

WHY SCIENTISTS STUDY OUR ABORIGINES

The Australian aborigines have been called "the most interesting race at present on earth," and scientists from countries like Britain and America sometimes spend a good deal of time living among the surviving tribes in central and northern Australia so as to make a careful study of their customs and ceremonies.

Our aborigines have systems of customs and ceremonies which are enormously complicated and which throw light on the whole of human history, because similar customs can be seen in many other savage tribes throughout the world. Not only that, but they throw light on many customs and ceremonies which still survive among (the peasant classes of European countries also.

By tracing all these customs around the world, scientists can at last become fairly sure about the original customs and beliefs of the prehistoric race from which all these races on the earth today have descended. The Australian aborigines have methods by which their medicine men try to bring down rain in times of drought and astonishingly similar methods' have been found to exist among many other native races throughout the world B

The study of these various customs of mankind throughout the world is called "anthropology ". It is interesting to observe that a few years ago Sir Baldwin Spencer and Frank Gillen made a long and careful study of the Arunta tribe in Central Australia and published two volumes called *The Arunta A Study of Stone Age People*. Later an American, after living for some time among the Murngin tribe in Arnhem Land, published a book entitled *A Black Civilisation*.

Those two titles in a sense illustrate the changing attitude to our aborigines at one time everyone seemed to regard them as a Stone Age people who would simply have to die out but now many people regard them as a people with a civilisation which ought to compel our respect.