

* Jolly, H. J. and H. J. G. (1933) The place of the Australian aboriginal in the evolution of society. *Anthropology*. 44-87
- J.M.

23 February 1943

Dear Mother,

I am returning now this fat paper on Australians, and see what you mean about pruning. Whatever may happen ultimately to the paper, I am sure it would be of service to the authors if you could give so much trouble to the matter.

Psychologically, I think -- and this of course is nothing to do with the paper's fate -- that they have got hold of the wrong end of the stick. I mean that the human race seldom or never notices good results, least of all from innovations, nearly all of which are done with rather a guilty conscience, just as the first inventors of printing doubtless regarded themselves as swindlers for foisting off this cheap substitute as honest-to-God manuscript. On the other hand we are capable of noticing any thing sufficiently alarming or grotesque in the way of bad results, especially if these can be connected with anything so guilt-provoking as sexual intercourse. Many African peoples regard the appearance of twins as an accusing finger pointed at their own duplicity. Deformities, imbeciles and albinos must be alarming phenomena to primitive parents, so long as they are unfamiliar and inexplicable and the long period of dependent childhood in Man gives the parents a chance ^{to fret} about their causation and to exaggerate the guilt of their early misconduct. I doubt if a completely albino tribe would recognise normal pigmentation as a "good result" of anything whatever.

To me it is puzzling that mankind should have passed through what must have been a very long phase of inbred nomadic kindred-groups, with perhaps no more than six to ten fertile women in each, without eliminating completely the animal instincts for the avoidance of incest. However, there is no doubt that they are extremely strong and widespread in Man and that a good many rare and alarming recessives are common enough, at least to cause occasional alarm.

I have written to Lady Barlow but have had no reply yet.

Yours sincerely,

P.S. I have now heard from Lady Barlow. She can manage the 16th though she may stay in the neighbourhood the night. I have suggested that we meet at the barrier for the 10.33 at Charing Cross.