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Ethnology and the Study of Society

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EVERY branch of knowledge can be made useful ; first, in its direct application to the practical management of the subject ; secondly, in opening a wider outlook upon its subject matter, in allowing us to build up a more adequate theory of the phenomena in question. The study of savage and coloured races possesses practical value, in the first sense, for purposes of colonial administration and the management of the relations between white and coloured people. In the second sense, ethnology may be a most powerful means of widening our outlook on human nature, of allowing us to build up a correct theory of society for the future scientific guidance of human affairs. This latter claim sounds yet, in our present state of things, like a mixture of wild utopia and an anæmic truism, but I think even the most pessimistic will have to admit that to cultivate and spread *true* and *correct* views of human nature and human society, cannot be without its good effects.

Let us say a few words first about the direct application of ethnology to colonial legislation and policy. We must remember that slavery, "dispensing of natives," indiscriminate "punitive expeditions," and the grossest forms of reckless injustice to natives, are things of the very recent past. One has to remember only the opium war on China, the Australian "blackbirding" in the South Seas, the even more recent "transplanting" of the Hereros in German South-West Africa and the Belgian and French atrocities in Africa scarcely a generation ago. With such an attitude prevalent, it was not to be hoped that a *scientific* management of natives or native affairs could become the guiding force in colonial policy. Of course, there existed always exceptionally able and far-sighted administrators who understood that in order to govern, one must know the human material. We owe, indeed, some of our best ethnographic information to men like Sir Everard im Thurn, Sir Richard Temple, Captain Francis Barton and other colonial officials. Also, many missionaries understood well that in order to spread a new creed, it is necessary to study thoroughly the existing religion and morality, which have to be supplanted and ultimately destroyed. But neither the religious nor the civil transformers of savage societies, as a body, took any trouble about a systematic, purposeful study of the material on which they were going to work and about the application of this study to practice. And even now, with the possible exception of Holland, none of the colonial powers in existence to-day seems to be willing to spend much money or effort on summoning the help of science to their difficult task of managing the subject native races.

And yet there are problems of high importance, where no haphazard methods, no rule-of-thumb acquired in a few years' colonial experience can be of any use. The most sinister of these problems is that of the gradual dying out of the majority of native races. The survival of natives—apart from humanitarian, æsthetic or moral considerations—is a matter of vital importance for practical purposes. Are the South Sea colonies to be repopled by imported yellow or Hindu labour or are they going to be left to waste, since white labour seems absolutely inadequate? The first course creates a serious political danger, the second means ruin. Millions of money—if we overlook the millions of human lives—are at stake and yet no serious effort has been made by the administrators to assess the danger and try to find out a cure for it.

For a field ethnologist, however, there is an overwhelming mass of evidence to prove that remedies for this dreadful danger are within reach. Broadly speaking, the evil is mainly caused by the destruction of all vital interest for the native, by taking away from him of all that was dear and valuable to him, of all that gave him the joy of living. Whole departments of tribal law and morality, of custom and usage, have been senselessly wiped out by a superficial, haphazard legislation, made in the early days often by newcomers unused to native ways and unprepared to face the difficult problem. They applied to the regulation of native life all the prejudices of the uneducated man to anything strange, foreign, unconventional and to him incomprehensible. All that would appear to a convention-bound, parochial, middle-class mind as "disgusting," "silly," "immoral," was simply destroyed with a stroke of the pen, and, worse, with rifles and bayonets. And yet to a deeper knowledge, based on real human sympathy and on conscientious scientific research, many of these "savage" customs are revealed as containing the very essence of the tribal life of a people as something indispensable to their existence as a race.

Imagine a board of well-meaning, perhaps, but rigid and conceited Continental bureaucrats, sitting in judgment over British civilization. They would see thousands of youths and men "wasting their time" over "silly" games, like golf, cricket or football, in "immoral" betting, in "disgusting" boxing or fox-hunting. "These forms of sport are *streng verboten*," would be their verdict! For it is a fact that we Eastern or Central Europeans—I, a member of the Polish Intelligencia as well as the average cultured German—feel exactly as I have just written about certain forms of English sport and especially about the great importance and the great amount of time given to it in this country. Yet, anyone looking from an ethnological point of view on this problem would soon see that to wipe out sport, or even to undermine its influence, would be a crime, as it would be an attempt to destroy one of the main features of national life and national enjoyment.

The savage, like anyone else, must have his pastimes and amuse-

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ments, his sports and pleasures, which give zest and meaning to his life. Some of them are really fine, æsthetic and significant, beneficent, hygienically and psychologically, and devoid of any harm whatever, even from the point of view of European morality. I have watched and taken part, time after time, in Melanesian surf bathing, in yachting on the Lagoon, in open air play, as well as in some of their big tribal festivities, with floral distributions, customary games and exchange of gifts. For weeks and months have I watched native dances, performed in a manner monotonous to us, though beautiful and extremely important to them, and at the same time, of an absolutely Puritanical chastity.

Yet the ignorant and pedantic morality-monger, whether clerical or official, cannot help scenting some sexual mischief, wherever he finds amusement and pleasure. In my experience of almost all tribes, I have found some sort of disapprobation, or actual interference, on the part of missionary or Government authorities with the amusements, and especially with the dancing, of the natives. In the Trobriand Islands in the N.E. of New Guinea, no elements of sex enter at all into their dancing which, in part, consists of conventionalized imitation of animals, but mainly is a performance where athletic, rhythmic and musical skill is exhibited. Strong passions of vanity, ambition and rivalry are displayed, but sexual *libido* is entirely absent. None the less, some missionaries try to eradicate this "evil," though an exceptionally enlightened one—Mr. Gilmour, a Methodist—did all he could to prevent this meddling. On the south coast of New Guinea, in and around Port Moresby, the use of drums has been prohibited for years, half of the public life of the natives being thus completely paralysed. This happened because the Administrator of the colony, entirely ignorant of, and out of touch with, native affairs, but very much under missionary influence, had been persuaded that drums serve immorality!¹ In the district of Dobu, in the d'Entrecasteaux Islands, the native flute has been tabooed by a missionary, who was at the same time Government agent, because it had been suspected that love messages were sent by means of certain melodious strains, and there was no guarantee that they could not be used in an ungodly manner—nay, for adulterous purposes!

The tragic humour of all these cases—because for the natives it is a tragedy to be deprived of half their pleasures—consists in the fact that in one and all of them the scented "evil" did not exist, as I can vouch on the basis of careful ethnographical inquiries. Thus, through mere ignorance, mental laziness and that hypocrisy which shrinks from even touching pitch, a good deal of real mischief has been and is being done, by wanton destruction of certain customs,

¹ This prohibition was withdrawn after a few years by Captain F. Barton, the new Administrator. It may be said at once that Captain Barton, a friend and collaborator of Professor Seligman, must be counted as a genuine ethnologist.

which, by all standards, even by the most rigid ones of the very destroyers, are perfectly innocent, and which possess at the same time a high biological value to the natives.

I have given these examples to show that, even without deepening their essential outlook on the world, and merely by increasing their knowledge of the natives, and their capacity for ethnographic inquiry, the modern petty inquisitors of primitive life could be saved from committing some of their worst crimes. But it would be much better if ethnographical knowledge could altogether change the average white man's whole outlook on savage morality. For there is no doubt that, taking native life as a whole, the element of sex plays a great part, and that it appears in certain forms which at first sight shock the white man's sense of morality. Although we find, even among the lowest savages, some tribes where strict chastity of girls, fidelity of married women and a monogamous marriage are laid down and enforced by usage and custom, yet in the majority of cases, general laxity, licentious, sometimes grotesque, customs and institutions, and a much greater overt cultivation of crude sexuality obtain. And this seems to show that there must be some biological reasons why primitive mankind lives and thrives under such conditions. To attempt a radical, complete change of all this by a few talks with the natives would seem to anyone with an even mediocre biological and sociological training, absurd from the outset. One might agree with the missionary principle that a change is here necessary, if the natives have to come into contact with large numbers of white men and women. In this case one might agree, thus far at least, that certain of the worst crudities and public obscenities should be eradicated, since they would be intolerable to the white onlookers. Again, that gradually the general licence should be limited, even if it were only to protect the natives from the spread of venereal disease, which the European brings, side by side with his "higher morality." But such gradual and selective change must be done carefully, with a deep knowledge of human nature, as well as of the local customs, that is, under expert guidance from ethnology.

A rapid and indiscriminate suppression of all sexual licence, in the first place never succeeds completely, and in so far as it succeeds partially, produces results which one must assume are not those desired by the reformers. In the Trobriand Islands, where sexual laxity is very great, unnatural vice, perversion or homosexuality and bestiality have been completely unknown. The only cases now on record are three or four of natives who have come under the influence of the white man's morals. These exceptions, which have, of course, been cast forth from the fold as black sheep, and sent back to their villages, are looked down upon with an amused contempt and disgust by the uncontaminated savage. The psychological and physiological mechanism of these cases is obvious. If you take a number of people from a community where an almost daily satisfaction of the sexual instinct is considered an absolutely legitimate and

necessary right of a man and woman, and if you then divide the sexes and coop each up into separate compounds, their powerful passions and instincts will turn into wrong channels. This example, as all others which have come under my notice through field work or reading, shows unmistakably how dangerous it is to tamper ignorantly with that most powerful human instinct, sex, and with the various regulations and liberties which a natural biological and social development has built up round it. Another aspect of native life, against which the destructive reform of administrator and missionary alike has to turn at the very outset, is warfare and all forms of fighting and raiding between the tribes. Especially cannibalism, so repugnant to our gastronomical and moral principles, arouses the European's ire and zeal for annihilation. It is quite comprehensible, of course, that the pioneer preacher or magistrate is keen on putting an end to cannibalism before it puts an end to him. Since "*l'appétit vient en mangeant*," it is better to prohibit consumption of black flesh, or some day a gourmet may feel a craving for a white dish. And, seriously speaking, even the most antiquarian of all ethnologists would not plead for the preservation and fostering by white authorities of cannibalism among the savages.

For similar reasons, it is an invariable rule to stop all hostilities among the natives, and to prohibit the use, and even the possession, of arms. For, with savages bearing arms, there is no knowing when they would turn them against Europeans. For reasons of self-preservation, therefore, the European finds himself compelled to disarm the native, and paralyse the free use of some of their most important activities.

But though one can admit fully the cogency of the white man's case, some ethnological insight shows that it is by no means simple. First of all, it would be good to make it quite clear to ourselves that it is sheer hypocrisy and humbug to pretend that the prohibition of fighting is done for the good of the natives. I may add at once that I am a convinced pacifist, that I believe that modern warfare cannot in any way be shown to be beneficent, that, indeed, ever since the invention of firearms, war has lost all its redeeming features and has remained an unmitigated evil.

But savage warfare is something quite different, the toll in human life and suffering which it takes is as a rule relatively small. On the other hand, it provides a wide field for physical exercise, the development of personal courage, cunning and initiative, and the sort of dramatic and romantic interest, the wide vision of possibilities and ideals, which probably nothing else can replace. I am speaking here, of course, of savages, and all these expressions must be translated into savage values. Also, there is no doubt that in some cases, especially when any more powerful people wages war on its weak and inferior neighbours, as frequently happens, especially in Africa, then war becomes almost as bad as it is between European nations. But

in no case is the mental anguish and suffering of a native comparable to that of a civilized man.

In many cases, again, savage warfare is nothing worse than a dangerous sport. In the Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea, in a big war, where a couple of thousand warriors took part, the total casualties might amount to half-a-dozen killed and a dozen wounded—nothing compared to a baseball match! And such a war afforded excellent amusement, exercise and development of personal qualities to large numbers of men for several weeks. Warfare on the south coast of New Guinea, with the wonderful treetop fortresses, with long marches in the jungle, moves and countermoves in difficult country, was perhaps a trifle more severe but not much, and even more romantic. Round the east end of New Guinea, where cannibalism and head-hunting flourish, the natives had the unpleasant habit of making nocturnal raids, and of killing without any necessity, and in an unsportsmanlike manner, women and children as well as combatants. But when investigated more closely and concretely, such raids appear rather as daring and dangerous enterprises, crowned, as a rule, with but small success—half-a-dozen victims or so—rather than as a wholesale slaughter, which indeed they never were. For the weaker communities used to live in inaccessible fastnesses, perched high up above precipitous slopes, and they used to keep good watch over the coast. Now, when European rule has established peace and security, these communities have come down to the sea-coast and to swampy and unhealthy districts, and their numbers have rapidly diminished.

Thus, the establishment of peace and safety is by no means an unmixed blessing, and it is always deeply resented by the natives themselves. And even here where the case for the eradicating and paralysing reformer is the strongest, we can legitimately ask the question, whether the reforms could not have been done with less wholesale destruction. Perhaps while forbidding the more bloody and pernicious types of fighting, some sort of milder forms might have been left so as not to unman the natives completely. Perhaps some sportive imitations of warfare might have been permitted without bloodshed, yet allowing the savages to settle their quarrels and satisfy their ambitions in this manner. These suggestions are not entirely fantastic, because in some cases the natives have themselves tried to provide such substitute activities. In this manner, there would remain the healthy exercise, the means of developing personality, of maintaining tribal rivalry and individual ambition, while all real and imaginary dangers would be entirely obliterated.

But the policy, both of administrator and missionary, has been quite the reverse. To take examples again from my personal field of observation in Eastern New Guinea, all war canoes were destroyed; club-houses and communal sitting places associated with head-hunting and cannibalism, but fulfilling many other functions besides,

were made to disappear ; social organizations referring primarily to warfare were abolished.

I could still multiply examples from other aspects of native life, besides the two most "shocking" ones, sex and warfare. Thus all savage belief, myth and ritual is evil growth in the eyes of the missionary, to be weeded out and burnt. That, of course, is his business. It is all very well to call everything which a native believes "superstition," and to try to import "true faith" instead. But the fact is that a savage community has obtained its religion as the product through centuries of natural development, and that it suits savage mentality and their social organization perfectly well, whereas European religion cannot be grafted on to an entirely different social, mental and moral soil, and requires an absolute upheaval of all the natives' own civilization before it can be introduced at all.

A series of customs again arouses the indignation of the benevolent hygienist, who pounces especially on burial arrangements, and on some of the practices of mourning. In some tribes, where the burial of the dead in the village is considered the first duty of filial piety, the European has compelled the bereaved family to bury their dead in the bush, upsetting thus the whole aspect of religious ritual and of social organization. Here once more we can question whether the negative good of preventing just here and there an isolated, unhygienic mode of behaviour is not outweighed by the positive evil of destroying much that is the mainstay of tribal life.

Everywhere the same fanatical zeal to prune, uproot, make an *auto-da-fé* of all that shocks our own moral, hygienic or parochial susceptibilities, the same ignorant and stupid lack of comprehension of the fact that every item of culture, every custom and belief, represents a value, fulfils a social function, has a positive, biological significance. For tradition is a fabric in which all the strands are so closely woven that the destruction of one unmakes the whole. And tradition is, biologically speaking, a form of collective adaptation of a community to its surroundings. Destroy tradition, and you will deprive the collective organism of its protective shell, and give it over to the slow but inevitable process of dying out.

To draw a moral, I am going to put the case briefly : there is much in native life that has to succumb to the contact with European influence. There is a good deal which is already undermined by missionary teaching and by indispensable claims of European interests and European prejudices. When, therefore, the legislator and administrator, in a burst of uncalled-for reformatory zeal, further prune and uproot much of the native's tree of life—is there no urgent need to stop and think? To invoke the advice of dispassionate study and scientific expert opinion?

I have only touched on the one, though the most essential point, where scientific study ought to be taken into the councils of colonial administration and legislation, that, namely, of preserving the integ-

richness of tribal life as far as possible, so as to prevent complete extinction. It would be easy to adduce many other very telling instances, if opportunity were offered to go into the matter more deeply and with more detail.

I want, however, to say a few words about the second great chance for ethnology to become really useful in human affairs, that is by serving as one of the most important foundations for a general science of Man in his mental and social nature. Whether we call such a science Sociology or Social Psychology, or Philosophy of History or Politics, is of no great importance as long as we agree that it must be based on a purely empirical basis and that it must aim at real utility in the conduct of affairs.

Although the present political atmosphere seems hardly conducive to optimism, there is no doubt that a better knowledge of the social mechanism would lead to a better appreciation of their *real* interests by the various conflicting groups and classes. In the present endless strife of group egoisms—national interests, class interests, racial interests—the introduction of the scientific spirit of dispassionate research would necessarily lead to a broader and more conciliatory attitude. A sober and heart-searching inquiry as to “What are we fighting for? What can we hope for from the defeat of our antagonists?”—might lead us to understand that co-operation and constructive work are more beneficial to both parties than hatred and opposition. Perhaps, even, not only to understand this truism, but even to act on it! Such an attitude in itself, apart from the more concrete and detailed counsels afforded from social study, would be a powerful gain to true progress and would, therefore, be an achievement of real practical value. A systematic exposition of this attitude—based on all available material scientifically formulated—will be the Sociology of the Future—The New Humanism—and, indeed, much of the Sociology of to-day has already fully justified the hopes and anticipations in this direction.¹

Now if this New Humanism is to have sufficient force to shape human ideals and even to influence policies, it must be based on a *really scientific* knowledge of human nature. This knowledge must, therefore, be empirical. But how and whence is the sociologist to draw empirical material? Where can he obtain observations of changes occurring through variation in conditions? The ready answer to this is: there is history which teaches us the fate of humanity throughout the moving ages and changing conditions. Here, however, it is necessary to consider a point of extreme importance, though of almost philosophic subtlety. The only knowledge of

¹ To mention only efforts on British soil, there are the excellent works of Professor Hobhouse, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, Dr. Westermarck, Professor Graham Wallas, Sir William Beveridge, and others; in fact, all the theoretical work carried on in Sociology, Economics and Politics at the London School of Economics. Also we might class here the many valuable attempts at Social Reform based on scientific research.

past history we possess, we owe to the testimony of chroniclers and historians of past ages, whose views on social matters and human nature widely differ from our own. They were entirely unfit to act as our vicarious observers, except in certain aspects of history, aspects which the most modern historian tends to consider as rather superficial. Aristotle was a great genius and had an encyclopædic knowledge of contemporaneous science. Yet the modern physicist would not rest content in founding his theory of electricity on Aristotle's observations! Great men though they often were, the chroniclers of the past can give us poor stuff only as foundation for the less obvious problems of sociology.

Social theory, as well as natural science, constantly opens up new vistas, discloses new ranges of facts, and on these the documents of past ages, as a rule, say nothing or very little and that indirectly. To the chronicler—who as often as not was a courtier—the court gossip, the often inglorious exploits of the monarch, of his ministers and mistresses, were more important than an obscure economic change slowly working its way among the peasants or artisans. Only after a social phenomenon flared up in the form of a civil war, revolt or other dramatic and sensational event, would the average chronicler take stock of it. To the exponents of the modern tendency in history—popularly and brilliantly set forth in Mr. H. G. Wells' recent work on history—it is just the fundamental forces of human society, the forms of social constitution, the types of economic organization, the great moral, religious and philosophic tendencies of an age that matter above all. The great men and the great masses alike make history, in mutual interplay or co-operation. To speak of leaders and forget the led is an error of method.

This new tendency in history meets insurmountable obstacles in the inadequacy of the historical chronicles. There are, of course, the indirect sources, deeds, legal documents, account books and such like, but how meagre and oblique is their testimony! How often a historian must dream of being transported into the period of his researches, of becoming his own source and vindicating his conclusions by direct observation!

But what never can be vouchsafed to a historian, is given in a full measure to the field ethnologist. What *time* has hidden from us for ever, *space* keeps preserved for a while, and under the modern conditions of travel reveals easily to an ethnographic explorer. In the various parts of our globe, there exist phases of civilization as far removed from ours as the Middle Ages or Classical Antiquity, as the Homeric Epoch or the Neolithic times. To the old-fashioned historian who hunts after kings, great men, heroes and sensational events only, the study of the various non-European cultures will not reveal much of interest. To the modern sociologist-historian, the records of a scientific field ethnologist will be very stimulating.

The field ethnologist, who studies the various types of civilization under varied conditions, is the only sociologist who can, on a large

scale, do anything comparable to an experiment in social matters. He can observe the differences in human mental constitution and human social behaviour under the various forms of physical and mental environment, as divergent as physical and mental nature will allow.

The opening up of a new vista of forgotten civilization gave the first great impulse to Humanism: that of the Renaissance. In the eighteenth century the work of Lessing and Winckelmann threw a new light on the classical cultures, and especially on the relative value of the Greek and Latin contributions, and there came again a new revival of humanistic studies. Humanism was broadened again in its scope and subject matter by the inclusion of Sanskrit linguistics and literature and the comparative study of Indo-European cultures and languages. The most important final step was taken when modern anthropology became a science in the achievements of Tylor, Robertson Smith, the *Völkerpsychologen*, Bastian, Morgan and Lubbock, and in its most modern development with the great works of Sir James Frazer. This new development, the placing of sociological and historical theory on the broadest basis of comprehensive comparison of all civilization, including those of the savage races, may be called without too much pretension the New Humanism.

This New Humanism has, however, its obligations and duties, as well as its claims and privileges. So far, ethnological research, whether at home or in the field, has shown too much of a tendency towards the sensational and singular, towards isolating customs and beliefs of an outstanding, striking character and towards treating them as a collector treats savage "curios." There was a tendency with the travellers among native races to skim the surface of tribal life in search of queer and quaint peculiarities. Barbarous mutilations of body, as well as distorted, incongruous beliefs, have been recorded very much as scandals or monstrosities are reported in the yellow press to satisfy our craving for the sensational and strange. We have excellent accounts of the dreadful rites of subincision in Australia and infibulation in the Sudan, of "survivals of primitive promiscuity" in Fiji and "group marriage" among the Dieri. Not that all these subjects are not of the greatest importance: but they are not the only facts worth study. These sensational plums stick in a very ordinary cake of the drab, commonplace tribal life, in which the native does and lives through many phases very much resembling our own conditions. And it is the *need of studying all the phases of native life* that I am urging here, attractive and ugly, sensational and commonplace alike.

This, of course, is not an entirely new outlook, because it is to be found in the works of Sir James Frazer, Prof. Hobhouse, Dr. Marett, Prof. Westermarck, and all those who attempt to reach the deeper layers of magic, religion, social organization and primitive social order. All these problems cannot be solved, except by a deeper analysis of big complexes of cultural phenomena, of whole aspects of

human civilization. Again, in ethnographic field work the research done by trained men of science—inaugurated by the memorable Cambridge Expedition to the South Seas, by Haddon, Ray, Rivers, Seligman and others—has, or ought to have, put once for all an end to mere curio-hunting in ethnology.¹

But although the tendency to shift the main weight of scientific attention from isolated details and striking curiosities to comprehensive groups of fundamental ideas is fully acknowledged by the best modern writers—by the late Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, of Cambridge, more consistently and explicitly than by anyone else—this tendency must be followed up further yet. Thus, for instance, there are still whole aspects of tribal life to which hardly any deeper attention has been paid. Even in our best monographs on native races, the *economic* aspect is almost without exception completely neglected. This is, no doubt, due on the one hand to the preconceived idea, which we all tend to have, of the extreme simplicity of primitive economics; on the other hand, it is just this aspect which presents to the observer the least sensational, the most obvious appearance, which promises no surprises or thrills of any sort. Yet this very aspect is of such great importance and of such an obvious one that a whole school of philosophers attribute to the economic organization the rôle of primary cause in all social change. This materialistic view of history, as it is called, is no doubt a metaphysical exaggeration of an important truth, but the neglect of the economic in ethnological field work is an interesting symptom of the need to reform its method still more thoroughly in the direction of a *comprehensive treatment of all aspects of tribal life and their correlation*.

This postulate, if carried through, will do away to a great extent with the sensational character of much of our ethnographic knowledge. A belief, which appears crude and senseless in isolation, a practice which seems queer and “immoral,” becomes often clear and even clean if understood as a part of a system of thought and practice. From this point of view, it is all important for the field ethnologist to try and assimilate thoroughly the ideas and ways of one single tribe and spend a good deal of time over it, rather than skim through a considerable number of tribes, though this latter is from some points of view an indispensable supplement of the first type of work. To borrow the terminology of Dr. Rivers and his opinion: in the present state of ethnography *intensive* field work is even more urgently needed than *survey* work.

The future development of ethnology lies in its rôle of first hand-aiden to a general theory of human society, a theory trying to

¹ Recently the generous endowment by Sir Peter Mackie, of the Mackie Expedition to Central Africa, organized and directed by Sir James Frazer and carried out by the Rev. J. Roscoe, and the financing by Mr. Robert Mond of the Mond Expedition to New Guinea, are hopeful symptoms that funds and initiative will be forthcoming to foster ethnological field work, carried out by competent observers with academic training.

achieve a deeper grasp of human nature and of human history. Such a theory would give us, within limits, the power to foresee the course of events, and in a dim future, when this power is universally recognized, it might improve and influence those in authority. It would also—and this is of no lesser value—be useful in creating a saner attitude, finer and wider ideals in the minds of men. For the destinies of mankind are shaped not only by the policy from above, but also by the slow, invisible changes which are always at work in all the individuals of a community.

From this point of view there can be no doubt about the *practical value* of a New Humanism, a broad philosophic view of the laws of human society and human nature, based on a strictly scientific study of the widest range of facts at our disposal. And it is not so far-fetched an idea as might at first seem, to appeal to the savages for some light to be shed on our own nature. For nothing stimulates research and understanding as much as contrast and comparison, reached through the widest possible empiric survey of facts. Just as the psychology of normal human beings has received much help and stimulus from the study of mental disorder, so the social science of modern man and of the historical periods can look for much inspiration and assistance from ethnological researches.