

THE SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY OF TOTEMISM¹

THESE has been in the past some disagreement and discussion as to the definition of totemism. I wish to avoid as far as possible entering into any such discussion. The purpose of preliminary definitions in science is to mark off a class of phenomena for special study. A term is useful if and in so far as it brings together for our attention a number of phenomena which are in reality, and not merely in appearance, closely related to one another. It will be part of my thesis in this paper that however widely or narrowly we may define totemism, we cannot reach an understanding of the phenomena we so name unless we study systematically a much wider group of phenomena, namely, the general relation between man and natural species in mythology and ritual. It may well be asked if 'totemism' as a technical term has not outlived its usefulness.

It is necessary, however, to have some definition to guide and control our discussion. I shall use the term in the wider sense to apply wherever a society is divided into groups and there is a special relation between each group and one or more classes of objects that are usually natural species of animals or plants but may occasionally be artificial objects or parts of an animal. The word is sometimes used in a narrower sense and applied only when the groups in question are clans, i.e. exogamous groups of which all the members are regarded as being closely related by descent in one line. I shall regard 'clan totemism' as only one variety of totemism, in the wider sense.²

Even in the narrower sense of clan totemism, and still more in the wider sense, totemism is not one thing but is a general name

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² It is sometimes said that totemism has two aspects, a social aspect and a religious or ritual aspect. What is referred to as the 'social aspect' of totemism is simply the clan organisation. But exogamous clans similar in all essentials to totemic clans so far as economic or juridical functions go, can, as we well know, exist without totemism. The so-called 'social aspect' of clan totemism is simply the social aspect of the clan.

given to a number of diverse institutions which all have, or seem to have, something in common. Thus even in the limited region of Australia, which has a single homogeneous culture throughout, there have been recorded a number of different varieties of totemism, and new varieties are being discovered by systematic researches now in progress.

In the south-east of the continent is found sex-totemism, i.e. an association of the two sex-groups, men and women, with two animal species. In the coastal districts of New South Wales, for example, the bat is the totem or animal representative of the men and the tree-creeper (*Climacteris sp.*) is that of the women.

In many parts of Australia the tribe is divided into two exogamous moieties, patrilineal in some regions, matrilineal in others. In some instances the moieties are named after species of animals, generally birds. Amongst such names are the following pairs: crow and white cockatoo, white cockatoo and black cockatoo, eaglehawk and crow, native companion and turkey, hill kangaroo and long-legged kangaroo. In other instances the meanings of the moiety names have not been discovered, and in some of them, at any rate, it seems certain that they are not animal names.

In many of the tribes that have this dual division, independently of whether the moieties are named after animals or not, there is a classification of animals and frequently of other natural objects whereby some are regarded as belonging to one moiety and others to the other.

Such ~~moiety totemism~~, if we may use that term for any such association between the moiety and one or more natural species, is found in a number of different varieties in Australia, and still other varieties are found in Melanesia and in North America.

Over a large part of Australia the tribe is divided into four groups which have often been called 'classes' but which I prefer to call 'sections'. The easiest way to understand this division into four is to regard it as constituted by the intersection of a pair of patrilineal moieties and a pair of matrilineal moieties.¹

¹ If we denote the four sections as A, B, C, and D, the matrilineal moieties are A + C and B + D; the patrilineal moieties are A + D and B + C. Since a man may not marry within his own patrilineal moiety or within his own matrilineal moiety it will follow that a man of A can only marry a woman of B and their children must belong to section D, i.e. to the patrilineal moiety of the father (A) and to the matrilineal moiety of the mother (B).

These sections are not as a rule named after species of animals, though there are one or two instances in which a section name is also the name of an animal. Thus Bandjur in Yukumbil is the name of a section and also of the native bear. In some tribes, however, there is a definite association between each section and one or more species of animal. Thus in the Nigena tribe of the Kimberley district of Western Australia the four sections are associated with four species of hawk. In some regions this association does not carry with it any prohibition against killing or eating the animal associated with one's own or any other section. In part of Queensland, however, each section has associated with it a number of species of animals and there is a rule that the members of a section may not eat the animals so associated with their section.

This 'section totemism' requires further investigation. We may distinguish, however, three varieties. In one each section has associated with it a single species of animal which is representative of the section in somewhat the same way as the sex-totem is the representative of the sex-group. In a second variety each section stands in a special ritual relation to a certain limited number of species which may not be eaten by the members of the section. In the third variety a great number of species of animals are classified as belonging to one or other of the four sections but there is no rule against eating the animals belonging to one's own section. The one thing that is common to these varieties is that each section is differentiated from the others and given its own individuality by being associated with one or more animal species.

In some tribes the four sections are again subdivided each into two parts, giving a division of the tribe into eight sub-sections. In some of these tribes there exist special associations between the sub-sections and certain natural species. Further investigation is needed before we can profitably discuss this subject.

If now we turn to clan-totemism we find a number of different varieties of this in Australia, too many, in fact, to be even enumerated in a short paper. Matrilineal clan totemism of different varieties occurs in three, or possibly four, separate areas in the east, north, and west of the continent. In Melville and Bathurst Islands there are three matrilineal phratries subdivided into twenty-two clans. Each clan is associated with one natural species, usually a species of animal or plant, though one or two clans have

two totems and one has three. The association between the clan and its totem is apparently of very little importance in the life of the tribe. There is no prohibition against eating or using the totem, there are no totemic ceremonies, and totemism has little influence on the mythology.

The matrilineal clan totemism of some tribes of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia seems to be of somewhat more importance. Here we find matrilineal moieties sometimes named totemically, sometimes not, and each moiety is divided into a number of clans. Each clan has one or more natural species regarded as belonging to it. Where there are several species associated with each clan, as is the case in many tribes, one of them is regarded as more important than the others and the clan is named after it. Throughout this region there is, so far as we know, no prohibition against killing or eating the totem.

Totemic ceremonial is apparently little developed nor have we any evidence of any elaborate totemic mythology connected with matrilineal totemism.

It should be noted that throughout Australia the most important group for social purposes is the horde, i.e. a small group occupying and owning a certain defined territory, and that the horde is normally strictly patrilineal. It follows that wherever there is a system of matrilineal totemic clans the clan consists of individuals scattered through a number of hordes. We thus get a double grouping of individuals. For most social purposes the individual is dependent on the local group, i.e. the horde, to which he is connected through his father, while at the same time he is also connected through his mother to a totemic group the members of which are scattered throughout the tribe.

Patrilineal totemism in Australia is more difficult to describe briefly than is matrilineal totemism. Where it exists the primary totemic group is usually the horde, i.e. the small patrilineal local group. In some regions the horde is a clan, i.e. it consists of close relatives in the male line and is therefore exogamous. But in a few regions the horde is not a clan in this sense.

As an example of one variety of patrilineal totemism we may take the tribes at the mouth of the Murray River (Yaralde, etc.). Here each horde is a local clan and each clan has one or more species of natural object associated with it. There is no prohibition against eating the totem of one's clan, but it is regarded with some

respect. There is no evidence of totemic ceremonial or of any elaborate totemic mythology. The function of the totem seems to be merely to act as the representative of the group.

Perhaps the most important, and certainly the most interesting, form of totemism in Australia is that to a brief consideration of which we now pass. This consists of a fourfold association between (1) the horde, i.e. the patrilineal local group, (2) a certain number of classes of objects, animals, plants, and other things such as rain, sun and hot weather, cold weather, babies, etc., (3) certain sacred spots within the territory of the horde, frequently water-holes, each one of which is specially associated with one or more of the 'totems' of the group, and (4) certain mythical beings who are supposed to have given rise to these sacred spots in the mythical period of the beginning of the world. This system of totemism is now being traced and studied in a number of variant forms over a very large part of the Australian continent. It was formerly known best from the centre of the continent, where, however, the Aranda have it in a somewhat modified or anomalous form. We now know that it exists or existed over a large part of Western Australia. Recently it has been discovered and studied in the Cape York Peninsula by Miss McConnel. At the beginning of this year I was able to demonstrate its former existence on the east coast of Australia in the north of New South Wales and in southern Queensland.

Where this type of totemism is found it is usually accompanied by a system of ceremonies for the increase of natural species. The members of the horde, or some of them, proceed to the totem centre or sacred spot connected with a natural species and perform there a ceremony which is believed to result in an increase of that species. There is also an elaborate mythology dealing with the sacred totem centres and with the mythical beings who gave rise to them.

It may be noted that this kind of totemism may coexist in the same tribe with other kinds. Thus in the Dieri tribe it exists together with a system of matrilineal clan totemism. In some parts it coexists with section totemism.

Finally, we may note that in some parts of Australia there exists what is sometimes called individual or personal totemism. This is a special relation between an individual and some one or more species of animal. A good example is found in some tribes

of New South Wales where every medicine-man has one or more of such personal totems. It is through his association with the animal species that he acquires his power to perform magic. Whether we call this totemism or not, it is quite evident that it is closely related to totemism and that any theory of totemism, to be satisfactory, must take it into account.

This brief and very incomplete survey of Australian institutions has shown us that special associations of groups or individuals with natural species exist in that region in a number of different forms. We find all gradations from a tribe with no form of totemism at all (such as the Bad of northern Dampier Land) through tribes such as the Melville Islanders where totemism of a simple form exists but is of comparatively little importance in the life of the tribe, to a tribe such as the Dieri which combines in a complex system two forms of totemism, one of matrilineal clans and the other of patrilineal hordes, with a highly elaborated totemic ritual and mythology. The only thing that these totemic systems have in common is the general tendency to characterise the segments into which society is divided by an association between each segment and some natural species or some portion of nature. The association may take any one of a number of different forms.

In the past the theoretical discussion of totemism was almost entirely concerned with speculations as to its possible origin. If we use the word origin to mean the historical process by which an institution or custom or a state of culture comes into existence, then it is clear that the very diverse forms of totemism that exist all over the world must have had very diverse origins. To be able to speak of an origin of totemism we must assume that all these diverse institutions that we include under the one general term have been derived by successive modifications from a single form. There does not seem to me to be a particle of evidence to justify such an assumption. But even if we make it we can still only speculate as to what this original form of totemism may have been, as to the enormously complex series of events which could have produced from it the various existing totemic systems, and as to where, when, and how that hypothetical original form of totemism came into existence. And such speculations, being for ever incapable of inductive verification, can be nothing more than speculations and can have no value for a science of culture.

For sociology, or social anthropology, by which I understand

The study of the phenomena of culture by the same inductive methods that are in use in the natural sciences, the phenomena of totemism present a problem of a different kind. The task of the inductive sciences is to discover the universal or the general in the particular. That of a science of culture is to reduce the complex data with which it deals to a limited number of general laws or principles. Approaching totemism in this way we may formulate the problem that it presents in the form of the question, 'Can we show that totemism is a special form of a phenomenon which is universal in human society and is therefore present in different forms in all cultures?'

The most important attempt to arrive at a sociological theory of totemism is that of the late Professor Durkheim in his work *Les Formes élémentaires de la Vie religieuse*. I think that that work is an important and permanent contribution to sociological theory, but that it does not provide a complete and satisfactory theory of totemism. I shall attempt to point out, in the briefest possible way, where Durkheim's theory seems to me to fail.

Durkheim speaks of the totem as being 'sacred' to the members of the group of which it is the totem. This is to use the term 'sacred' in a sense somewhat different from that which it has at the present day in English or even in French, and not even identical with, though somewhat nearer to, the meaning that *sacer* had in Latin. I prefer to use a term which is as free as possible from special connotations, and therefore instead of saying that the totem is sacred I find it preferable to say that there is a 'ritual relation' between persons and their totem. There exists a ritual relation whenever a society imposes on its members a certain attitude towards an object, which attitude involves some measure of respect expressed in a traditional mode of behaviour with reference to that object. Thus the relation between a Christian and the first day of the week is a typical example of a ritual relation.

Every society adopts, and imposes upon its members, towards certain objects, this attitude of mind and behaviour which I am calling the ritual attitude. There are, not only in different societies, but in the same society in different references, many different varieties of this attitude, but all the varieties have something in common. Moreover the ritual attitude may vary from a very indefinite one to a definite and highly organised one.

One of the important problems of sociology is therefore to discover the function of this universal element of culture and to formulate its laws. This general problem obviously includes a vast number of partial problems of which the problem of totemism is one. That problem may be stated as being that of discovering why in certain societies a ritual attitude towards a certain species of natural object is imposed upon the members of a particular social group. It is obvious that no solution of the lesser problem of totemism can be satisfactory unless it conforms with or is part of a general solution of the wider problem, i.e. a theory of ritual relations in general.

With regard to the general problem Durkheim's theory is that the primary object of the ritual attitude is the social order itself, and that any thing becomes an object of that attitude when it stands in a certain relation to the social order. This general theory, with which I agree, obviously amounts to very little until we have succeeded in defining the more important types of relation to the social order which result in the object which stands in such a relation becoming an object of ritual attitude.

If I may restate in my own terms Durkheim's theory of totemism it is as follows. A social group such as a clan can only possess solidarity and permanence if it is the object of sentiments of attachment in the minds of its members. For such sentiments to be maintained in existence they must be given occasional collective expression. By a law that can be, I think, readily verified, all regular collective expressions of social sentiments tend to take on a ritual form. And in ritual, again by a necessary law, some more or less concrete object is required which can act as the representative of the group. So that it is a normal procedure that the sentiment of attachment to a group shall be expressed in some formalised collective behaviour having reference to an object that represents the group itself.

A typical example is to be found in our own society. National solidarity depends on a sentiment of patriotism in the minds of the nation. This sentiment, in conformity with the laws stated above, tends to find some of its chief expressions in reference to such concrete objects as flags, or kings and presidents, and such objects become in this way objects of the ritual attitude.

Part of a king's sacredness, whether in Africa or in Europe, is due to the fact that he is the representative of the national

solidarity and unity, and the ritual that surrounds him is the means by which patriotic sentiments are maintained. In the same way in the flag we have an object which is 'sacred' because it is the concrete material representative or emblem of a social group and its solidarity.

Durkheim compares the totem of a clan with the flag of a nation. The comparison is valid, in a very general sense, for some forms of totemism, if not for all. But putting the comparison aside, the theory is that the totem is 'sacred' as Durkheim says, or is an object of ritual attitude, as I prefer to say, because it is the concrete representative or emblem of a social group. And the function of the ritual attitude towards the totem is to express and so to maintain in existence the solidarity of the social group.

With Durkheim's theory as stated above in my own terms I am in agreement, but I do not regard it as complete. In the first place it seems to me that totemism has other functions besides the one indicated above. Secondly, the theory so far as stated above does not explain why so many peoples in America, Asia, Africa and Australasia should select as emblems or representatives of clans or other social groups species of animals or plants. It is true that Durkheim offers an answer to this question, but it is an entirely unsatisfactory one. He regards as an essential part of totemism the use of totemic emblems or designs, i.e. figured representations of the totemic animal or plant, and suggests that the reason for selecting natural objects as emblems of social groups is because they are capable of being used in this way.

This hypothesis fails as soon as we apply it to the facts. In Australia no designs are made of the sex totems or of the totems of the moieties or sections, and even for clan totemism there are many tribes that do not make any representations of their totems. Totemic designs, which for Durkheim are so important or indeed so essential a part of totemism, are characteristic of central and northern Australia but not of the continent as a whole.

Moreover, the reason suggested for the selection of natural objects as emblems of social groups is of too accidental a character to give a satisfying explanation of an institution that is so widespread as totemism. There must surely be some much more important reason why all these peoples all over the world find it appropriate to represent social groups in this way by associating each one with some animal or plant.

This, then, is where I think Durkheim's theory of totemism fails. It implies that the totem owes its sacred or ritual character solely to its position as the emblem of a group. Now there are a number of peoples who have no form of totemism amongst whom we still find that natural species such as animals and plants are objects of ritual or of the ritual attitude expressed in mythology. And even amongst totemic peoples such as the Australian tribes the ritual customs relating to natural species are not all totemic. In other words the phenomena which we have agreed to denote by the term totemism are merely a part of a much larger class of phenomena which includes all sorts of ritual relations between man and natural species. No theory of totemism is satisfactory unless it conforms with a more general theory providing an explanation of many other things besides totemism. Durkheim's theory fails to do this.

In a great number, and I believe probably in all, of the societies where man depends entirely or largely on the hunting of wild animals and the collection of wild plants, whether they have any form of totemism or not, the animals and plants are made objects of the ritual attitude. This is done frequently, though perhaps not quite universally, in mythology, in which animal species are personified and regarded as ancestors or culture heroes. It is done also by a mass of customs relating to animals and plants. This system of ritual and mythological relations between man and natural species can be best studied in non-totemic peoples such as the Eskimo or the Andaman Islanders. In such societies we find that the relation between the society and the natural species is a general one, all the most important animals and plants being treated as in some way sacred (either in ritual or in mythology) and some being regarded as more sacred than others, but any single species being equally sacred to every member of the whole community. The ritual attitude of the Andaman Islanders towards the turtle, of Californian Indians to the salmon, of the peoples of North America and northern Asia to the bear, constitutes a relation between the whole society and the sacred species.

Now totemism, I would suggest, arises from or is a special development of this general ritual relation between man and natural species. Let us assume for the moment that such a general ritual relation of man to nature is universal in hunting societies, as I believe it can be shown to be. When the society becomes

differentiated into segmentary groups such as clans, a process of ritual specialisation takes place by which each segment acquires a special and particular relation to some one or more of the *sacra* of the community, i.e. to some one or more natural species. The totem of the clan or group is still sacred in some sense to the whole community, but is now specially sacred, and in some special way, to the segment of which it is the totem.

The process here suggested as the active principle in the development of totemism is one which I believe to be of great importance in social development, and which can be observed in other phenomena. Thus, to take only one example, and perhaps not the best, in the Roman Church the saints are sacred to all members of the church as a whole. But the church is segmented into local congregations and a congregation is often placed in a special relation to one particular saint to whom its chapel is dedicated. This is, I think, parallel to clan or group totemism. We might also draw a significant though not quite exact analogy between the patron saint of an individual and the personal totem or guardian animal of Australian and American tribes.

There is no space in this paper to discuss this process of ritual specialisation, and indeed any adequate treatment of the subject would require us to deal with the whole process of social differentiation and segmentation. I will refer to a single example that may help to illustrate the problem. Amongst the Eskimo of part of North America one of the most important features of their adaptation to their environment is the sharp division between winter and summer, and between the winter animals and the summer animals. There is a complex system of ritual relations between the society and all the most important of these animals and in this ritual the opposition between summer and winter is strongly expressed. Thus you may not eat reindeer meat (summer food) and walrus meat (winter food) on the same day. The Eskimo have made for themselves a segmentation into two groups, one consisting of all the persons born in the summer and the other of those born in the winter, and there is some slight ritual specialisation, the summer people being regarded as specially connected with the summer animals and the winter people with the winter animals. This is not quite totemism, but it is clearly related to it, and illustrates, I think, the process by which totemism arises.

In this way, I think, we can formulate a sociological theory

of totemism which incorporates a great deal of Durkheim's analysis and is not open to the criticisms that can be levelled against Durkheim's own presentation. We start with the empirical generalisation that amongst hunting and collecting peoples the more important animals and plants and natural phenomena are treated, in custom and in myth, as being 'sacred', i.e. they are made, in various ways and in different degrees, objects of the ritual attitude. Primarily this ritual relation between man and nature is a general one between the society as a whole and its sacra. When the society is differentiated, i.e. divided into segments or social groups marked off from one another and each having its own solidarity and individuality, there comes into action a principle which is more widespread than totemism and is indeed an important part of the general process of social differentiation, a principle by which within the general relation of the society to its sacra there are established special relations between each group or segment and some one or more of those sacra.

This theory incorporates what I think is the most valuable part of Durkheim's analysis, in the recognition that the function of the ritual relation of the group to its totem is to express and so to maintain in existence the solidarity of the group. It gives moreover a reason, which can be shown, I think, to be grounded in the very nature of social organisation itself, for the selection of natural species as emblems or representatives of social groups.

Before leaving this part of the discussion I would like to touch on one further point. Durkheim, in reference to clan totemism, emphasises the clan and its solidarity. The totem, for him, is primarily the means by which the clan recognises and expresses its unity. But the matter is much more complex than this. The clan is merely a segment of a larger society which also has its solidarity. By its special relation to its totem or totems the clan recognises its unity and its individuality. This is simply a special example of the universal process by which solidarity is created and maintained by uniting a number of individuals in a collective relation to the same sacred object or objects. By the fact that each clan has its own totem there is expressed the differentiation and opposition between clan and clan. The kangaroo men not only recognise the bond that unites them as kangaroo men but also recognise their difference from the emu men and the bandicoot men and so on. But also the wider unity and solidarity of the

whole totemic society is expressed by the fact that the society as a whole, through its segments, stands in a ritual relation to nature as a whole. This is seen very well in the system of increase ceremonies that is so widespread in Australia. Each group is responsible for the ritual care of a certain number of species by which the maintenance of that species is believed to be assured. For the tribe all these species are of importance, and the ceremonies are thus a sort of co-operative effort, involving a division of (ritual) labour, by which the normal processes of nature and the supply of food are provided for. One of the results of Durkheim's theory is that it over-emphasises the clan and clan solidarity. Totemism does more than express the unity of the clan; it also expresses the unity of totemic society as a whole in the relations of the clans to one another within that wider unity.

The result of my argument, if it is valid, is to substitute for the problem of totemism another problem. The question that now demands an answer is, 'Why do the majority of what are called primitive peoples adopt in their custom and myth a ritual attitude towards animals and other natural species?' My aim in this paper has simply been to exhibit as exactly as possible in a brief space the relation of the problem of totemism to this wider problem.

It is obvious that I cannot attempt in a mere conclusion to a paper to deal with this subject of the relation in myth and ritual of man and nature. I attempted some years ago to deal with it in reference to the customs and beliefs of one non-totemic people, the Andaman Islanders. As a result of that and other investigations I was led to formulate the following law: Any object or event which has important effects upon the well-being (material or spiritual) of a society, or any thing which stands for or represents any such object or event, tends to become an object of the ritual attitude.

I have given reasons for rejecting Durkheim's theory that in totemism natural species become sacred because they are selected as representatives of social groups, and I hold, on the contrary, that natural species are selected as representatives of social groups, such as clans, because they are already objects of the ritual attitude on quite another basis, by virtue of the general law of the ritual expression of social values stated above.

In modern thought we are accustomed to draw a distinction between the social order and the natural order. We regard society as consisting of certain human beings grouped in a social structure

under certain moral principles or laws, and we place over against the society its environment, consisting of geographical features, flora and fauna, climate with its seasonal changes, and so on, governed by natural law.

For certain purposes this contrast of society and environment, of man and nature, is a useful one, but we must not let it mislead us. From another and very important point of view the natural order enters into and becomes part of the social order. The seasonal changes that control the rhythm of social life, the animals and plants that are used for food or other purposes, these enter into and become an essential part of the social life, the social order. I believe that it can be shown that it is just in so far as they thus enter into the social order that natural phenomena and natural objects become, either in themselves, or through things or beings that represent them, objects of the ritual attitude, and I have already tried to demonstrate this so far as the Andaman Islanders are concerned. Our own explicit conception of a natural order and of natural law does not exist amongst the more primitive peoples, though the germs out of which it develops do exist in the empirical control of causal processes in technical activities. For primitive man the universe as a whole is a moral or social order governed not by what we call natural law but rather by what we must call moral or ritual law. The recognition of this conception, implicit but not explicit, in ritual and in myth is, I believe, one of the most important steps towards the proper understanding not only of what is sometimes called 'primitive mentality' but also of all the phenomena that we group vaguely around the term religion.¹

A study of primitive myth and ritual from this point of view is, I think, very illuminating. In Australia, for example, there are innumerable ways in which the natives have built up between themselves and the phenomena of nature a system of relations which are essentially similar to the relations that they have built up in their social structure between one human being and another.

¹ A more precise way of stating the view I am here suggesting is that in every human society there inevitably exist two different and in a certain sense conflicting conceptions of nature. One of them, the naturalistic, is implicit everywhere in technology, and in our twentieth century European culture, with its great development of control over natural phenomena, has become explicit and preponderant in our thought. The other, which might be called the mythological or spiritualistic conception, is implicit in myth and in religion, and often becomes explicit in philosophy.

I can do no more than mention examples. One is the personification of natural phenomena and of natural species. A species of animal is personified, i.e. treated for certain purposes as if it were a human being, and in the mythology such personified species are regarded as ancestors or culture heroes. The function of this process of personification is that it permits nature to be thought of as if it were a society of persons, and so makes of it a social or moral order. Another of the processes by which, in Australia, the world of nature is brought within the social order is to be found in the systems of classification of natural species, existing in a number of diverse forms in different parts of the continent with this one thing in common to them all, that the more important natural species are so classified that each one is regarded as belonging to a certain social group, and occupying a specific position in the social structure.

Although there is always a danger in short formulas I think it does not misrepresent Australian totemism to describe it as a mechanism by which a system of social solidarities is established between man and nature. The mechanism has been worked out in many different ways, and much more elaborately in some than in others, but everywhere it possesses this character.

The suggestion I put forward, therefore, is that totemism is part of a larger whole, and that one important way in which we can characterise this whole is that it provides a representation of the universe as a moral or social order. Durkheim, if he did not actually formulate this view, at any rate came near to it. But his conception seems to have been that the process by which this takes place is by a projection of society into external nature. On the contrary, I hold that the process is one by which, in the fashioning of culture, external nature, so called, comes to be incorporated in the social order as an essential part of it.

Now the conception of the universe as a moral order is not confined to primitive peoples, but is an essential part of every system of religion. It is, I think, a universal element in human culture. With the question of why this should be so I cannot now attempt to deal.

I may summarise what I have tried to say as follows: A sociological theory of totemism must be able to show that totemism is simply a special form taken in certain definite conditions by an element or process of culture that is universal and necessary.

Durkheim's attempt to provide such a theory fails in certain important respects. We can, however, incorporate a good deal of Durkheim's analysis in a theory which rests on the same general hypothesis of the nature and function of ritual or the 'sacred'.

Finally, my argument has brought out something of the conditions in which this universal element of culture is most likely to take the form of totemism. These are (1) dependence wholly or in part on natural productions for subsistence, and (2) the existence of a segmentary organisation into clans and moieties or other similar social units. The Andamanese and the Eskimo have (1) but not (2), and they have no totemism though they have the material out of which totemism could easily be made. There are, of course, apparent exceptions to this generalisation, in some of the tribes of Africa, America and Melanesia. The detailed examination of these, which of course cannot be undertaken in a brief paper, really serves, I believe, to confirm the rule.

I would not be understood to maintain the view that totemism, or rather the different institutions which in different parts of the world we call by this general term, have arisen independently of one another. I think that it is very likely. But it does not matter for the sociologist, at any rate in the present state of our knowledge. If anyone wishes to believe that all the existing forms of totemism have come into existence by a process of what is rather unsatisfactorily called 'diffusion' from a single centre, I have no objection. I would point out that totemism has not spread everywhere, or evenly, and that it has not survived equally in all regions. It is sufficient for my argument if we can say that it is only where certain other features of culture are present that totemism is likely to be accepted by a people when it is brought to them from outside, or is likely to remain in active existence after it has been introduced.