

Chapter 17

E.W.P. Chinnery: A Self-Made Anthropologist

Geoffrey Gray

In *South Seas in Transition*, the Australian anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner commented that a majority of 'Australians between the wars might have denied, in all innocence, even with a certain indignation, that the Commonwealth was a "Colonial Power" at all'.¹ This is, with few exceptions, all too true today, and is mirrored in the lack of scholarly investigation of the interwar period.² A good deal that is available focuses on Papua, which Australia administered for over 70 years, rather than New Guinea, a League of Nations mandate.³ This paucity is to some degree due to the loss of government records. The files of the Australian administered League of Nations Mandate Territory of New Guinea were depleted first by the 1937 volcanic eruption in Rabaul and again as a result of the outbreak of war in February 1942. The National Archives of Australia explains: 'in early 1942 the Japanese invasion led to the destruction of large quantities of records ... Of the surviving eight series of records, six relate to mining in the district of Morobe; none cover the general administration of the Territory'.⁴ The situation regarding the records for Papua is much better and we have, for instance, several superb histories, particularly Francis West's on J.H.P. Murray, and J.D. Legge's on Australian colonial policy. There is also some interest in the Papuan government anthropologist Francis Edgar Williams.⁵

Consequently, to develop an understanding and an appreciation of the interwar period in New Guinea, historians are largely dependent upon the private papers of colonial officials. For example, E.W.P. Chinnery's papers in the National Library of Australia are an exceptionally rich source for the workings of a colonial official in New Guinea (including Papua and the Northern Territory of Australia). His personal records are supplemented by the various government records held in Canberra and Melbourne, particularly the Central Office of the Department of Home and Territories, and the Territories Branch of the Prime Minister's Department, as well the holdings of the National Library, which has a varied collection of papers of colonial officers, especially field officials.

Chinnery's career presents an opportunity to investigate Australia's colonial involvement in all its territories, as well Australia's regional and international relations in regard to its colonial obligations and aspirations. His

appointments—Government Anthropologist, Director of District Services in New Guinea, Commonwealth Advisor on Native Affairs and director of the Northern Territory Department of Native Affairs as well as his earlier service in Papua—make him one of the few colonial officials to work in the three main Australian administered territories of Papua, New Guinea and the Northern Territory.

Ernest William Pearson Chinnery (1887-1972), born in Waterloo, a Victorian country town, joined the Papuan service in 1909, rising to Acting Resident Magistrate, before leaving for England in 1917 to join the Australian Flying Corps as a navigator. After he was demobilised, he completed a diploma in anthropology at Cambridge under A.C. Haddon and W.H.R. Rivers. He returned to Papua, as the supervisor of Native labour for New Guinea Copper Mines (November 1920), and, in 1924, was appointed Government Anthropologist in New Guinea, and Director of District Services in 1932, retaining his position as Government Anthropologist. He was made Commonwealth Advisor for Native Affairs and, in April 1939, Director of the Native Affairs Branch in the Northern Territory administration. After Chinnery's resignation at the end of 1946, the Commonwealth continued to use his experience and knowledge in matters as diverse as the South Pacific Commission and the United Nations, sought his advice on the Papua New Guinea Act of 1949 and the future of the Australian School of Pacific Administration. (Chinnery had in the early 1930s represented Australia at the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations). In 1951, John Gunther, Director of Public Health in Papua New Guinea, invited Chinnery to complete a longitudinal study of depopulation in New Ireland, a project started under the German administration in 1911. Chinnery retired in 1952.

This chapter concentrates on Chinnery's work in Papua and his subsequent attendance at Cambridge in 1919, as it was in the years 1910 to 1920, I contend, that he formulated ideas about the usefulness of anthropology in the management, control and advancement of colonised peoples. In this chapter I set out what brought Chinnery to Papua, his move from a clerk to a field officer, examples of the work he undertook and the various influences on Chinnery as he developed an interest in anthropology and its uses for the governance of colonised peoples.

A Biography of Chinnery

I have been working on Chinnery since the early 1990s. Chinnery's papers were stored in the house of his eldest daughter, Sheila, and the researcher had to travel to Black Rock, a bayside suburb of Melbourne, to see them. Sheila and her late husband Larry looked after researchers well, and the atmosphere was most congenial and enjoyable. Sheila and her sisters, ever helpful to answer questions, nonetheless exercised a watchful eye over their father's legacy and encouraged researchers to concentrate on his life as a government official. As

part of a larger work on Australian anthropology I wrote several articles on Chinnery and aspects of his official work.⁶ After reading two of my papers on their father I was contacted and asked if I would write his biography. I discussed the proposition with various colleagues, especially Hank Nelson, and decided to start, but could give the family little by way of a completion date. I have other projects, and all research takes longer than anticipated!

My interest in Chinnery arose from my interest in the intersection between anthropology and colonial governance. In the first decades of the 20th century, anthropology was making a claim for its special relevance to the governance of colonised peoples. By the mid-1920s there was a chair of anthropology at the University of Sydney premised on the need to train colonial officials in anthropology, in order to better understand indigenous peoples and assist in their transition to modernity.

Chinnery, a colonial official trained in anthropology, had the opportunity to investigate the relationship between anthropology and colonial governance in a context wider than simply Australian colonial rule in its external territories. Such investigations also underline the international aspect of Australian colonialism. This is most explicit in regard to the administration of New Guinea, and the obligation to report to the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC) in Geneva which put Australian rule under scrutiny. In fact when the University of Sydney's Chair of Anthropology was threatened with closure, Radcliffe-Brown turned to Lord Lugard, chair of the PMC, for support.⁷

When Chinnery joined the Papuan service, anthropology was dominated by ideas of evolution and diffusion, and ethnographers, often initially trained in biology or zoology, were interested in the origins and spread of people and culture. There was however a nascent anthropological practice developing in Britain which found expression in long-term expeditions to far-away places, such as the Torres Strait Islands and Central Australia. In some instances individuals, such as the Melbourne University biologist Baldwin Spencer, undertook what might now be considered long-term field work in Central Australia.⁸ These expeditions were scientific in character and a move away from traveller tropes and mission stories of savagery, salvation and conversion. Largely as a result of colonial rule in Africa and the Pacific, a belief was developing that colonial governance could best be effected by some sort of specialised training for field officials. This was reflected in resolutions at meetings of professional associations and papers published in journals such as *Man*, the journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. For example: In 1894 the Cambridge zoologist Alfred Cort Haddon considered it was of 'urgent national importance' that colonial personnel possess some anthropological knowledge, and he approached the Royal College of Science in London 'urging that a course in General Anthropology with practical work should be provided

there to meet this need, and outlining a comprehensive syllabus'.⁹ Nearly 10 years later he noted that 'it can hardly be questioned that a missionary would have a better chance of success if he understood something of the aboriginal ideas which he proposes to modify or supplant'.¹⁰ What was needed was an acceptance by universities of anthropology so that teaching could begin. In 1900 Haddon was appointed lecturer in ethnology and instituted a course of lectures in ethnology for missionaries and explorers. He was appointed Reader in Anthropology at Cambridge in 1909, a position he held until his retirement. The tripos degree in Archaeology and Anthropology was established in 1919. I mention Haddon because he trained Chinnery but there were other appointments, around the same time, such as R.R. Marett at Oxford and C.G. Seligman at the London School of Economics.

Colonial Government

Australia had some measure of responsibility for the administration of south-eastern New Guinea since British annexation in 1888. From 1888 to 1902 Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria shared responsibility with Britain; from 1902 to 1905 the newly formed Federal Government of Australia replaced the three States. In 1906 Australia took full control of the territory from Britain, changed its name to Papua (it had been British New Guinea) and ruled it as a separate dependency of the Commonwealth. The foundations of policy had been laid by the British, especially Sir William MacGregor, who advocated a policy designed to protect the indigenous population in its relations with Europeans. This was a touchstone of Australian policy. J.D. Legge argues that one of the permanent themes of Australian administration of Papua was 'the benevolence of the Administration ... expressed ... in the measures designed to take control [of] the contact made ... between European and the native. More positive expressions of benevolence in the form of health services, education services, or adequate schemes for expanding native production within the framework of the village, were prohibitively expensive'.¹¹

As a result, after pacification (as it was called then), much of the interaction between the administration and indigenous people was focussed on control and management, with advancement of the indigenous peoples framed within the parameters of benevolent government and near penury. Once an area was pacified, the government could concentrate on the 'civilising' and 'modernising' of the indigenous population—a government anthropologist would be able to 'help in reconciling an intelligent though very backward race to the inevitable march of civilization'.¹² J.H.P. Murray, Lt-Governor of Papua, maintained that the government had to govern and this 'automatically entailed the suppression of repugnant customs and the enforcement of certain standards of behaviour, hygiene and industry. It was irrelevant that these standards cut across traditional

bases of leadership and influence, for the government had no choice but to suppress certain customary actions in the process of pacification'.¹³

A young E.W.P. Chinnery applied for a clerical position in the Papuan service. His motives are unclear but, according to his daughters, adventure was certainly one. He was attached to the Government Secretary's office in Port Moresby but it is unclear how he perceived a career in the Papuan service and whether remaining a clerk would have satisfied his yearning for adventure.¹⁴ Francis West, in his *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry, states that Chinnery 'seeking the prestige of field service',¹⁵ won an appointment as a relieving patrol officer in July 1910 to Ioma in the Mambare division. The following year he took up a position of Assistant Resident Magistrate in the Kumusi division; for the next three years his work on routine patrols was said to have:

gained the respect and the confidence of the local tribes. He was, however, not on good terms either with local Europeans or with Hubert Murray. In November 1913 Chinnery was charged with infringing the field-staff regulations and was reduced in rank. In the Rigo district in 1914, a patrol led by him clashed with tribesmen and shot seven; Murray saw the incident as probably unavoidable. By 1917 Chinnery was patrolling into new country in the central division behind Kairuku and into the Kunimaipa valley. There he discovered the source of the Waria River.¹⁶

Helping and Understanding

Undoubtedly Chinnery was introduced to what might be seen as a nascent anthropological method of colonial governance by Hubert Murray; in the hands of Murray it was a way of gaining a cultural and social understanding of indigenous peoples and thus enabling not only peaceful occupation of new territory but also the 'uplift' of Papuan people. Murray argued in 1912 that when certain customs are forbidden, a substitute ritual is needed to 'fill the void': when, for example, a 'native who learns for the first time' that he cannot engage in head-hunting, never collect any more heads and never fight again, he is 'likely to feel a void in his existence, for his chief occupations will be gone, and unless something is given to him which will fill the void he and his descendants will suffer'.¹⁷ It is only later, in 1916, when Murray was negotiating for the appointment of a government anthropologist that we gain a sense of the importance of anthropology to Murray in the governance of indigenous peoples.¹⁸

Chinnery was convinced that anthropology was central to good governance in the colonies. He commented to the ANZAAS conference in 1955 that during his

service as a native administration official in Papua and New Guinea between 1909 and 1938, I found it easier, after training in anthropology

and scientific methods of enquiry, to study the beliefs and practices of the people, to win and retain their confidence, and to help them through their problems, and changes due to Government, Mission and Industrial influences ... It should not be forgotten that hasty ill-advised European pressures disrupting land ownership and usages, and forcing changes in marriage systems, religious beliefs and practices, social and other observances, before people were ready to absorb them, together with irritating racial discrimination, especially in employment, have contributed largely to nativistic outbreaks damaging European and Natives alike, and holding up progress in other non-self governing Territories.¹⁹

The primary influence on Chinnery's anthropology and its method was Alfred Cort Haddon and W.H.R. Rivers. There is little doubt, however, that his enthusiasm for what might be now termed applied anthropology was supported by Haddon, after Rivers' death in 1922. Chinnery acknowledged the importance of Rivers for his thinking and development as anthropologist, first in his 1919 paper, 'The Application of Anthropological Methods to Tribal Development in New Guinea', and again in his 1932 ANZAAS presentation, 'Applied Anthropology in New Guinea'. But Haddon and Rivers were not the only influence on Chinnery. It was through Wilfred Beaver, a field officer at Mambare, that Chinnery became acquainted with Haddon; Beaver also encouraged Chinnery to develop his ethnography.²⁰ (Beaver was described as a 'man of patience and sympathy [dealing] with ... the obtuseness of Papuans'.)²¹ Haddon, probably the most influential anthropologist of the time, engaged in correspondence with a number of colonial field officers and missionaries, including Beaver. This correspondence ranged over many matters but was mainly Haddon seeking specific information about customs of indigenous people. He had for example an intense interest in the prow designs of canoes.²²

Murray developed his ideas about anthropology from discussions with anthropologists such as Seligmann and Haddon in the early years of his administration, yet he made little effort to have his officers trained in anthropology, preferring to choose field officers on the basis of character. When he did appoint a trained anthropologist to the position of assistant government anthropologist it was not his intention that the incumbent train field officers in anthropology. Chinnery, in contrast, once he was appointed Government Anthropologist in New Guinea, was eager to gain the support of the Administrator in training field officers. Chinnery supported the establishment of a chair of anthropology at the University of Sydney, as did Haddon, and planned to send field officers to undertake the course proposed by Radcliffe-Brown.²³ So did Murray, at least for a while, although he was ambivalent about the value of such a course.²⁴

A Resident Magistrate was expected to undertake patrols, carry out exploration work, establish and maintain good relations with the indigenous people, and oversee modifications to their way of life and their interaction with representatives of civilisation—missionaries, traders, gold miners, and government officials. The government set about to change household and village hygiene and health, remove those customs offensive to Australian sensibilities, and introduce the rule of law.²⁵ Chinnery explained to the ANZAAS conference held in August 1932 that the field official

[f]ound himself called upon to build houses, roads and bridges; to treat tropical diseases, to control epidemics, and attempt surgical relief; to make and record geographical discoveries, to pacify and control savage tribes of cannibals and head-hunters; to arrest, try and incarcerate law breakers; to perform routine departmental duties.²⁶

In 1915, the year he and Wilf Beaver published a paper on the initiation ceremonies of Hunjara, the people of the Yodda Valley at the head of the Kumusi River, Chinnery was slowly grasping the nature of anthropology. As a result of this paper, a story circulated that Chinnery had been initiated. Chinnery had observed parts of the initiation ceremonies, as it was stated that 'Mr Chinnery had seen the proceedings and was to a certain degree initiated himself into the Hunjara'.²⁷ His formal introduction to recording aspects of indigenous life occurred in 1911, when his superior officer, Resident Magistrate Oelrichs, advised him to record 'any curiosities, any peculiarities about a person or a whole tribe'. The usefulness of drawings to record information about their way of life was stressed. This was the extent of any training he was to receive in the field. Beaver therefore was critical in Chinnery's development as an observer of native customs. Beaver had formed a relationship with Haddon some years earlier and in 1920 a book on Beaver's ethnography—that is, his experiences as government field officer—was published.²⁸

Chinnery's early reports were used in the report of the Resident Magistrate.²⁹ In later years, Chinnery's reports were included under his own name. He collaborated with Beaver in compiling several vocabularies,³⁰ and it was accepted at the time that genealogical information could be adduced through such collections.³¹ During his time in Papua Chinnery produced over 20 ethnographic and geographic publications, some appearing in British journals.³²

We can infer that Chinnery's method of recording data followed Beaver's and Haddon's advice. His association with them helped him to acquire a structure in which to present his ethnographic data. In his initial correspondence with Chinnery, Haddon advised him to read *Notes and Queries*, especially the 1912 edition which stressed the importance of using, where possible, 'native terminology' when asking question in the field as this minimised misunderstanding between informants and investigator. The value of information

freely provided was also stressed, as this was less likely to be contrived than information actively sought after.³³

Chinnery at Cambridge

In the year he left Papua to join the Australian Flying Corp in England, Chinnery published with Haddon a paper on 'religious cults'.³⁴ He had shown himself to be capable of writing ethnographic reports and articles; when he was demobilised in 1919 he enrolled at Cambridge 'to undertake two years academic study in anthropology under the tutelage of A.C. Haddon and W.H.R. Rivers'.³⁵ Haddon had requested the Australian government assist Chinnery: he informed them that Chinnery wanted to further his theoretical and general knowledge and in particular to study the distribution and migration of cultures of Oceania.³⁶ His request was granted.

Critical to understanding Chinnery's enthusiastic embrace of applied anthropology is Rivers' argument as laid out in his paper on 'The government of subject peoples'.³⁷ This was published in a volume, edited by A.C. Seward, whose purpose was 'to demonstrate the fallacy of [the] distinction that technical education stands for efficiency and prosperity, but pure science is regarded as something apart—a purely academic subject'.³⁸ Hoping that 'our rulers will recognise the value of those sciences which will make our possessions more healthy and more productive', Rivers set out to show how 'anthropology can point the way to the better Government' of peoples ruled by Britain.³⁹ There were according to Rivers three possible lines of action when one people 'assumes the management of another': destruction, preservation or compromise. Whatever the degree of interference, 'knowledge of the culture to be modified is absolutely necessary if changes are to be made without serious injury to the moral and material welfare of the people'.⁴⁰

Of the several tasks of the anthropologist, Rivers considered that only the collection, description and classification of the ethnographic facts had any practical value.⁴¹ Against the stereotype of anthropologist as head-measurer and museum collector, he saw a movement away 'from physical and material towards the psychological and social aspects of the life of Mankind. [The anthropologist's] chief interest today is in just those regions of human activity with which the art of government is daily and intimately concerned'.⁴² The gap between rulers' and subjects' knowledge of each other did not, according to Rivers, promote good government, nor did it 'foster a healthy sentiment of respect towards rulers'.⁴³ One misunderstood feature of 'lowly cultures' Rivers saw as 'the close dependence of one department of social life upon another [which] is so great that interference with any department has consequences more immediate and far reaching than in the more developed and specialized varieties of culture'.⁴⁴

Rivers recommended that colonial governments should either employ anthropologists or sponsor research, as well as require anthropological training of their recruits.⁴⁵ Such training, however, should be concerned, not with facts, but with 'the principles which underlie the vast variety of social institutions and belief of mankind'. Nor should training be in the hands of former administrators, for this would be 'especially futile', leading only to the perpetuation of false knowledge. Finally, Rivers attempted to counter two objections: that anthropological training would lead to 'weakness and indecision on the executive side' and that time was too short. The first he saw answered by a separation of policy-makers from executives, with the latter simply feeding facts to the former; the second in that facts were collected in the normal course of administration. In short, Rivers looked to the formulation of 'policies which will reconcile the general needs of the Empire with a due regard for the moral and material welfare of the peoples to whom the Empire has so great a responsibility'.⁴⁶ This was a call which Chinnery certainly heeded once he returned to Papua in 1921. But Rivers' continued influence over Chinnery is harder to determine, not least because of his death in 1922; it was with Haddon that Chinnery maintained a correspondence until Haddon's death in 1940.

While in England Chinnery lectured to audiences of government, academic and amateur associations on colonial rule and the life and work of a colonial field officer in Papua (better known as British New Guinea).⁴⁷ It was clear that Chinnery had been cogitating on the value of anthropology as a civilising method. He gave two addresses which reflect this, the first to the Royal Geographic Society, and the other to the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI).

To the Royal Geographic Society, Chinnery was reported as describing a clash with tribesmen in the Rigo district in 1914. The influence of Murray is apparent:

[A] village was raided and some of its inhabitants were murdered by a hitherto unknown tribe. [Chinnery] was despatched to explore the district and capture the people responsible for the raid. He found them among the headstreams of a river draining the principal southerly spur of Mount O'Bree, one of the peaks of the central chain over 10,000 ft in height, situated to the east of Port Moresby. The valleys of these streams were inhabited by fierce peoples who had never before seen a white man or a Government party. Their villages were built on the summits or pinnacles of razor-backed ridges, generally over 4000 ft above sea level, and protected by one or two lines of stockades. The approach of Mr Chinnery's was detected at almost every case from look-out houses or platforms built on tops from within the villages. When the natives learned the purpose of his mission two or three hundred of them attacked three of the police and Mr Chinnery with spears and large stones and in the fighting which ensued six of the ringleaders of the massacre which had

given rise to the expedition were shot. The remainder fled, but afterwards accepted Mr Chinnery's offer of friendship on condition that he went into the next valley and pacified the people there, in order that inter-tribal warfare might cease. This he did under native guidance, and achieved his objective without further fighting. As a proof of their appreciation of Government intervention a good many of the natives accompanied him to the Government Station and for the first time in the history of their tribe saw the sea. Subsequently when his successor visited the district he found the native peaceful and contented under the new conditions.⁴⁸

His address to the RAI laid out how greater efficiency could be achieved by colonial administrations when dealing with their 'responsibility to civilize' backward peoples, which resonated with the idea of a 'trusteeship', a sort of partnership between the colonised and the coloniser to uplift and advance the colonised on the ladder of civilisation, which was being discussed in such circles.⁴⁹ He pointed out that he had learnt to apply himself to the needs of primitive cultures through his work as an Assistant Resident Magistrate. His experience had given him 'a knowledge of the psychology of numerous tribes, and the application of such knowledge to general methods of administration enabled me to assist my [sic] people through their many stages of transition'. He considered the key to good government in the colonies was knowing how the minds of indigenous people work (this resonates with Murray's notion of encouraging his officers to 'think black').⁵⁰ He discussed how modifications were being made to various unacceptable elements of Papuan societies, and concluded by making the following recommendations: first, that 'general training in anthropological subjects be [given to all] District Officers and other persons holding positions of responsibility over natives'; and second, that 'publication and circulation of all existing and subsequent records of New Guinea ethnography [be provided to District Officers] for their guidance'.⁵¹

This progressive view of anthropology was in direct contrast to the course-work and instruction he undertook while at Cambridge. His thesis, as part of the requirement for the diploma in anthropology, was on stonework and gold mining in New Guinea.⁵² In keeping with the diffusionist thrust of anthropology taught at the time, it contained many speculations and inaccuracies and shows the influence of the heliocentric school of ethnology of W.J. Perry and Grafton Elliot Smith at University College, London.⁵³ In fact, Perry used Chinnery's Papuan map in his *Children of the Sun* (1923).⁵⁴ Chinnery never lost his interest in such speculative ideas, and in 1956 and 1957 made a series of broadcasts on the ABC, in which he returned to the topics of stonework and gold mining.⁵⁵ Chinnery had opined in 1920 that 'the New Guinea objects (mortars, pestles, stone clubs, stone circles and incised stone work) appear to be

similar in many aspects to objects associated with megalithic cultures in other parts of the world'.⁵⁶ These musings about origins and diffusion were elided in the practical application of anthropological knowledge to the problems of colonial government. In his work as an anthropologist we find little or no mention of these matters, nor do such theoretical interests appear to create a tension in his practical work. Certainly, he held a view that New Guineans were backward, and most likely unable to achieve their colonisers' level of civilisation. Yet, as alluded to earlier, Chinnery argued that they should be assisted to advance, and treated fairly and with due process.

Return to Papua

When Chinnery was patrolling in various parts of Papua, especially his early appointment to the Kumusi Division, one task was to arrest labourers who had deserted from rubber plantations. Native constables assisted the field officers in their policing work, while indigenous men were employed on these patrols as carriers, cooks and interpreters.⁵⁷ It was during this time that Chinnery developed an interest in labour problems, which were at the heart of the industrial project of colonial rule. Indigenous people were not skilled in working on plantations, assisting gold miners and such like. They were agricultural workers used to different rhythms and division of labour.

On his return to Papua in 1920, he was no longer an officer in the Papuan service, but was engaged as a supervisor of labour for New Guinea Copper Mines Ltd at Bootless Bay. This was not what he had anticipated when he wrote from London seeking an anthropological appointment in Murray's Papuan Administration. Murray was seeking a government anthropologist and Haddon had supported Chinnery,⁵⁸ but Murray did not want Chinnery. He wrote to his brother, Gilbert, that

We have a man called [Chinnery] who is in England now—Haddon has a great opinion of him and wants him appointed. But 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. Not that he is a liar—but he must attract notice.⁵⁹

It is unclear why Murray took such an attitude. To avoid any undue pressure from the Minister, Murray quickly appointed his Chief Medical Officer, Walter Mersh Strong, as government anthropologist. It has been suggested that part of Murray's dissatisfaction was with Chinnery's pursuit of heliocentric ethnology: 'attempts to link Papuan people to any romantic notions of ancient "civilizations" would have been anathema to the colonial regime'.⁶⁰ Personally, I think this is a fanciful explanation, although some years later there was an exchange between Murray and Chinnery of some of the ideas about Papua found in Perry's *Children of the Sun*.⁶¹ Ideas such as those of Elliot Smith and Perry were academic

orthodoxy at the time; rather it was functionalist theory, as promoted by anthropologists such as Malinowski, that created problems for administrators like Murray, who believed that it was a theory which supported the retention of customs despite their offensiveness, thereby keeping people in some form of cultural servitude.⁶² I suspect that Chinnery's anthropology, as he had expressed in his London lectures, had the potential to question the manner in which Murray administered the colony.

While Chinnery waited for an opening in the League of Nations Mandate of New Guinea, he further enunciated the principles of an anthropologically informed administration at the Pan Pacific Science Congress of 1923. He presented a paper on native labour in which he discussed his work at the mine. He explained that an adequate supply of native labour is essential and 'as numbers in excess of those now employed may be needed ultimately, considerable thought has been given by the Company's officials as to the best means to adopt for insuring the numbers of recruits needed from time to time for any expansion of the Company's business'. He noted that 'strict observance of the provisions of the "Native Labour Ordinance", maintenance for the natives of the pre-war purchasing power of money, provision of suitable variety of foods, and the creation of conditions for insuring health and contentment of the natives, will combine to attract to our Company many boys who have refrained hitherto from entering into a contract of service, and an increased number of boys who have already worked a term with the Company'. In this connection New Guinea Copper had 'retained the services of two highly competent recruiters', and commissioned a former government official, 'long in the service of the Papuan government to make the necessary investigations and report on the future possibilities of recruiting preparatory to assuming the position of supervisor of native labour department'.⁶³

Chinnery drafted the annual report on labour for New Guinea Copper, in which he stated that 'today there may be seen [Papuan] peacefully wielding the tools of industry ... who but yesterday cut off their neighbour's heads, and ate their bodies with equanimity'. He went on to explain that the company's labour policy was consistent with policies advocated by Murray who had stated that the 'preservation of native races depends on whether the energy formerly devoted to cannibalism and head hunting can be diverted into the relatively gentle activities of industrial development'. New Guinea Copper was 'actively connected with the cultural development of its savage employees, and becomes, as well as their employer, their guide and teacher through the intricate byeways [sic] leading from primitive life to the complex state know as civilization'. Once the indenture was complete, care was taken to ensure that the employee was paid off in Port Moresby 'and protected and maintained by our agents until a boat is available to take them to their homes where they are landed with their trade goods, the fruits of their labour, well content with the results of their

service and the envy of their fellow villagers, who, stimulated by the example and treatment of the time expired boys will, it is hoped engage in their return'.⁶⁴

Government Anthropologist

Chinnery saw the position as labour supervisor as a holding one. In May 1921, soon after Australian civil administration had begun in the League of Nations Mandated Territory of New Guinea,⁶⁵ Chinnery applied to the Australian government for an anthropological appointment in the territory. He informed the commonwealth government secretary that he had discussed the question of anthropology in connection with the administration of colonies with Prime Minister Billy Hughes who said he would advise Chinnery as soon as there was a suitable opening.

In his application to the Official Secretary of the Commonwealth of Australia, he described himself as a 'student [who] specialized on the ethnology of Oceania' and had 'spent three months on research in parts of the mandated territory'. Since November 1920 he had been 'studying problems of native labor [sic] for the New Guinea Copper Mines and applying the results to their organization'. To demonstrate his enthusiasm and commitment to anthropology he informed the commonwealth officer that he planned to spend 'a short time in the mountains to investigate the social organisation of one of the negrito tribes' of Papua.⁶⁶ He was eager to present himself as both the practical man and most importantly as an anthropologist, a scientist who could oversee the dramatic changes which were impacting on the indigenous population and offset the undesirable effects. His time outside the structure of government service enabled him to put into practice some of the ideas he developed while in England. Rivers played an important role in this, as it is apparent Chinnery took two strictures from him into his supervising of indigenous labour: first, to 'uphold the indigenous culture of the subject race'; and second, 'whatever the degree of interference with indigenous customs ... knowledge of the culture to be modified is absolutely necessary if changes are to be made without serious injury to the moral and material culture of the people'.⁶⁷

He no longer saw himself as merely a resident magistrate or patrol officer: he wanted to put into effect his anthropological training, which he thought could be realised by an appointment as a government anthropologist, either in Papua or the newly acquired mandated territory of New Guinea. Chinnery was both a product of colonialism and a critic of colonialism, while sensitive to the more humane ideals of the colonial enterprise. He was deeply influenced by the idealism of J.H.P. Murray's colonial philosophy which permeated his thinking and practice, as well as Haddon who served as his mentor and advisor.

Chinnery had to wait until April 1924 before he was appointed Government Anthropologist. By then he was well versed in all matters to do with an

anthropology premised on assisting colonial administrations to help advance and uplift indigenous populations.

ENDNOTES

¹ W.E.H. Stanner, *The South Seas in Transition: a study of post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction in three British Pacific dependencies* (Sydney 1953), 1.

² See, e.g., G.W.L. Townsend, *District Officer: from untamed New Guinea to Lake Success, 1921-1946* (Sydney 1968); J.K. McCarthy, *Patrol Into Yesterday* (Sydney 1964); Ian Downs, *The Last Mountain: a life in Papua New Guinea* (St Lucia, QLD 1986); George Stocking, 'Gatekeeper to the field: E.W.P. Chinnery and ethnography of the New Guinea Mandate', *History of Anthropology Newsletter*, 9:2 (1982), 3-12; Robin Radford, *Highlanders and Foreigners in the Upper Ramu: the Kainantu area, 1919-1942* (Melbourne 1987); Deidre J.F. Griffiths, 'The career of F.E. Williams, government anthropologist of Papua, 1922-1943', MA thesis, Australian National University (Canberra 1977); Sarah Chinnery, *Malaguna Road: the Papua and New Guinea diaries of Sarah Chinnery*, ed. and introd. Kate Fortune (Canberra 1998); Naomi McPherson, 'Wanted: young man, must like adventure. Ian McCallum Mack, Patrol Officer', in Naomi M. McPherson (ed.), *In Colonial New Guinea: anthropological perspectives* (Pittsburgh 2001), 82-110; George Westermarck, 'Anthropology and administration: colonial ethnography in the Papua New Guinea Eastern Highlands', in *ibid.*, 45-63; cf. Maria Lepowsky, 'The Queen of Sudest: white women and colonial cultures in British New Guinea and Papua', in *ibid.*, 125-150; Francis West, 'An Australian moving frontier', in Niel Gunson (ed.), *The Changing Pacific* (Melbourne 1978), 214-227; Bill Gammage, *The Sky Travellers: journeys in New Guinea 1938-1939* (Melbourne 1998); Francis West, 'E.W.P. Chinnery', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 7 (Melbourne 1979) 639-640; I.C. Campbell, 'Anthropology and the professionalisation of colonial administration in Papua and New Guinea', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 33:1 (1998), 69-90; Geoffrey Gray, 'Being honest to my science: Reo Fortune and J.H.P. Murray, 1927-1930', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 10: 1 (1999), 56-76. This list is by no means exhaustive.

³ See <http://www.naa.gov.au/fSheets/FS148.html>

⁴ Francis West, *Hubert Murray: the Australian Pro-Consul* (Melbourne 1968); J.D. Legge, *Australian Colonial Policy* (Sydney 1956).

⁵ See http://www.naa.gov.au/Publications/fact_sheets/fs235.html; Michael W. Young and Julia Clark, *An Anthropologist in Papua: the photography of F.E. Williams, 1922-39* (Adelaide 2001); also Griffiths, 'The career of F. E. Williams'.

⁶ 'A desire to improve their conditions: E.W.P. Chinnery in New Guinea and the Northern Territory', in States and Territories, Proceedings, 1999 <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/pworkshop.htm>; 'There are many difficult problems: Ernest William Pearson Chinnery—government anthropologist', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 38:3 (2003), 313-330; "'Mr Chinnery should be given the recognition he deserves": E.W.P. Chinnery in the Northern Territory', *Journal of Northern Territory History*, 15 (2004), 21-33; 'A wealthy firm like Vestey's gives us our opportunity: an attempt to reform the cattle industry', *Journal of Northern Territory History*, 16 (2005), 37-54.

⁷ See Geoffrey Gray, *A Cautious Silence: the politics of Australian anthropology* (Canberra 2007), esp. ch. 3.

⁸ See, e.g., Howard Morphy, 'Gillen—a man of science', in John Mulvaney, Howard Morphy and Alison Petch (eds), *My Dear Spencer: the letters of F.J. Gillen to Baldwin Spencer* (Melbourne 1997), 23-50.

⁹ A.H. Quiggin, *Haddon the Headhunter: a short sketch of the life of A.C. Haddon* (Cambridge 1942), 117.

¹⁰ Haddon, 'The Teaching of ethnology at Cambridge', *Manchester Guardian*, 5 January 1903.

¹¹ Legge, *Australian Colonial Policy*, 3.

¹² Murray, *Anthropology and the Government of Subject Races*, Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS), vol. 15 (1921), 180. See also Murray, 'The scientific aspect of the pacification of Papua', Presidential Address, ANZAAS, 1932. The anthropologist Lucy Mair states that in many ways Murray presented an enlightened and humanitarian colonial rule but the length of his administration weakened this position, Lucy Mair, *Australia in New Guinea* (Melbourne 1970) [1948] 11-13.

¹³ West, *Hubert Murray*, 173.

- ¹⁴ West points out that the educational qualifications of field and office staff were not high: 'What Murray was looking for was sober, energetic and fit young men plus, for the field staff, men who could learn patience and self-control in the face of hardship or danger'. West, *Hubert Murray*, 118.
- ¹⁵ Shiela Waters, in letters to me, has complained about the use of such an expression. David Lawrence suggests, without much evidence, that monetary reward attracted Chinnery to field service. 'The early ethnographic writings of E.W. Pearson Chinnery: Government Anthropologist of New Guinea', Public lecture for the National Archives of Australia, presented in Canberra, 23 March 2006, 4.
- ¹⁶ West, *Hubert Murray*, 640.
- ¹⁷ J.H.P. Murray, *Papua* (London 1912).
- ¹⁸ West, *Hubert Murray*, 10-11. Moreover, Murray's tracts on anthropology date from 1920. His *Anthropology and the Government of Subject Races* was published in 1930.
- ¹⁹ Chinnery, ANZAAS, 1955. Chinnery Papers (CP), National Library of Australia, Canberra.
- ²⁰ Haddon to Chinnery, 7 July 1915. CP.
- ²¹ West, *Hubert Murray*, 162.
- ²² A.C. Haddon and James Hornell, *Canoes of Oceania* (Honolulu 1975). (Originally three volumes, published between 1936 and 1938).
- ²³ Radcliffe-Brown to Gregory, 2 April 1928, Elkin Papers, Sydney University: 164/4/2/12.
- ²⁴ Gray, 'Being honest to my science' 56-76.
- ²⁵ Gray, 'Being honest to my science', 56ff.
- ²⁶ Chinnery, Applied Anthropology in New Guinea, Report of the ANZAAS, August 1932, Sydney, vol. 21 (1933), 3.
- ²⁷ E.W.P. Chinnery and W.N. Beaver, 'Notes on the initiation ceremonies of the Koko, Papua', *Man*, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 45 (1915), 70.
- ²⁸ W.N. Beaver, *Unexplored New Guinea* (London 1920). Beaver was killed on the Western Front in September 1917.
- ²⁹ National Archives of Australia, Canberra (hereinafter NAA): A1, 1920/9030(b); see also Annual Report, Papua, 1911; 1914-15; 1916-17.
- ³⁰ Chinnery and Beaver, Comparative table of languages of Northern Division and vocabularies, Papua Annual Report, 1914-15, 161-7; Vocabularies—Buna Station, Kumusi Division, Papua Annual Report, 1919, 86. Chinnery, Comparative vocabulary of tribes of main range, west of Mt Albert Edward, Papua Annual Report, 1916-17, 65-7, Appendix II, III, IVa.
- ³¹ Stocking, 'The ethnographers magic: fieldwork in British anthropology from Tylor to Malinowski', in idem, *Observers Observed: history of anthropology*, vol. 1 (Madison 1983), 91.
- ³² For a list see NAA: A1, 1920/9030 (a).
- ³³ George Stocking, 'The ethnographer's magic', 91.
- ³⁴ Chinnery and Haddon, 'Five new religious cults in British New Guinea', *Hibbert Journal*, 1 (1917), 448-63; also Stanner, *South Seas in Transition*, 57-73.
- ³⁵ Chinnery, Applied Anthropology in New Guinea, 4.
- ³⁶ Haddon to Atlee-Hunt, 15 November 1918. NAA: A1, 1921/9820.
- ³⁷ W.H.R. Rivers, 'The government of subject peoples', in A.C. Seward (ed.), *Science and the Nation: essays by Cambridge graduates* (Cambridge 1917). 2-28.
- ³⁸ Seward, 'Preface', in idem, *Science and the Nation*.
- ³⁹ Rivers, 'The government of subject peoples', 302-3.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 305.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 305-6.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 306-7.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 309.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 311.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 321.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 325.
- ⁴⁷ Papua was described as the 'first grandchild of the empire'. Unattributed press cutting (London), 6 March 1920. NAA: A1/1, item 21/9820.

⁴⁸ 'At the sign of the world's cross roads: a young Australian administrator', unnamed newspaper report. NAA: A1/1, item 21/9820; also Chinnery, 'The opening of new territories in Papua', *The Geographical Journal*, June (1920), 439-459.

⁴⁹ Chinnery, 'The application of anthropological methods to tribal development in New Guinea', *Man*, 49 (1919), 36-41. For a discussion on trusteeship see Ronald Hyam, 'Bureaucracy and 'trusteeship' in the colonial empire', in Judith M. Brown and William Roger Louis, *The Twentieth Century: the Oxford history of the British Empire*, vol. 4 (Oxford 1999), 255-279.

⁵⁰ West, *Hubert Murray*, 210-11.

⁵¹ Chinnery, 'The application of anthropological methods to tribal development', 41.

⁵² It was published as, 'Stone-work and goldfields in British New Guinea', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 49 (1919), 271-91.

⁵³ Among Australian anthropologists who started doctoral theses at London University under Grafton Elliot Smith and W.J. Perry were Ursula McConnel and A.P. Elkin. Tigger Wise describes Elkin's PhD, completed in 1926: 'It was a vast historical survey of burial rites, initiation rites, the making of medicine men and mythology, prefaced by 21 pages of index, studded with maps on the distribution of circumcision rites, subincision rites, the use of shell and ending with a token bow to Elliot Smith's pet hobbyhorse: the diffusion of mummification rites out of the Egyptian XXI Dynasty.' Wise, *The Self-Made Anthropologist* (Sydney 1985), 49.

⁵⁴ W.J. Perry, *The Children of the Sun: a study in the history of civilization* (London 1923), 291.

⁵⁵ NAA: A452, 1957/2232.

⁵⁶ Chinnery, 'The opening of new territories in Papua', 279.

⁵⁷ See Gammage, *The Sky Travellers*.

⁵⁸ Murray to Hunt, 21 March 1919. NAA: A1/1, item 21/9820.

⁵⁹ Murray to Gilbert Murray, 2 December 1919, in Francis West (ed.), *Selected Letters of Hubert Murray* (Melbourne 1970), 106. West deletes Chinnery's name. Murray had decided by March that there was no opening for Chinnery. Murray to Hunt, 21 March 1919. NAA: A1/1, item 21/9820. Six months earlier Murray had written to his brother that '[w]e want one and I think that I should prefer an Oxford man, though Haddon, who seems to interest himself in New Guinea more than any one else, is of course Cambridge. I wrote to Marett about it some time ago ... We could only give him about £300 a year to begin with, but we should pay his passage out and give him a sum of money for equipment'. (Murray to Gilbert, 17 July 1919, in West, *Selected Letters of Hubert Murray*, 104.)

⁶⁰ Lawrence, 'The early ethnographic writings of E.W. Pearson Chinnery', 15.

⁶¹ Chinnery, *Man*, 27 (Nov. 1927), 214-215 and Murray's reply in *Man* 28 (Jul. 1928), 128.

⁶² Gray, 'Being honest to my science'; idem, 'There are many difficult problems'.

⁶³ Paper presented by Chinnery to Health Section, Pan Pacific Science Congress, (Haddon chair), 1923, typescript, CP.

⁶⁴ E. Hogan Taylor, General Manager, 'General Report, The New Guinea Copper Mines Ltd.' (1921), CP.

⁶⁵ The mandate was confirmed on 17 December 1920; civil administration formally began on 9 May 1921.

⁶⁶ Chinnery to Official Secretary, Commonwealth of Australia, 27 May 1921. NAA: A518/1, R815/1 Part 1.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Chinnery, 'The application of anthropological methods to tribal development', 36.