the royalties on all further copies.[29] The publication of this book realized Williams' early ambition for a literary career.

1928 was, in many ways, the most significant year in Williams' career. Besides the publication of his first book, Williams was also promoted from assistant Government anthropologist to Government anthropologist. This promotion came as a result of Dr. Strong's resignation from the post in June of 1927. Williams quickly wrote to Marett informing him that he was "rather satisfied with this position rather than an academic one - not that I see the latter offering!"[30] Moreover, after 1928 a qualitative change can be detected

28. Williams: Private Papers, letter to Marett dated 17 May, 1925.
29. Papuan Annual Report, 1927/1928, p. 16.
30 Williams: Private Papers, letter to Marett, dated 29 July, 1928.

in Williams' work; an increasing emphasis was to be placed on the finding of an overall solution to the question of native welfare, rather than specific suggestions to certain problems. This demarcation was highlighted by the publication in 1928 of "The Blending of Native and European Cultures" and "Native Education". These two publications were the first of a number leading up to Williams' thesis on a blend of cultures and its attainment through education.

Williams' decision to remain in Papua and his promotion to Government anthropologist meant he could no longer shelter, in a lowly position under Strong, from the inherent dilemmas of being both an anthropologist and a Government official. After 1928 Williams was directly responsible to Murray and in effect was forced to compromise between the ideals of his training and the reality of his position.

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHER OR SOCIAL SCIENTIST?

The decision to appoint a Government anthropologist was, as has been shown in chapter one, the result of a need for compromise between Murray's administrative policy and the scientific critique of that policy. F. E. Williams therefore found himself in a novel, and in many ways an uncongenial position. Existing relations between the science of anthropology and colonial administration meant that a Government anthropologist was close to a contradiction in terms. Williams, however, continued to develop intellectually and came to question the functional orthodoxy of his line; this removed the basic contradiction of his appointment. While Murray's compromise had been one of expediency, that of Williams was based on a scientific evaluation of his Papuan experience. However, the price of compromise was the inheritance of both academic and practical dilemmas. Consequently in the period 1928-1939 Williams can be depicted as a man searching and attempting to justify his loyalties as a Government anthropologist.

When Williams was appointed assistant Government anthropologist in 1922 the flags of the functional theory of anthropology were first unfurling themselves. Although he had been supervised in his anthropological studies at Oxford by Marett, he still emerged from his training with this new theory of applied anthropology deeply implanted.[1] As has been shown, Williams' observations on the 'Vailala Madness' convinced him that the functionalist stress on the inter-relatedness of cultural elements was correct. Consequently in 1923 he had contended:

> You have only to remove one wheel to stop the watch, or one stone from the social structure to have it tumbling around your ears.[2]

1. F. E. Williams, "Presidential Address - Creed of a Government Anthropologist", Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, Vol. XXIV, 1939, p. 147
2. F. E. Williams "The Vailala Madness", (etc.), p. 64

By 1935, however, Williams had completely changed his opinion of these statements, which he was later to term "prophetic figures of speech" that were "very wide of the mark".[3] He maintained instead that "Cultural change is not only inevitable but desirable".[4] Two factors were critical in this reversal of stance. Firstly Murray's own views on what a Government anthropologist should, and should not do, and secondly Williams' growing realization of the 'raison d'etre' of his position - native welfare.

Since he was a Government official and an anthropologist Williams' duties in Papua could be, and were, closely defined by the Papuan Administration. Upon his appointment Murray was most explicit about the role he should play:

> Mr. Williams' duties as Assistant Government Anthropologist 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 civilization which we are introducing.[5]

Murray was adamant that Williams' anthropological work should not stray from the tasks set by the Administration, and become "Lost in the mazes of anthropological science".[6] In his "Creed of a Government Anthropologist" Williams indicated that he accepted this tight control of his anthropological studies. He acknowledged that as a Government anthropologist he had to be interested in certain areas of anthropology that were relevant and useful to his position. Thus some branches of study had to be ignored completely; e.g. Physical Anthropology, Prehistory, Ethnology and Museum Collecting.[7] A definition of 'useful anthropology' was given as the study of societies and cultures "as they exist at present, whether virtually

3. F. E. Williams, Drama of Orokolo, (Oxford, 1940), p. 406
4. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures: An Essay on the Aims of Native Education", Report issued by the Government of Papua, No. 16, 1935, p. 3
5. Murray in Introduction to Williams, "The Natives of the Purari Delta", Anthropological Report, No. 5, 1924, p. 1
6. Gilbert Murray, Private Papers, letter dated, 7 November, 1922.
7. F. E. Williams "Presidential Address - Creed of a Government Anthropologist", (etc.), p. 146

unchanged or in the process of changing".[8]

Implicit in both the Administration's view of the role of a Government anthropologist and Williams' perception of this role was an expectation and a need that he be involved in the question of native welfare. Williams was also, in a very practical sense, tied to this area of concern. Murray had effectively done this by providing that the Government anthropologist's salary was paid from the Natives' Benefit Fund, which was devoted to purposes having for their object 'the direct benefit of the natives of Papua'. The Papuan people actually provided Williams' salary as it was their taxes that went into this fund. As Williams admitted this placed him in a "Somewhat embarrassing position", because it forced him into a situation of dual responsibility.[9] He had to work effectively in native welfare, because he was responsible as a government official to his Administration's instructions, and because he was indebted to the Papuans who paid his salary.

The problem Williams faced in his early years in Papua as a functionalist, was one of applying this view to his task of investigating native welfare. A major tenet of the functional theory was that interference with primitive culture would eventually destroy that culture. Radcliffe Brown in The Andaman Islanders drew an analogy between primitive culture and an 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 general part in the general life of the organism.[10]

The inference behind this analogy was that if some organ of the body was destroyed then the whole organism would die. In essence then, the cause of native welfare could only be served if the primitive culture was saved from any interference by Europeans. For Williams, as an anthropologist and member of an Administration, to apply this concept of native welfare, which was interfering with native culture, was absurd. Even Murray recognized this

8. F. E. Williams "Presidential Address - Creed of a Government Anthropologist", (etc.) p. 147.
9. ibid., p. 145 - 146.
10. Radcliffe-Brown, The Andaman Islanders, (Cambridge, 1933), p. 229

fallacy in the funtionalist criticism of his administration and countered by arguing that an anthropologist engaged in studying primitive society was, by his presence, interfering with primitive culture.[11]

Williams, too, recognized the functionalist solution to cultural decay as being unrealistic in Papua. His 1933 publication "Population and Education in Papua" argued against the unreasonableness of the funtionalist outlook:

> It might be argued that the sole effective remedy was, therefore, to remove the Europeans. But this would be merely to side-step the problem. We must take it that Europeans are politically and economically established in the Pacific; they have come to stay.[12]

Once Williams had realized the discrepancy between the functionalist outlook and the situation in Papua, especially to his position in the Administration, he had two choices. Firstly, he could resign from his position and remain true to his functionalist outlook. This would have been a similar course of action to Fortune, an anthropologist, who worked in Papua in 1927 and 1928. Fortune told Murray that his scientific discipline prohibited him from offering any information to the government, and that it was impossible for white and brown or black to meet.[13] The second alternative, and the one Williams pursued, was to modify his functionalist outlook, and to attempt reconciliation between the Papuan culture and the European presence.[14]

Williams' role was to study primitive culture in the situation of culture-contact. He reasoned that because of his concern with native welfare, the phenomena of culture contact represented the major problems confronting him as an anthropologist. His function as a Government anthropologist was twofold; firstly to bring to notice certain undesirable results of

11. Murray, "The Response of the Natives of Papua to Western Civilization", (etc.), p. 7
12. F. E. Williams, "Population and Education", (etc.) p. 57.
13. F. West, Op. cit., p. 217 (Fortune was Margaret Mead's Husband).
14. F. E. Williams "Population and Education", (etc.), p. 58.

European influence, and secondly, to advise the Administration on its understanding of the Papuan culture. The objective of Williams' work would be to preserve 'the rights of both European and native and ensure their mutual satisfaction and goodwill'.[15]

As Williams' perception of his role and duties became clearer the need to scientifically justify his stand, particularly towards functional anthropology, grew. On an academic level he reasoned that:

> If the test of applicability leads to a reductio ad absurdum then there must be something wrong with the theory (i.e. functional theory).[16]

This belief led Williams to search for a fallacy within the functional theory. By 1933 he had isolated fallacy as being the functionalists' belief that primitive culture was a fully integrated whole; in his opinion it was not. At this time Williams had no scientific proof to support his theory; despite this he launched a fervent attack on the 'champions of sacrosanctity';

> There exists in some quarters a tendency to idealize cultural forms, to treat them as ends, or worthy of preservation for their own sake; and such a tendency, which I take to be the expression of a sentimental attachment to the culture in question, is liable in questions of native welfare to vitiate our judgement.[17]

Ironically at the same time Williams was launching this attack he was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship, which he used to study under Malinowski at the London School of Economics.

> It was my main object to acquaint myself at first hand with the aims and methods of the functional school.[18]

15. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Native and European Cultures", Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Vol. XIX, 1928, p. 372.
16. Papuan Annual Report, 1933/34, pp. 8 - 9.
17. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures", (etc.), 1935, p. 2.
18. Papuan Annual Report, 1933/34, p. 8.

Murray was convinced that Williams would not return to Papua, and wrote a public appraisal of his work:

> We shall miss him, for he gave us real assistance in native matters ... We shall be very glad to welcome Mr. Williams back again, but I think myself that he will be called to some higher position than anything we can offer him.[19]

In England Williams obtained his Bachelor of Science with his book Papuans of the Trans-Fly, and was awarded the Wellcome Medal for an essay on the application of anthropology to the problems of native peoples, but it was the stimulus of Malinowski's teaching that proved to be the highlight of the trip. Williams on his return commented:

> The intellectual stimulus of contact with Dr. Malinowski and his electrical seminars could not be valued too highly ... it has knocked off some of the accumulated rust of twelve years.[20]

Perhaps the tonic Williams received from his trip to England, helped falsify Murray's view that he would not return, or perhaps the fear that he expressed to Marett in 1923 became a reality in 1934:

> Papua is the sort of place where one may easily forget one's ambition. They call it the land of 'dohove' - wait a while.[21]

Whatever the reason for his return, it was clear that Williams, in spite of Malinowski's own tuition, came back with his suspicion of a fallacy within the functional doctrine intact.

Williams eventually did accumulate the anthropological evidence to prove his suspicion, by employing his own research technique of studying

19. Papuan Annual Report, 1932/33, p. 26.
20. Papuan Annual Report, 1933/34, p. 9
21. F. E. Williams, Private Papers, (etc.) letter to Marett, dated 14 July, 1923.

a single culture over a long period of time. In fact he gleaned most of his evidence from the study of a single situation within Western Elema culture - the Hevehe. The centerpiece of this ceremony were gigantic masks which came, ostensibly, from the sea to the eravo (men's houses) in rudimentary form. There they remained from anything between five and twenty-five years, being gradually built up, until at the end of the time they descended for a month of brilliant masquerade. Then, their dancing over, they were destroyed and their spirits returned to their element, eventually to be summoned again, when the whole cycle recommenced.[22]

Close examination of this cycle, over fifteen years, convinced Williams that it was of composite nature; that is, that certain parts of it were inessential to the general scheme and that they merely adhered. Parts of the ceremonial cycle could be dropped, and in some performances, in fact, were precluded. He concluded from the study, that the Hevehe cycle was "partly a system and partly a haphazard agglomeration".[23] On the basis of this conclusion he further submitted that "The culture to which it forms a part is likewise far from being a fully organized system".[24] Williams emphasized that he did not mean that the culture was devoid of structure, but that it was only partly organized. The Elema culture had evolved by a process of accretions:

> They have formed a whole which remains to some extent loosely constructed: new elements could be introduced, and existent elements dropped out, without necessarily creating disorganization ... at its best it is only a semi-integrated whole.[25]

This conclusion contradicted the major tenet of functional anthropology; for example, Malinowski had written:

22. This is a very brief summary of Section II of F. E. Williams, Drama of Orokolo, pp. 138 - 390.
23. F. E. Williams, "Presidential Address - Creed of a Government Anthropologist", (etc.), 1939, p. 150.
24. F. E. Williams, Drama of Orokolo, (etc.), p. 406.
25. ibid., p. 407.

> In every type of civilization, every custom, material object, idea, and belief fulfills some vital function, has some task to accomplish, represents an indispensible part within a working whole.[26]

The basic point of difference between Williams' view of culture and that of the functionalists concerned the existence or non-existence of 'survivals'. The functionalists did not recognize them as such. Their argument was simple, - when an element of culture ceased to serve a function then it ceased to exist. Contrary to this Williams argued that much primitive culture was composed of 'survivals', elements that held no functional value but were retained through tradition.[27] Thus Williams could distinguish, in his research, between 'survivals', like the seclusion of youths for a varying period of time before they can take part in the Hevehe,[28] and functional or valid elements like the raising of pigs in Orokolo - if this was stopped then the whole culture would collapse.[29] In view of this consideration Williams proposed quite honestly and apologetically a simile between culture and a pile of rubbish:

> Every particle therein is in a sense related to the whole and to every other particle: the discarded boot rests on the ashes, the ashes on the potato-peel, the potato peel on the jam tin, and so on. Remove the jam-tin and you may shake the pile to its very base. But it is not a system. The relations between the parts are merely those of juxtaposition or contact, direct or indirect.[30]

Williams labelled his own theory on the relationship between society and its culture, modified-functionalism. It is important to understand that this theory resulted from Williams, as Government anthropologist, being unable to apply his functionalist outlook to the benefit of native welfare; it was not (per se) simply an attack on the functional theory.

26. Cited by Williams in "Presidential Address - Creed of a Government Anthropologist", (etc.) 1939, p. 148
27. ibid., p. 140.
28. ibid, p. 150 .
29. F. E. Williams, Drama of Orokolo, (etc.), p. 407.
30. ibid., p. 408.

Regretably contemporary anthropologists did take Williams' modified outlook as an attack on the functional school. F. L. S. Bell, writing in Mankind commented:

> It is the opinion of the reviewer that Mr. Williams has unwittingly set up an Aunt Sally and then proceeded with a great deal of "wit" to knock it over.[31]

Bell, in his admitted defense of Professors Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, distorted the fallacy that Williams detected as, "the belief that in primitive society all things work together for good." By doing so he ignored completely Williams' distinction between survivals and functioning cultural elements. Later anthropological critics were much kinder to Williams' stance. A. P. Elkin, judged Williams' warning "that we can overdo the functional theory" as his "main contribution to anthropology".[32]

The beauty of modified-functionalism to Williams, the Government anthropologist, was that it enabled him to see the Papuan culture as not being sacred or inviolable. For the first time there was no contradiction between his duty as a Government anthropologist to supervize change, and his loyalties to an anthropological school that condemned change. Williams' primary objective now became the supervision of the degree of change in the Papuan culture.

It was ironic, that in overcoming the basic con tradiction between a functionalist outlook and the requirements of his position, Williams was faced with a new dilemma. In order to supervize the degree of change in the Papuan culture, he had to evaluate the importance of the culture elements, in an attempt "to try to improve things".[33] By evaluating what he observed and recorded Williams set himself apart from the role of an independent

31. F. L. S. Bell, "Review of 'Creed of a Government Anthropologist'", Mankind, Vol. 2, No. 9, 1940, p. 335.
32. A. P. Elkin, "F. E. Williams - Government Anthropologist Papua", Oceania, Vol, XIV, No. 2, 1943, p. 97.
33. F. E. Williams, "Presidential Address - Creed of a Government Anthropologist", (etc.), 1939, p. 7.

anthropologist. For instance, Malinowski's statement of aims for an anthropologist:

> To grasp the native point of view, his relation to life; to realize his vision of his world. We have to study a man, and we must study what concerns him most intimately, that is, the hold which life has on him.[34]

was not sufficient for Williams as a Government anthropologist; he had to think in terms of ends and values as well. Williams recognized the necessity of doing this:

> Pure minded anthropologists stay clear of questions of value - but a government anthropologist cannot. He comes in contact with two groups of people, the administration and missionaries, both concerned with native welfare, and therefore must enter into discussion about the customs being good or bad.[35]

Equally clear to Williams, however, were the inherent difficulties for a man in a scientific position, who evaluated what he observed.

For an anthropologist to evaluate, meant the acceptance by him of a Jekyll and Hyde situation. On the one hand he needed to be an objective observer, but on the other he was required to be a critic and quite possibly a reformer.[36] In his paper "Depopulation and Administration", Williams painted a clear picture of the difference in duty he had, firstly, as a trained anthropologist, and secondly as an administrative official:

> The scientist as such takes a coldly disinterested view of the phenomenon and its causes. He does not - indeed, he should **not** - care whether the population dies out to a man; and if it is his considered opinion that this will happen, he should incur no blame for saying so. The administrator on the contrary takes a warm interest in the preservation, not to say the welfare of his people, and no such pessimism is allowed him.[37]

34. B. Malinowski Argonauts of the Western Pacific, (N. York 1960 edition), p.25.
35. F. E. Williams, Drama of Orokolo, (etc.), p. 441.
36. F. E. Williams, "Presidential Address .....", (etc.) p. 152.
37. F. E. Williams, "Depopulation and Administration", Oceania, Vol. III, No. 2, 1932, p. 128.

The impossible solution that Williams proposed to overcome this dilemma of dual loyalty, was that he, as a Government anthropologist, should be able to keep his "two personalities apart at will";[38] when acting as an anthropologist he should be objective, but when asked for advice he should offer it subjectively as part of his duty as a government official. However, the"two personalities" could not, in reality, be separated. Knowing his studies would be evaluated by other administrative officials, he often surrendered his objectivity to give a more personalized, and hence, evaluative view of the culture he was investigating. Williams admitted in his description of the Hevehe in the Drama of Orokolo that:

> I have proved false to scientific detachment and have fallen somewhat in love with it.[39]

A full reading of Williams' work revealed that he wrote with a feeling of sympathy for the Papuan culture he researched. His surrender of objectivity, for a sympathetic appraisal of the culture, was also recognized by others. For example, Murray wrote that in the Papuans of the Trans-Fly, Williams had shown a "Gift of making the people of whom he writes, to appear as real men and women, and not as lay figures with certain queer customs attached to them".[40] Finally, Williams admitted that his aim in writing about the Hevehe was that the reader "may come to admire it".[41] Clearly he did not keep separate his dual personality; often his objectivity gave way to a conscious, or unconscious, appraisal of the culture he studied.

Once Williams had accepted the need to evaluate the customs and structures that made up the diverse Papuan culture, he was faced with the task of establishing a criteria of evaluation that would enable him to assess the relative importance of elements within that culture. It is Williams' criteria

38. F. E. Williams,"Presidential Address - Creed of a Government Anthropologist",(etc.), p. 152.
39. F. E. Williams, Drama of Orokolo, (etc.), p. 414
40. Papuan Annual Report, 1934/35, p. 34.
41. F. E. Williams, Drama of Orokolo, (etc.), p. xiii.

that holds the key to an understanding of his work in Papua. Not only did it shape his recommendations to the Murray Administration, but it paradoxically meant that many of them would be ignored by the other bodies concerned with native welfare - the Administration and the missionaries - because, as will be shown later, they held different criteria.[42]

The criteria of evaluation that Williams employed as a spokesman for native culture, was the extent to which any facet of that culture ministered to the fundamental needs of the Papuans, and the degree to which it gave expression to their potentialities. Williams' concern in native welfare, was then, with the "primary, indefeasible values ... of the individual human personality".[43] His criteria of 'needs' and 'potentialities' recognized the necessity of both sociological and psychological considerations. Moreover, he maintained that the latter, viz. the sentiments, the motives, the emotional attitudes of the native towards the matter in debate, weighed more heavily in the scale than did its sociological associations.[44] Williams' emphasis then might be summed up in his use of the phrase "la j'oie de vivre"[45] or again in his dramatic plea in his report on the Vailala Madness: "Give the native something worth living for and he might live".[46]

It is not surprising in lieu of Williams' criteria, that his aim in The Papuans of the Trans-Fly, was to discover the motives of the natives - a knowledge of these was vital for an objective evaluation.[47] Furthermore, it is indicative of Williams' emphasis in evaluation that after examining the sociological aspects of the Hevehe, such as food production, social intercourse, leadership and organization, he concluded that it was in the psychological sphere that it had its greatest value, and that was as a source of recreation.[48]

42. See Chapter V, p. 62 and pp. 64 - 65.
43. F. E. Williams, "Presidential Address - Creed of a Government Anthropologist, (etc.) p. 154.
44. F. E. Williams, Bull-Roarer in the Papuan Gulf, publication in book form of Anthropological Report, No. 17, 1963, p. 3.
45. F. E. Williams, "Some Effects of European Influence on the Natives of Papua", Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Vol. XXII, 1935, p. 218.
46. F. E. Williams, "The Vailala Madness ....", (etc.). p. 64
47. F. E. Williams, Papuans of the Trans-Fly, (Oxford, 1936), p. ix.
48. F. E. Williams, Drama of Orokolo, (etc.), p. 414 - 421.

By placing his emphasis on the psychological value of cultural elements Williams was reacting to what he termed a "policy with strong advocates - to concentrate on the material reforms to the neglect of matters spiritual".[49] In his anthropological reports Williams continually warned the Administration to treat the psychological factor with due respect.[50] Two problems arose for Williams because of his emphasis. Firstly, many of the elements that had great psychological import, such as head-hunting and inter-tribal warfare, had to be eliminated, because of the primary Administrative objective of pacification. Thus while Williams could write:

> There can be no question as to the necessity for Pacification, and yet even this has not proved an unmixed blessing ... It is actually a question of whether the direct loss of life in war was not more than counterbalanced by that keen spirit engendered.[51]

there was nothing he could do about it. Secondly, Williams in emphasising the importance of psychology had entered into a branch of inter-disciplinary study that was new, both to him and everyone else; the 'needs' and 'potentialities' that he had used in evaluation had, at this time, not even been agreed upon by psychologists.[52] Nevertheless, Williams experience allowed him to perceive the importance of psychological investigation in cultural change. He urged collaboration between anthropology and psychology, fully realizing the danger of not taking the psychological factor into account:

> With the best of intentions we may succeed in taking half the amusement, half the enjoyment, and perhaps more than half the pride out of the natives life.[53]

Apart from the more academic dilemmas that Williams faced as a Government anthropologist, he also encountered practical difficulties in his endeavours to gain information. Williams went to the Papuans, not as an

49. F. E. Williams, "The Vailala Madness ..." (etc.), p. 44
50. See for example "Depopulation and Administration", p. 222 and "Population and Education", p. 42.
51. F. E. Williams, "Population and Education", (etc.), p. 44.
52. Williams admitted this is "The Blending of Cultures....", (etc.) pp. 42 - 43.
53. ibid., p. 43

independent investigator, but as the representative of the Administration. Consequently he had a self-expressed difficulty in gathering evidence.[54] The Papuans' reluctance to impart information to a member of the white Administration was reinforced by the necessity of Williams having to uphold the prestige of that Administration. For example, he always had to travel with an entourage of "boys" recruited to assist him, and his position (and perhaps his own preference) required that he lived apart from the Papuans while doing his research. Albert Kiki recounted in his book, Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime:

> The missionaries kept to themselves. They met us in church, but they don't come and sit on the floor with us in our houses. Even F. E. Williams, the anthropologist had a house built for himself on the edge of the village and his informants had to come and talk to him there.[55]

As an ambassador of the Administration Williams was, in Murray's opinion, a success; Murray, for instance, attributed the decrease in inter-tribal fighting among the Aban people to the frequent visits of "Mr. Williams who seems to have succeeded in winning the confidence of the people".[56] However, his dual role of ambassador and investigator, no doubt, affected or biased some of the information that he received; an obvious example was the difference in interpretation that Kiki and Williams offered in respect of the decline of the 'Vailala Madness'.[57] Further the fact that Williams was a Government official sometimes prevented him from gaining information on a subject at all, due to the Papuans distrust of his motives. For example, the Administration under Missionary influence had made the drinking of Kava among the Kevaki, a punishable offence; a move strongly resented by the natives. Even after restrictions had been removed, Williams could not gain information as to its use.[58] The problem of being both an Administrative

54. F. E. Williams, Papuans of the Trans-Fly, (etc), p. xxxi.
55. A. Kiki, Ten Thousand Years in a Life Time, (Melbourne, 1968), p. 164.
56. Papuan Annual Report, 1936/37, p. 31.
57. A. Kiki, op. cit., pp. 49 - 51. (Williams claimed the Vailala Madness died out because of Government action, but Kiki was told by the villagers that they, not the Government, were responsible for discrediting the cult leaders).
58. F. E. Williams, Papuans of the Trans-Fly, (etc.) pp. xxxi - xxxiii.

representative and an investigator was one Williams could never overcome; all he could do was acknowledge it as a difficulty.

While the above chapter has concentrated on the personal dilemmas that Williams found in his work as a Government anthropologist, the subsequent chapter will examine the general theory of native welfare that resulted from these dilemmas, and grew up parallel to them. The freedom of modified-functionalism enabled Williams to postulate a 'blending of cultures', and within this theory will be detected another instance of him leaving behind the axioms of his discipline. While anthropology was by definition tied to the study of the present and the past, Williams needed to look to the future. His primary concern became increasingly the application of anthropology, "not merely with native society as it is, but also with native society as it ought to be".[59]

59. F. E. Williams, "Sentiments and Leading Ideas in Native Society", Anthropological Report, No. 12, 1932, p. 2.