

CHAPTER IV.

"LESS CHRIST AND MORE CRICKET."¹

By arguing that "The European cannot be denied and consequently the native cannot stay as he is",² Williams rejected non-interference - one extreme of cultural theory. He also rejected the other extreme - Europeanization - by recognizing that, "It entails the loss of much that is intrinsically admirable in native culture, and of a great deal more that is peculiarly fitted, be generations of selection and confirmation, to the native genius".³ Obviously then his own solution for the future of the Papuan culture had to lie between these extremes; it was realized in a 'blending of cultures'.⁴

Williams' theory was expounded and expanded in three principal publications: "The Blending of Native and European Cultures" 1928, "The Blending of Cultures: An Essay on the Aims of Native Education" 1935, and "Presidential Address - Creed of a Government Anthropologist" 1939. While it was apparent that some kind of blending must follow naturally from contact, as it already had in Papua, Williams' uniqueness came in arguing that this blend should deliberately be viewed as an ideal - "making as it were a virtue of necessity".⁵ The ideal that he envisaged implied more than a passive blend of culture elements; it really implied a cultural outgrowth in a new direction.

1. F. E. Williams, "The Vailala Madness", (etc.), p. 49.
2. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Native and European Cultures", (etc.) p.372.
3. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures: An Essay on the Aims of Native Education", (etc.) p. 6.
4. It is important to note that Williams misused the word blend; it means mix, and implies some degree of Europeanization of the Papuan culture, as well as, Papuanization of the European culture. The latter was apparently a possibility that Williams did not consider.
5. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 7.

He described his theory as being:

The natural development of native culture together with an infusion of new elements, in fact a vigorous blending of cultures. What we aim at is a culture advancing along its own lines, but quickened by an infusion of new power, in fact by the adoption and adaptation of European elements. ... Advance is essential, but it should be advanced along natural lines. We may train the shoot to go in a better direction, but we cannot give it a right-angled bend, or we may end by snapping it off.⁶

The elements that were added to the Papuan culture would be represented by new areas of interest and endeavour; but they had to be introduced slowly and they had eventually to be compatible with the existing culture.⁷

Williams talked of the old and new elements in Papuan culture in terms of oil and water. His hope was that in time they would "resolve themselves into a fluid of even consistency from which the unwanted elements, whether new or old, will be eliminated like so much sediment".⁸ The ideal which Williams had in mind would require the preservation, subtraction and addition of elements in the Papuan culture. Ultimately it would leave the Papuan with a distinctive culture, but one which was not at variance with the culture of the European in Papua. However, he warned that this 're-integration' would be slow in developing, during which time the native would be leading a dual life, owing some loyalty to his traditional culture, and the rest to the new European culture.⁹

The 'joie de vivre' evaluative criteria, elaborated in the previous chapter, was Williams' measuring stick by which he decided the maintenance, addition and subtraction of culture elements. The only missing

6. F. E. Williams, "Population and Education in Papua", (etc.) p. 6.

7. *ibid.*, p. 8.

8. F. E. Williams, "Some Effects of European Influence on the Natives of Papua, (etc.), p. 217.

9. *ibid.*, p. 216

factor in the 'blending of cultures' thesis was the means by which the ideal blend might be achieved; this gap was filled by a very broad definition of education.

Williams' basic tenet in education was that traditional culture, and the mechanisms by which it transmitted this culture, were no longer valid in the culture contact situation in Papua. The pre-existent means of education would be unable to cope with the new conditions and requirements which resulted from the European presence.¹⁰ He further argued that persons concerned with native welfare had a 'moral obligation to help', as it was Europeans who had destroyed the suitability of traditional education:

We, the intruders, have shattered his neolithic complacency
we have sepr him off his feet. In fairness we should set
him on them again.¹¹

Williams believed European civilization was "incomparably" richer than the natives, and that education could provide the opportunity, and had the responsibility to "extend widely the scope of the natives' mental experience".¹² This 'altruistic aim' would, apart from the Papuans, also benefit the Europeans; by helping to establish a 'modus vivendi' that would lead to mutual help in the relations between the two races.¹³

Williams justified the inter-related way he treated native welfare policy and education by arguing that progress towards, what he took as the mutual aim of all concerned bodies, a harmonious juxtaposition of European and Papuan was very much dependent on education. In fact, welfare policy merely kept pace with education.¹⁴ The situation in Papua allowed Williams to offer a unique interpretation of education. It was normally believed that the role of education was to fit the man to his culture; since there was no stable culture

10. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures: An Essay on the Aims of Native Education," (etc.), p. 3.

11. *ibid.*, p. 4.

12. *ibid.*, p. 3.

13. *ibid.*, p. 5.

14. *ibid.*, p. 1.

to which the Papuan could be fitted, the aim should be reversed; i.e. the culture should be suited to the man.¹⁵ Having adopted this position Williams was in partial disagreement with the finding of the Seminar Conference on Education in Pacific Countries that he attended in 1936; this study concluded that:

We should not seek to bolster up the old way of life, trying to keep the native willy-nilly as he was; nor on the other hand should we drag and boot him along the path of what we think to be European progress. We should, on the contrary, endeavour to educate him to a point where a critical choice is possible, and then abide by the choice he makes.¹⁶

While Williams agreed that self determination was an essential principle, and theoretically as valuable to a primitive people as an advanced nation, he argued that in native education in Papua it represented a "counsel of perfection". From his own experience in Papua he argued that an educator invariably took a stand on what he thought was right, and that these biases were transmitted and implanted in the minds of his pupils. Consequently this 'pre-determining' restricted the natives' freedom of choice, limiting him to the inherited selection of his educator.¹⁷ Despite the ideal of self-determination the educator did in reality interfere, guide and to some extent control, the progress of the native.

Williams' contention was that the educator's control should be recognized and that it should be used in the correct manner, adapting the Papuan culture to the man. This placed the future of the Papuans and their culture in the hands of the educators.

Our purpose (educators) in fine is to guide and assist the development of a new culture in which all that is best in the old native life shall blend with elements and forces derived from our own civilization.¹⁸

15. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures: An Essay on the Aims of Native Education", (etc.), p. 6.
16. F. E. Williams, "Native Art and Education", Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, Vol. xxiii, 1937, p. 192. (my emphasis).
17. *ibid.*, p. 193.
18. F. E. Williams, "Blending of Cultures ... " (etc.), p. 44.

In "Native Education (Intellectual)" Williams suggested that the most effective means to guide the education of the Papuan was the establishment of a Papuan newspaper.¹⁹ Murray consented to Williams' request; he hoped that the paper would "catch-on" as it would provide a medium to educate the Papuans in the rudiments of Administration. Secretly, he had his doubts and confided to his brother, "Anyhow it can do no harm, and it will be interesting from a philological point of view".²⁰ The Papuan Villager was introduced in 1929, and was edited by Williams until 1938. The initial editorial explained in simple language his objectives for the paper:

This paper is for the people of Papua. It is not for the whitemen (they have a paper of their own). It is for the brown men, and will tell you about the things that belong to you. Every month we shall try to fill the paper with things about Papua. We want you to think of these things and be proud of them. The Government does not want you to throw away all your old fashions.²¹

The success of the paper as an educator was no doubt limited by its very small circulation,²² and by its publication in English. However, throughout its existence Williams used the paper as an avenue of instruction for his three tasks of education; the task of maintenance - to preserve native culture, the task of expurgation - to remove the "evil" elements from that culture and the task of expansion - "making positive contributions from our own culture such as will make the new blend something richer and fuller than the native has hitherto known".²³ Consequently the Papuan Villager, when examined in combination with the mainstream of Williams' ideas from other publications, provides a clear indication of how he envisaged the 'blending of cultures'.

In detailing the maintenance task of education Williams stressed firstly that the Papuan culture was a living thing, it could not be ill-treated

19. F. E. Williams, "Native Education (Intellectual)", Anthropological Report, No. 9, pp. 19 - 21.

20. Gilbert Murray, Private Papers, letter dated 2 January, 1933.

21. Papuan Villager, 15 February, 1929

22. In 1932 there were 153 Papuan subscribers, 490 went to the Mission schools and 175 to Europeans. Papuan Villager, 15 January, 1932: The total no. issued never went above 1,000, Papuan Villager, 15 January, 1938.

23. F. E. Williams, "Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 8

or it would deteriorate; secondly, sufficient of the traditional culture had to be retained to preserve the Papuan's distinctiveness. He warned that while responsibility of teaching the native would inevitably lead to a superior attitude to him, this did not remove the necessity of studying his viewpoint and understanding his achievements:

It is not for us to take up a patronizing attitude, much less a scornful one; and to dismiss his culture as worthless in comparison with ours is, merely the mark of narrowness, or a kind of cultural bigotry.²⁴

In "Population and Education" Williams argued that the lack of understanding and sympathy for native practices among many Europeans, teachers included, often placed them in a situation of "throwing stones from a glass house". For example, he compared the harsh views of Europeans to the customs of tattooing and cicatrization, and the boring of the holes through noses and ears, to the Papuans' thinking on the Europeans' strangulation by a collar, and the shaving of whiskers. They are both incomprehensible to the other.²⁵ The inference was that Europeans should not feel antagonism towards customs just because they were foreign to them.

Williams' vision of an ideal culture did not, however, permit him to accept the passive preservation of native culture; in his words preservation should mean "Something more than mere continuance or repetition".²⁶ It was necessary to foster native customs so that they could survive the impact of European culture, and then continue to grow and change with time. What was required was an active policy of encouragement. This he suggested could take the form of simply showing an interest or enthusiasm for native customs and ceremonies.²⁷ There are numerous instances of Williams doing

24. F. E. Williams, "Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 10.

25. F. E. Williams, "Population and Education in Papua", (etc.), p. 50.

26. F. E. Williams, "Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 9.

27. This is a recurrent theme in Williams' writings; e.g. "The Collection of Curios and the Preservation of Native Culture", Anthropological Report, No. 3, 1923, p. 18, and "Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 14.

this himself in the Papuan Villager. For example, in referring to the erection of Oalu Dagova's ŋew ŋuku (carved tree trunk) he wrote:

It is a good thing to see that the Hanuabada people have not forgotten their old customs.²⁸

Another approach by Williams was to write about the Papuans' customs, in an effort to arouse interest in them: the May, 1931, issue on Kaiva Kuku (masks) commenced - "Some Papuans have never seen real masks ...".²⁹

Encouragement by direct incentives was also espoused by Williams. In "Native Art and Education", he proposed the establishment of a commercial incentive for traditional art. Art could be taught in the schools by the natives themselves, the best works sent to a museum controller and sold to tourists, and the money returned to the artists. This Williams hoped would lead to a revival in native art, and even more hopefully, as in the Maoris' renaissance, a restoration of the corporate pride.³⁰

Williams' conception of what could be maintained in Papuan culture was extremely broad. Apart from the ceremonial aspects of the culture he was concerned with native political institutions and the possibility of incorporating them into government, the economic balance of primitive culture, and above all, the sentiments of the primitive society.³¹ Williams was in partial agreement with Radcliffe-Brown in the Andaman Islanders, who stressed the importance of sentiment:

A society depends for its existence on the presence in the minds of its members of a certain system of sentiments by which the conduct of the individual is regulated in conformity with the needs of the society.³²

28. Papuan Villager, editorial, 15 September, 1930.

29. ibid., editorial, 15 May, 1931.

30. F. E. Williams, "Native Art and Education", (etc.), pp. 193 - 195.

31. F. E. Williams, "Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 14.

32. Radcliffe-Brown, The Andaman Islanders, (etc.), pp. 223 - 224.

However, he could not accept such a statement in full, because implicit in it was the argument of preservation for the sake of preservation. Sentiments were important, but like all other aspects of Papuan culture, "They had to be judged on their merits or upon the measure in which it contributes toward what we envisage as the new ideal".³³ Thus, while Radcliffe-Brown would argue for the preservation of all sentiments, Williams was selective. For instance, the 'duty of revenge' sentiment could not be encouraged because it did not meet the 'joie de vivre' criteria.³⁴

Williams' strong conviction about the necessity of preserving the greater part of the Papuan culture stemmed from his belief that the Papuan needed to retain a distinctive culture. On the expurgation of certain "evil" cultural elements he was much less sure. This was so for two reasons. Firstly, there was only a thin line that separated changing a native custom and suppressing it. Did changing a custom destroy it? Williams argued, no. For instance, he maintained that the Papuan burial rite which culminated in the deceased being buried under a relative's house, could be tolerated, and would survive, if the body was buried outside the village so that it did not pose a health hazard.³⁵ This view enabled Williams to limit complete suppression to three practices - headhunting, inter-tribal warfare and sorcery. Naturally this list could be extended to include practices that were contrary to European law, like theft and rape. However, he concentrated on those practices that were distinctively Papuan. The second reason for uncertainty arose because Williams recognized the functional value of all these practices - they were not just "survivals". In the conflict between his anthropological views which labelled the customs valid, and his evaluative criteria, by which they must be suppressed, Williams' emphasis shifted to the latter. It is yet another example of Williams' plight as both scientific observer and social philosopher.

33. F. E. Williams, "Sentiments and Leading Ideas in Native Society",
(etc.), p. 2

34. *ibid.*, p. 15

35. Papuan Villager, 15 April, 1930.

Williams held that headhunting and its consequence, inter-tribal warfare, were "prima facie very bad". However, he was prepared to admit that when headhunting was viewed in its manifold aspects it did appear to be at the heart of the culture; for example, the taking of a head was considered in some areas as a qualification for marriage, or a condition of full manhood.³⁶ Nevertheless, headhunting had no part in the 'ideal' Williams was pursuing; it represented the antithesis to the happier culture that he had in mind.³⁷ The question of sorcery was less absolute. The sorcery that Williams wanted suppressed had a very rigid definition:

Sorcery is here defined as magic devoted to anti-social ends. It may be directed against the destruction of property, the ruin of gardens, or any such evil purpose; but it is thought of typically as the cause of sickness and death.³⁸

Again he was prepared to admit that sorcery had a strong functional value - it was often a pillar of chiefly authority and it did provide the 'primitive' with answers to the riddles of causation.³⁹ But evaluated against its anti-social aspects, he was forced to conclude:

Whatever defence may be offered for sorcery it seems to the writer that the good in it is vastly outweighed by the evil. It provides a means for the strong and cunning to impose upon the weak and credulous; it is the instrument of extortion and terrorism; its general effect is to create an atmosphere of suspicion and vengefulness ...

and consequently:

Any sincere attempt to better the conditions of the native's life must view his emancipation from magic as one of its main objectives.⁴⁰

36. F. E. Williams, "Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 15.
37. Williams makes this clear in Papuan Villager, editorial, 15 February, 1932.
38. F. E. Williams, Papuans of the Trans-Fly, (etc.), p. 334
39. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.) p. 15. This finding was in complete agreement with functionalists like G. Pitt-Rivers, viz. "Some Problems in Mental Anthropology and the Problem of Civilization".
40. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ..." (etc.), pp. 23 - 24.

The first educative method which Williams hoped would emancipate the Papuans from both headhunting and sorcery, was to convince the native that some of his beliefs were untenable and harmful, and that he should give them up of his own accord.⁴¹ The shortcomings of this education by conviction were very apparent to Williams; he despondently concluded an article on headhunting in the Papuan Villager:

I am afraid this article won't do much good. For those who can read it have given up raiding; and those who haven't given up raiding can't read it.⁴²

Moreover, in two reports "Native Education (Intellectual)" and "Papuan Petrographs", Williams had pointed out the lack of curiosity and interest of the Papuans to attempt to question, and discover, the reasons for the phenomena surrounding them.⁴³ Without this questioning of their own explanations, education by conviction represented just as "ideal of education".⁴⁴

Williams placed more hope for expurgation on a second method of education - suggestion and example. In the area, Administration and Missions, because of the prestige enjoyed by them in the eyes of the Papuans, had a special duty. Persistent example and propagation of views created superficial doubt about the efficacy of magic.⁴⁵ An example of the role Williams expected the Administration to play was given at the village of Poreporena, when the Administration witnessed the killing of a dog, and the failure of the vada men to bring the animal back to life. He saw this episode as being "beneficial" because it caused the Papuans to doubt the power of these native sorcerers.⁴⁶

The third means of education in this area, advocated by Williams, was punishment. He regarded punishment as the most immediate means of

41. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 20.

42. Papuan Villager, editorial, 15 February, 1932.

43. F. E. Williams, "Native Education (Intellectual)", p. 14, and "Papuan Petrographs", Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. LIX, 1931, p. 140.

44. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 21.

45. *ibid.* (Especially the footnote).

46. Manuscript. Commonwealth Archives Office. A518 Series, File A640/1/5.

suppressing the bad elements in Papuan culture; it was not the ideal method, but necessary for, "While we wait patiently for education to take effect we must recognise our obligations to protect the weak from victimization".⁴⁷ Williams saw the ultimate justification for the use of punishment as an educative means in that it brought about reform. He justified the use of punishment only in cases where a sorcerer made it known he was practising sorcery and openly pretended or threatened to use it.⁴⁸ Constricting the definition of sorcery in this way enabled Williams to overcome the technical difficulty of legally suppressing an act when he believed it to be harmless - it was the threat, not sorcery itself, that was punishable.

The final task of education in Williams' thesis was that of expansion. This task was comprised of two sub-tasks: substituting practices to replace those suppressed, and adding other elements to expand the Papuan culture to a new ideal. This latter task represented the unique feature of Williams' theory on the 'blending of cultures':

We aim at more than a restoration of the quantitative balance; we want not merely to bring native culture up to the old level again but to raise it to a higher level. That is to say our contributions should make it possible for the native to live a richer and fuller life than he knew before our coming.⁴⁹

Williams maintained that while there was a necessity to remove some features of the Papuan culture because of their anti-social ends, there was also an obligation to replace these elements so that a gap would not be left in the natives' life. Moreover, the substitutes had to be more than additions; they should be able to integrate themselves into the culture and make up for the lost 'good' features of the suppressed elements. Williams observed:

There is a certain good manners about innovation. Where reform is a stranger it should enter unobtrusively among the old elements in a culture; it should fraternize and co-operate with them; and if at last it reach a position of power or even domination, it must never forget the claims and feelings of its fellows.⁵⁰

47. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 25.

48. *ibid.*, p. 24.

49. *ibid.*, p. 26.

50. *ibid.*, p. 26.

The two principal substitutes that he proposed to replace headhunting and sorcery were games and Christianity.

There was no doubt in Williams' mind that Christianity tended to supplant the Papuan belief in magic; however, he believed it was only a "convenient half-way house between heathenism here referring to magic and enlightened rationalism".⁵¹ The salvation of Christianity as a substitute in Papuan culture was its emotional value; it gave an explanation of 'God' and spirits, "in a far more vivid sense" than the Papuans own mythology, and also provided satisfaction in its membership to a corporate body, the Church, and in its rites of worship.⁵²

Yet Williams recognized that Christianity, as a substitute, posed two difficulties. It did not extend far enough:

The disintegration of old custom has outstripped the spread of Christian teaching; and I doubt whether, beyond the scope of the European Mission stations, Christianity can be said to provide a real or absorbing interest.⁵³

Secondly, he argued that Christianity was not always of an acceptable caste. It was a question of whether the gospel should take precedence of the native, or the native of the gospel. To Williams the latter was more correct: "Any form of Christianity which does not prove acceptable to the native, and which does not provide him with an absorbing interest needs to be changed to meet the case".⁵⁴ He recognized that while it was a feature of the European culture to place doctrine before ritual in importance, in primitive religion it was the reverse. The best religious substitute would be one that allowed the Papuan to dance, feast and make merry, and to practice some of their own ceremonies within Christianity.⁵⁵

51. F. E. Williams, "Population and Education", (etc.), p. 34.

52. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 35.

53. F. E. Williams, "Population and Education", (etc.), p. 46.

54. *ibid.*, (my emphasis).

55. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 37.

These downfallings of Christianity as a substitute prompted Williams to proclaim on behalf of the Papuan:

"Less Christ and more Cricket."⁵⁶

Games, such as football and cricket, were seen by him as the best substitute for suppressed customs. He lost few opportunities in urging the Papuans to take up European sports. This is particularly evident in the Papuan Villager in which cricket was the most frequently mentioned subject.⁵⁷ An editorial from the September 1932 issue serves as an example:

In those old days when you got wild you used to fight. That gave you some excitement, but of course, we can't allow people to fight. How are you going to get your excitement now? One of the best ways is by playing games; and one of the best games is cricket. If you are all tied up inside, than you can bowl very fast, or chase the ball very hard, and you will feel better.⁵⁸

Besides replacing the suppressed elements Williams, as has been discussed, saw it as a duty of education to improve the Papuan culture by grafting on to it 'good' elements from the European civilization. His writings concentrated on two such benefits that could be given the Papuan. These were the use of Western research to improve native horticulture, and the use of the English language.

In Orokaiva Magic Williams argued that horticultural reform could have economic and social advantages for the Papuans. It would ensure a steadier and larger output of food products and make possible the cultivation of new and important crops, and also tend to settle the native population, by giving them a "new interest in life".⁵⁹ To institute this reform, he urged the setting up of 'Garden Boarding Schools'. There was to be one school per district; they should cater primarily for the young, and be co-educational.

56. F. E. Williams, "The Vailala Madness", (etc.), p. 49.

57. H. Nelson, "The Papuan Villager: A National Newspaper", The Journal of the Papua and New Guinea Society, Vol. II, No. 1, 1968, p. 29.

58. Papuan Villager, 15 September, 1932.

59. F. E. Williams, Orokaiva Magic, (etc.), pp. 152 - 165.

The curriculum of these schools was to include domestic economy, hygiene and sanitation, as well as improved gardening methods. Most importantly Williams wanted them to be secular institutions, with the teaching of Christianity confined to Sundays, and leave being granted to attend any ceremonies in the pupils' home villages.⁶⁰

The other major benefit, the teaching of English was in Williams' opinion, "The most valuable gift we can bestow upon the natives".⁶¹ His insistence on the use of English in the native education was the most puzzling feature of his culture thesis. For instance, Williams was aware of the Phelps-Stokes Commission's⁶² finding that:

The value of the native tongue is immensely more vital, in that it is one of the chief means of preserving whatever is good in Native Customs, ideas and ideals, and thereby preserving what is more important than all else, namely, native self-respect.

And that:

No greater injustice can be committed against a people than to deprive them of their own language.⁶³

Williams applied his evaluative criteria to the Papuan languages and concluded their value, despite the Commission's finding, was not high. Furthermore, the Papuans had no common language, not even a widely spread 'lingua franca'; although pidgin-Motuan had been popularized by the Missions.⁶⁴ Finally he argued, if the Papuans were to be taught in a foreign language it might as well be English, as at least, this would open up a wealth of literature and communication in the future. The deciding factor was the reality of the

60. F. E. Williams, Orokaiva Magic, (etc.), pp. 152 - 165.

61. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 29.

62. The Phelps-Stokes Commission was sent in early 1920's by the British Government to investigate the question of what language medium should be used in Colonial East Africa.

63. Williams cited these finding in "Native Education (Intellectual)", p. 19

64. *ibid.*, pp. 8 - 9.

situation in Papua; Williams reasoned:

Indeed contact, in so far as it is to be educative, depends almost entirely on the possession of a language medium, and if the European at large is to be an educator of the native, that medium can be nothing but English, for the simple reason that the average Britisher will not take the trouble, or has not got the brains, to learn a native language.⁶⁵

Ironically Williams' decision to employ English as the educative medium was largely responsible for the failure of his own effort, through the Papuan Villager, to bring about the 'ideal' blend.

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There can be little doubt that Williams in elaborating his thesis was being patronizing to the Papuan culture, both in the sense of encouraging it and also in the sense of treating it in a condescending way. Numerous examples could be given of Williams referring to European culture as being superior to the Papuans; e.g:

The white man can do many things better than you Papuans. They can read and write, and they can do their arithmetic very well on the whole; they build houses of stone and make boats of pig skin; and lately they have taken to flying around in the air like birds ...⁶⁶

or:

They the Europeans have come to Papua and, as in other parts of the world they are now the real masters in Papua ... I do not know exactly why this should be; but I suppose it is because they are hard-working and stronger, and because they know a lot that the grandfathers of the Papuans had never found out.⁶⁷

65. Williams cited these findings in "Native Education (Intellectual)" p. 10.

66. Papuan Villager, editorial, 15 October, 1929.

67. Papuan Villager, editorial, 15 April, 1930.

Williams both defended and exposed his patronizing attitude, when he argued that all educators were "Inevitably" led to assuming a superior position. The Europeans being the educators were therefore superior; apparently the Papuans could teach the Europeans nothing.

It was in building up to a charge of patronization against Williams that Hank Nelson in "The Papuan Villager: A National Newspaper" propped two fundamental beliefs that he argued underlay the 'blending of cultures' thesis. The first was that the Papuan for the sake of his pride and the intrinsic work of some aspects of his culture should not change; and the second was that the Papuan could not attain the level of the European anyway.⁶⁸ I have no argument with the first belief that Nelson attributed to Williams - the above discussion on preservation bears him out. However, the second falls wide of the mark, in fact the reverse was true - Williams feared that the Papuans, in the right educative circumstances, could too easily model the culture of the Europeans. His object was to prevent them from doing this because it would, not only, mean the Papuan surrendered the culture that generations of his predecessors had established, but also it would lead to a situation of race-hatred "comparable to the Negroes in America".⁶⁹ Consequently he warned:

Let the native hold to a course of his own and the white man will tolerate and even admire him. But let him presume, or ape, or try to be a "white man with a black skin" and the average European will bristle with suspicion and resentment. ... a distinctive cultural difference must be preserved.⁷⁰

Why would Williams campaign so strongly against the concept of a black or brown European if, as Nelson argued, he did not think them capable of attaining this level?

68. H. Nelson, "The Papuan Villager: a National Newspaper", (etc.), p. 84
 69. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Native and European Cultures", (etc.)
 p. 373
 70. F. E. Williams, "Some Effects of European Influences ..." (etc.), p. 221.

Viewed over all Williams' thesis, on the blending of cultures can only be seen as a compromise between the Papuan culture as it was, and the reality of the European presence. His thesis was visionary in that it aimed at an ideal cultural blend some time in the future, but at the same time it was historic in that it resulted from and drew upon his own many years researching in Papua. The sad aspect of Williams' thesis was that, as will be shown in the next chapter, it was not fully acted upon. The principle reason that this thesis remained a theory only was given, perhaps unknowingly, by Williams in the opening page of "The Blending of Cultures", when he stated that it could only be of use when an Administration aimed at something more than temporary expedients in dealing with native culture;⁷¹ it is my contention that Murray did not set his sights so high.

71. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.) p. 31.

CHAPTER V.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND ADMINISTRATION.

Murray's ostensible reason for appointing a Government anthropologist was so he could advise the Administration within the sphere of native welfare. The thesis, examined in the preceding chapter, was the synthesis of all the advice Williams could give the Administration about how best to serve the interests of native welfare. Logically, the Administration should have accepted this theory and applied it in native administration; but it did not. For the most part Williams' thesis remained a theory. J. T. Bensted, a Public servant for twenty-six years in Murray's Administration, commented:

The talented and likeable F. E. Williams - great as his work was, it was of chiefly academic importance - it was not put to much practical use.¹

Why was Williams' blue-print for a blend not accepted? The answering of this question, to which the present chapter will be devoted, requires a clarification and explanation of the underlying reasons for the impasse between Anthropology and Administration in Papua.

It is important to appreciate that Williams' thesis was a practical one, well suited to application in Papua at the time; it was not just an intellectual exercise, but a tenable theory born out of his own research in Papua, heeding the demands of the European presence. This is evident in a number of factors. Firstly, Williams' thesis in the Publication "The Blending of Cultures" won for its author the Wellcome Medal in 1933. This was awarded for, "the best research essay on the application of anthropological methods to the problems of native peoples, particularly those arising from the intercourse between native peoples, or between primitive natives and civilized races".² Clearly the critics of the day did not see Williams' thesis as

1. Bensted Papers, Manuscript 2057, Australian National Library, p. 10.
2. Papuan Annual Report, 1933/34, pp. 8 - 9, (my emphasis).

impractical. Secondly, following the deaths of both Murray and Williams the essay was republished: W. C. Groves, the Director of Education in Port Moresby, noted the reason:

It was considered that it represented a clear and well-considered statement which was applicable to post-war conditions, (and hence), the essay was re-published in 1951 as Official Research Publication No. 1, of the Provisional Administration of Papua and New Guinea.³

Again there was no question as to the applicability of Williams' thesis. The final piece of evidence arose from what Murray himself said of Williams' work:

He gave us real assistance in native matters, and he had the gift, a very rare one in my experience, of being able to suggest the application of his scientific knowledge to practical administration, instead of leaving the adaptation to someone else.⁴

The one basic reason why Williams' thesis was not employed in Papua, was that it was based on the assumption that the two bodies concerned with native welfare, the Administration and the Missions, were aiming at "something more than compromise or temporary expedient" in their treatment of native welfare.⁵ It is my intention to show that this assumption in Papua, under Murray's administration, was false.

In the first chapter of this thesis, it was argued that Murray was a social evolutionist; consequently, he viewed primitive society as an inferior society which had to pass through numerous evolutionary stages to attain the level of European civilization.⁶ It was his duty as a representative of a superior culture to supervise and encourage the Papuans to a higher

3. W. C. Groves, "The Blending of Cultures", Papua and New Guinea Scientific Society, Annual Report for 1953, p. 2.
4. Papuan Annual Report, 1932/33, p. 26.
5. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ... ", (etc.), p. 1.
6. See Chapter I, p. 2.

place in the evolutionary ladder:

The principle demands of the "sacred trust" demanded that we should not be content with the present condition of the Papuan; it was our duty to look to the future, and to see that he has the opportunity of raising himself to a higher place in the scale of humanity.⁷

For Murray then, complete cultural change was inevitable and proper, but this could only be achieved through a slow and gradual process. He believed that the Papuans were incapable of making a rapid transition from a primitive culture to the highest culture in the world. This view is clearly evident when in 1936, Murray set himself the question - "can we set a limit to the progress of a race?" He answered:

Science says we can but few Europeans who have lived and worked in Papua subscribe to the theory of natural intellectual equality ... I must admit that this theory appears to me to be rather fantastic and very difficult to reconcile with fact. But there is, I think, no doubt that the two; i.e. the European and the Papuan, overlap, and the highest Papuan is superior to the lowest European.⁸

Clearly it was Murray's opinion that a good deal of time would elapse before Papuan and European overlapped completely, and the Papuan able to comprehend and utilize the culture responsible for British prestige.

Given that the objective of Williams' thesis was to enable the Papuan to retain his own distinctive culture alongside the European presence, it was not surprising that Murray's and his own views on preservation, came into collision. This collision was highlighted by the question, whether the Administration should encourage the Papuans to retain their culture.

7. J. H. P. Murray, The Scientific Method as Applied to Native Labour Problems in Papua, (etc.), p. 5.

8. Pacific Islands Monthly, 21 February, 1936, p. 25.

In December, 1930, Murray wrote to Scullin, the Prime Minister of Australia, concerning a "revolutionary" method that the Administration of Dutch New Guinea had carried out on the Marind Amin natives. These people had suffered badly from epidemics resulting from European contact; in an effort to stem the deathrate, the Administration had given Dr. Thierfelder a medical practitioner, and Dr. Wirz, an anthropologist, a free hand. Together they drastically changed the culture of the natives, even to the extent of forcing them to live in 'model villages' designed along European lines. The deathrate dropped. Murray was greatly impressed by this work, and admitted to Scullin:

I lack the courage to follow the lead of this very progressive Administration, but I shall in future be inclined to welcome any tendency which I may discover among our natives ... to assimilate their culture to ours, in the hope that we may achieve a success equal to that of our neighbours among the Marind Amin.⁹

Clearly Murray was against encouraging the Papuans to retain their culture. But he had also rejected Europeanization of the Papuans as being inconsistent with the "spirit of Indirect Rule". Hence while Murray would not encourage preservation, neither could he actively destroy the culture. Consequently, his Administration adopted a neutral position in regards to the preservation of the Papuan culture.

Williams attacked this neutral stand vigorously. He argued that if native culture was exposed merely to the impersonal and inevitable force of change, a position of neutrality by government and missions would be fair; but that to adopt such a position, in a situation where the native culture was under attack from the European presence, as it was in Papua, was in effect to sentence that culture to decay.¹⁰

Time and time again Williams hammered home this criticism.

9. Manuscript. Commonwealth Archives Office, A518 Series, File A840/1/5.
10. F. E. Williams, Drama of Orokololo, (etc.), pp. 440 - 441.

For instance, in the Papuan Annual Report of 1934/35 he complained:

The arts and crafts of the native villages represent what all would agree in calling a "good feature". But while they languish, as they commonly do under the influence of European contact, we are mostly content with bewailing the loss and take no active measure to sustain or revive them.¹¹

In "The Blending of Cultures", he made no effort to disguise his feelings towards the Administration's policy:

While the well wishers of native cultures stand idle there are many who with good intent, or with no intent at all are really its enemies.¹²

Murray could not ignore such an attack on his Administration. He countered that it was, "Hopeless to attempt to force a man to dance and make merry if he did not want to".¹³ And in what was virtually a personal attack on Williams argued that:

In the last resort, it is the native himself who will decide whether a custom is to survive, and not the administrator, nor even the missionary, or the anthropologist. Natives are, not unnaturally, inclined to resent an attempt to preserve a custom which they regard as superannuated and out of date; even though it might for instance be thought desirable by anthropology.¹⁴

To actively encourage the preservation of the Papuan culture was in Murray's mind to demean his administration; he used a passage from The Protection of Colonial Peoples to defend his stand.

No system of native administration can justify itself unless, through it, enlightened minorities are enabled to free themselves from ancestral burdens.¹⁵

11. Papuan Annual Report, 1934/35, p. 33.
12. F. E. Williams "The Blending of Cultures ... ", (Etc.), p. 11.
13. Papuan Annual Report, 1937/38, p. 30.
14. *ibid.*,
15. Cited by Murray in Papuan Annual Report, 1937/38, p. 29.

An impasse between Williams and Murray had been reached. Murray as Lt. Governor could and did disregard his Government anthropologist's pleas for the preservation of the Papuan culture. For example, Lett in The Papuan Achievement, explained how Williams' plan to promote Papuan art through a money incentive "failed to find favour with the authorities". The reason given was that:

Papuan art is decadent rather than progressive. And to perpetuate these disabilities is as far from the Papuan administration's conception of advancement as anything could be.¹⁶

In a sense the impasse between Williams and Murray centered around a debate between life and the quality of life. To Murray, as Administrator it was enough if the Papuans survived; their culture was of little importance. The success of the Marind Amin experiment was evaluated in terms of death rate. He did not possess an evaluative criteria towards the Papuan culture outside the consideration of whether elements in that culture were harmful to the lives of the Papuans. On the other hand Williams aimed paternally, not merely for live Papuans, but also contented ones. To him the two, life and the quality of life were inseparable; hence his plea to the Administration: "Give the native something worth living for and he might live".¹⁷

While Williams criticized the Administration for not encouraging the preservation of the Papuan culture his criticism of the Missions centered on them being the greatest destructive force on that culture. What were the aims of the Missions in Papua, as regards native welfare? The answering of this question is much more difficult than an examination of Murray's views, simply because of the many different Missions operating in Papua; the risk of generalization is consequently much greater. However, two factors emerge from a study of the role of the Missions in Papua.

16. Lewis Lett, The Papuan Achievement, (Melbourne 1944), pp. 148 - 149.
17. F. E. Williams "The Vailala Madness ..." (etc.), p. 64.

Firstly, their objectives aimed at the conversion of the heathen Papuan to Christianity; secondly, it was generally thought that to achieve this it would be necessary to 'civilize' or, more specifically to Europeanize the natives.

Williams described the aim and role of the Missions in Papua in one terse sentence: "Conversion to Christ is the way and the life, and the subject is closed before it is open".¹⁸ If any element of the Papuan culture stood in the way of this conversion, then it had to be suppressed. For example, in 1936 the London Missionary Society's Mission in the Gulf Division requested that the Papuan Administration suppress the bull-roarer cult in the area, charging that the cult was an infliction on women and that it was bound up with sorcery. In essence this cult centered around the men of the villages sounding a tiparu (a hollow piece of wood with wind holes) by whirling it around their heads. The sound produced was supposedly the spirits of the village talking to the men. A series of ceremonies introduced the uninitiated boys of the village to the secret of the tiparu when manhood was attained. Although Williams concluded that the cult was harmless, and the Missions should not complain, he reported that the cult was effectively being destroyed by the Missions, through their revealing the 'secret' of the cult to the native women.¹⁹

The tasks of conversion and civilization were complementary in Papua. For instance, the son of Charles Abel, who established a mission at Kwato reported on his father's work:

He set out with a purpose to train Papuans, not only to be good Christians; but to one day run their own country and manage their own affairs".²⁰

While the technique of civilizing differed from one mission to another - the Methodist Missions placed their emphasis on industry and developing the mission

18. F. E. Williams, "The Blending of Cultures ...", (etc.), p. 36

19. F. E. Williams, Bull-Roarers in the Papuan Gulf, (Papua, 1936), especially, pp. 51 - 55.

20. C. Abel, "The Impact of C. Abel", in Weigani Seminar Papers, No. 2, 1969, p. 269.

