



universität  
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# DISSERTATION / DOCTORAL THESIS

Titel der Dissertation /Title of the Doctoral Thesis

„Totemism Re-examined: A Study of Totems and their  
Relevance Today with Special Reference to the Keiyo  
Community in Kenya”

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doktor der Theologie (Dr.Theol.)

Wien, 2018 / Vienna 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /  
degree programme code as it appears on the student  
record sheet:

A 780 011

Dissertationsgebiet lt. Studienblatt /  
field of study as it appears on the student record  
sheet:

Katholische Fachtheologie

Betreut von / Supervisor:

ao. Uni.Prof. Mag. Dr. Hans Gerald Hödl

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**DEDICATED TO**  
**My Mother Leah Talaa Kigen (1934-2009)**  
**AND**  
**My Bishop Most Rev. Cornelius Korir (1950-2017)**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis could not have succeeded without help from several people. First and foremost, I wish to thank my supervisor Professor Dr. Hans Gerald Hödl, for accepting to supervise my thesis and supporting me academically and morally. I also thank the Professors at the Faculty of Religious Studies and Theology at the University of Vienna who taught me to research, to be interdisciplinary and ecumenical. Special thanks go to my colleagues at the Faculty of Religious Studies and other faculties that through discussion, they helped me to refine my area of research. I am very grateful to every person I interviewed, especially Keiyo, Marakwet and Nandi elders, and teachers and students. I wish to thank especially Rev. Fr. Ben Kiriswa for the rich information on the early Catholic church and culture.

I am very grateful for all the support that I received from the Archdiocese of Vienna. I also wish to thank the Catholic Diocese of Eldoret for allowing me to study in Austria. My studies at the University of Vienna has widened my academic and social horizons. I am also very grateful to the Christians of St. Boniface and St. John Nepomuk Breitenfurt for allowing me to live with them as I study. Breitenfurt people and its area gave me a conducive environment to think, socialize and write my thesis. I owe a debt of gratitude also to those who read, corrected, formatted and printed my thesis, especially, Dorothea Iijima, Mr. and Mrs. Corfield, Elisabeth Waldherr, Mrs. Eva Lysagt, Mrs. Elisa Reil and Mr. and Mrs. Füreder. I owe debt and gratitude to many friends and family members who supported me as I was writing this thesis. Especially my parish priest Rev. Fr. Villiam Döme and my friends Rev. Fr. David Malel, Rev. Fr. Sammy Kiprugut and Rev. Fr. Luka Kipruto. Finally, I wish to thank all who I have not named by name but supported me in one way or another to finish this thesis. To all of you, I am deeply grateful. Thank you all!

## INTRODUCTION

“We have been told that we must go from our land, from the land of our ancestors. But it is very difficult thing to uproot an old oak of many years. The roots of such a tree are very deep. Certainly, one can take an axe and cut down such a tree, that is easy, but the roots remain and are very hard to dig up. So, you see, the tree really remains. The tree goes on.”

Alex La Guma<sup>1</sup>

African societies have undergone tremendous changes in the past decades which has affected in a big way the core of their cultural systems. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the traditional worldviews and cultural system that they have cherished for many years and generations have been totally changed or uprooted. The cultural roots are still very deep and very hard to remove from the life and the thinking of most people in Africa. Despite the big changes that Africans have experienced, some elements of culture and ways of viewing reality persist up to today. One of these cultural elements is what has been called “totemism” in the anthropological research. This thesis, therefore, is seeking for an answer to the question: Could a traditional way of thinking and structuring of social relations within the community and its relationship with nature using the totemic system be viable in modern times despite severe cultural changes that have occurred during the process of modernization through the last decades?

During his early years, the author of this thesis, born and raised in the Keiyo ethnic group, has experienced how to live and cherish the totemic culture within his community. Later, being educated in the European style in Kenya and in Europe and furthermore living as a Christian, he developed an urge to find out what aspects of both cultures might be used by Keiyo people to facilitate their life in modern times.

“Totemism” is to be understood as a complex belief system of indigenous people of perceiving a relationship between parts of the community called the clan and natural objects or species of animals, like birds, insects, etc. All these can be called totems and considered by people as their relatives. The relationship between the clan and the totem comes with duties, taboos, and responsibilities.

In 1791, an Englishman John Long travelled through the Northern America, and in the Ojibwa land he heard the new word “totem.” Though the name is originated from the Ojibwa language, the phenomenon labelled as such had later been also found in Australia as well as in other parts of the world. After his return home and publishing a series of

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<sup>1</sup> Alex La Guma, *Time of the Butcherbird* (London: Heinemann, 1979), 12.

articles, the concept of totemism awakened much interest and attracted ethnologists to do research in the new and interesting field. Later, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a vivid interest aroused especially among the developing social sciences (anthropology, sociology) and in the psycho-analysis. In that time, totemism was a perennially popular theme that made headlines of anthropological and ethnological journals and books and was one of the most discussed issues among anthropologists and ethnologists. Discussion of totemism took place on various academic disciplines, at different times, and addressed different issues. Totemism has baffled many in the understanding of the primitive mind. No doubt that totemism was and is a broad and complex subject. Though being a topic of anthropological research, it also evoked controversial opinions, even disapprovals and, with time, the term had been abandoned by researchers.

This thesis aims to revisit the complex matter of totemism that had been broadly discussed in the past but almost forgotten in the present time. Despite all the past discussions and writings, totemism has lost none of its allures. That has motivated the author to undertake a new research, and further to animate the discussion on the subject. Although the concept has been abandoned by most academics, the phenomenon of totemism is still present and practiced in many societies in Australia, America, and Africa. The totemic phenomenon is especially prevalent in the Keiyo ethnic group in Kenya. The aim of this thesis is to rekindle the debate again and to find the modus of how to understand totemism in our current world. This new approach is necessary especially for those ethnic groups who still practice totemism.

This thesis, therefore, advocates the interest of those indigenous ethnic groups, in saying to the academic world: Do not bury the concept of totemism! Totemism is still alive! This thesis aims to challenge African scholars to revisit their old healthy cultures, research them and explain them anew under the aspect of challenging modern times. The present study of totemism is motivated by the need to explain and to teach the young Keiyo people to understand, love and care for their totemic phenomena and to value their good culture. Like many other ethnic groups in Africa, the Keiyo people are experiencing a growing social disintegration and environmental destruction. In the author's opinion, the correct understanding of today's totemic phenomena can be helpful in solving some of these problems. Unfortunately, few studies have been carried out on current totemism as a part of indigenous knowledge. So far, totemism has been mainly studied under the aspect of



the past primitive mentality. Actually, totemism is a vibrant culture of people living in very close relation with nature. The kinship between the clan and nature is a sign of their understanding of an interrelated structure of reality. Totemism has survived over centuries and has proven its value; it is worth a new attempt and understanding in the modern times. This is in line with what Denis Edward who said; “listen to the ancient indigenous religious traditions of people of Australia, and to traditions of many other peoples that involve a profound respect for the land and for all its creatures.”<sup>2</sup> Ecological problems are one of the many challenges facing humanity. Many problems that people are experiencing today have either a social, economic, educational or a religious aspect.

Isolating local people from participation in searching for a solution for their problems frequently leads to the failure of the enterprise. For example, the project of environmental conservation among the Keiyo people is a government project. The local administration has imported modern scientific solutions from the national government. A similar scenario has also been replicated in the field of education, economy, and religion. Today it is known that a purely foreign solution can seldom be successful in solving a local problem: contrary the local cultural traditions, although considered by scientists as unscientific and primitive, might be of a great help. Local people should be involved in efforts to solve local issues. To do this effectively, they should revisit their old traditions and make them understandable to the present generation. This is the only way that the local traditional cultures can contribute actively to the sustainable development that starts at the local and grows to national or even on a global scale.

### **Scope of Research**

Historically, totemism has been studied from the ethnological, anthropological and psychoanalytical point of view. This thesis emphasizes the religious perspective because religion is a central element of any traditional culture, and especially the African cultures. John Mbiti points out the importance of religion in the African culture.

“Africans are notoriously religious, and each people has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it. A study of these religious systems is, therefore, ultimately a study of the peoples themselves in all the complexities of both traditional and modern life”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* (New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 5.

<sup>3</sup> John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: East African Education Publishers, 1969), 1.

Therefore, the study of the religious aspect of totemism is crucial because it has not been recently thoroughly expounded. Although the religious perspective is important in this study, it is not the only one perspective that eases the understanding of totemism. There are multi-disciplinary perspectives that makes totemism more understandable. No scholar, no study therefore, can lay claim to have the last word in the understanding of totemism. It is not the aim of this thesis to rewrite the history of totemism but to contribute to a deeper understanding of it today. The bringing together of religious and social perspectives might in a special way enrich the comprehension of totemism in our present world.

Modern times appreciate the value of interdisciplinary dialog, methodology, and research. This is also a special demand from Religious Studies (*Religionswissenschaft*) that encourages scientific neutrality.<sup>4</sup> The fact that this work is written from a theological point of view, it was a big challenge to be neutral, a challenge usually met by theologians who participate in the Religious Studies discourses, as there has been a long and intricate debate on the relationship between Theology and Religious Studies.<sup>5</sup> This research is a convergence thesis between Theology and Religious Studies but still keeping awareness of the distinction between them. The two related disciplines and other disciplines are brought together to achieve a rich interdisciplinary perspective.

On the one hand, a unique opportunity for this research is that an insider has done it, whilst on the other hand the author had to overcome many obstacles to maintain the neutrality in his comments. In fact, this thesis has been written with his utmost efforts to preserve academic neutrality. The research was done as library study as well as field research i.e collecting and gathering of data, and direct personal interviews with the Keiyo people. The library research involved studying the concept of totemism from a historical perspective and finding out if the Keiyo community is a totemic community. Historical and theoretical information from written sources on the concept of totemism was brought together, sorted out and summarized in order to answer the research question. The fieldwork among the Keiyo people forms an important part of this thesis. It highlights the whole thesis with field research information and is not limited only to the Keiyo ethnic group.

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<sup>4</sup> See Michael Stausberg, "Religionswissenschaft: Profil eines Universitätsfachs im deutschsprachigen Raum." In Michael Stausberg (Hrsg), *Religionswissenschaft* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 2012), 8-10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

The thesis is divided into five chapters.

**Chapter One:** Is a brief journey through the historical debate of totemism. The aim of this chapter is to bring to the foreground the complex scholarly discussion on totemism that prevailed in the 19th and 20th century and had a great impact on its understanding today. Among many scholars from different fields of study who have participated in the debate on totemism only a few, important and influential ones have been selected. The criteria of choosing them was not the quantity of their writings but the centrality of their contributions and the relevance of their works to the questions pursued in this thesis. The concepts used like “primitive” or “savages” that today bear an pejorative meaning, will be understood from their historical perspective.

**Chapter Two:** Is a brief discourse over African philosophical and religious worldview. Totemism is depicted as an integral part of the African cultures and not a separate system. Thus to understand totemism, one should understand the complex interconnectedness of African philosophical and religious thought system.

**Chapter Three:** The chapter contains mostly the results of the field research done among the Keiyo people. The task of this thesis is not to do research into the origin of Keiyo totemism but to understand its recent form and to find out its relevance today after a long time of change and development.

**Chapter Four:** Is an attempt to understand totemism from a theological perspective. One of the main changes the Keiyo people have gone through is the Christianization of the community. The main questions are: Can totemism be helpful for Keiyo people to better understand Christianity? Can we find elements of totemism or totemic worldview in the Bible that might be useful in understanding Christianity? This thesis is not about exegetically searching for totemism in the Bible, instead, it is looking at a general worldview from the Bible that complies with a totemic view.

**Chapter Five:** This chapter revisits the general understanding and the relevance of totemism today. An understanding that may be close or far from the old meaning of totemism as discussed in the past.

#### Terms and Glossary

**Africa** - In this article we use the term “Africa” to mean the area south of the Sahara Desert or the Sub-Saharan Africa. Africa is not only taken to be a geographical space but also a cosmological space with both common and unique cultures.

**African Cultural Traditions** - The term is used to connote the way of life of the people in social, cultural, religious, political, and economic areas that have been handed over from one generation to the next and thus have survived the changes that the community has undergone in the course of time. In cultural traditions there are both elements of continuity and change. In this thesis, those cultural traditional elements which have continued up to the present will be considered as cultural traditions or modern African cultures.<sup>6</sup>

**African Religions** -In this thesis African Religions will be refer to the indigenous religious worldviews that are found in Africa or even outside Africa. They are varied because in Africa there is diversity in religions worldviews, religious ecology, ethnic groups and cultures. These result in different religious expression and worldviews of the people that are unique and special to a group of people. In every ethnic group, religion lies at the centre of peoples' life, their identity and their relation to one another, to other people and to the world.<sup>7</sup>

**Clan**- This term will be used in this thesis to mean a kin-group that hinges on kinship through one parent who is the ancestor who exists in mythological past.

**Tribe** – In this thesis, tribe means the anthropological classification of people basing on similar migration origin, language structure, culture and religious worldview. Another similar word that is used synonymously with tribe is an ethnic group which is a culturally distinctive within a society, with a unique identity on the basis of shared tradition, language, religion and economic specialization.<sup>8</sup> Despite overall similarity, there are too differences.

**Sub-tribes**- This are sub-divisions of a tribe, basing on small space they occupy and slight difference in the language (dialects). The tribe classification is contested by some scholars, i.e., Okot p'Bitek who saw it as a false anthropological classification. He suggested that such term should be dropped from sociological vocabulary because it has no definite meaning and, more so, is an insult.<sup>9</sup> Despite the strong critique, sub-tribe and

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<sup>6</sup> See Christo van Staden, "Using Culture in African Context," in P. H. Coetzee, A. P. J. Roux eds., *The African Philosophy Reader* (London, New York: Routledge, 1998), 26.

<sup>7</sup> See Jacob K. Olupona, *African Religions, A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1.

<sup>8</sup> See Robert H. Winthrop, *Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 94.

<sup>9</sup> See Okoth p'Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship* (Kampala: Uganda Literature Bureau, 1980), 13-14.

tribe will be used in this research to denote Keiyo and Kalenjin respectively, because these terms are still commonly used at the present.

**Indigenous** – In this thesis we use the term indigenous in general sense to mean a group of people who hold a distinct language, knowledge and beliefs that have been handed over from one generation to the next. Indigenous people are also spiritually tied to their land as a symbol of collective identity. They have their own diverse understanding of development, religion, education based on their cultural values, visions, needs and priorities.<sup>10</sup>

**Kinship** – Kinship is an important anthropological theme and sometimes a very controversial theme.<sup>11</sup> In this thesis, kinship means a massive network of social and at the same time of religious nature that comes from blood relationship, marriage, or adoption. Kinship is multi-directional. Some communities, like Keiyo people, consider their totems as members of the big web of kinship. Kinship brings responsibilities, rights and duties to the members of the ethnic group.

**Totem**-Throughout this paper, the word totem will refer to the clan totems. While there are variety of definitions of totem (totemism) has been suggested, this paper will take the definition first suggested by James Frazer who understood totemism to mean a class of material objects which a savage (indigenous communities) regards with superstitious (religious) respect, believing that there exists between him and every member of the class (clan) an intimate and altogether special relation.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, “Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Voice Factsheet,” accessed 18.01.2017, [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session\\_factsheet1.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> See the big debate on Kinship in Elman R. Service, *A Century of Controversy: Ethnological Issues from 1860-1969* (New York: Academic Press, 1985), 59-99.

<sup>12</sup> James Frazer, *Totem and Exogamy, vol.1* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2009), 3. I have added the words in brackets to make the meaning understandable in the modern language.

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. HISTORICAL DEBATE

### 1.1. Preamble

Totemism has been part and parcel of many indigenous cultures. However, it became a theme of debate when it was introduced to the western academic platform that was very active in “discovering” the newly discovered social-cultural world of the so-called primitive people. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the history of the term “totem” and to pursue the academic discussion that followed after that. The main aim of the academic debate was to search for a theory of totemism that fits into the framework of all totemic communities. As the historical debate shows, the mission of searching a totemic theory became complex. In the middle of these complex discussions of totemism, the renowned anthropologist A.R. Radcliff-Brown once remarked that:

“The word ‘totemism’ has been a useful one in the past, but it may well be asked if it has not outlived its usefulness. Such a term is useful when it enables us to bring together and compare phenomena of one general type, occurring in different forms or varieties in different regions; it is the opposite useful, however, when it isolates these phenomena from other related phenomena, and so prevent us from considering them together. The problem of totemism is part of the wider problem of the relation of man and nature in ritual and myth, and must always be studied in reference to the larger problem.”<sup>13</sup>

This chapter sketches the debate of some scholars who tried to comprehend the phenomena of totemism. At first, the etymology of the word “totem” had been expounded and followed then by the discussion of scholars. These scholars include; John McLennan (1827-1881), James Frazer (1854-1941), Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Emile Durkheim (1858-1939), Albert Goldenweiser (1880-1940), and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009). We shall discuss them more detailed as they have brought forth the most influential theories in the field. Nevertheless, other authors will also be considered in conjunction with the works by the prominent scholars named above. The works of another important scholar, William Robertson Smith (1846-1894), will be separately discussed in the Chapter Four. His understanding of totemism from a theological perspective complies more with the theological understanding of totemism than with the historical discussion of totemism. The chosen scholars will be presented in order after their: life and work, contribution to historical debate and lastly their influence on future debate. At the end of

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<sup>13</sup> A.R. Radcliff-Brown, “Notes in Totemism in Eastern Australia,” in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropology Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, (vol.59, Jul.-Dec.1929),399. Accessed 21.04.2016 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2843892?origin=crossref>

the chapter, the positive and the negative elements in all historical discussion on totemism will be highlighted.

## 1.2. The Etymology of the Word “Totem”

The word “totem” originates from Ojibwa (Chippewa) which is an Algonquian-speaking language. It is from the word *ototeman* which means ‘his brother-sister kin.’<sup>14</sup> Totem and totemism came into public attention and were introduced to the English language through an English traveller and trader John Long, in 1791. He noticed among the Chippewa that, “one part of the religious superstition of the savages consist in each of them having his ‘*totam*’ or favorite spirit, which he believes watches over him. This totem they conceive, assumes the shape of some beasts, or other, and therefore they never kill, hunt or eat the animal whose form they think this totem bears.”<sup>15</sup> This curious totemic phenomenon that Long observed among the Ojibwa was also noticed in Western Australia by George Grey (1812-1898)<sup>16</sup> under a different name, *kobong*. Other research on the topic followed in Europe, Asia, and Africa. The study of totemism remained a fascinating subject to scholars because they saw it as a worldwide phenomenon among the indigenous tribes. The wide distribution of phenomena labelled as totemic among the indigenous communities of the World has encouraged more research. The understanding of totemism, hence, always became broader and more complicated in the course of being studied and interpreted by scholars from different fields of study, like law, ethnology, history, theology, religious studies, and psychology. However, it became also more complicated, because what was called “totemism” had been practiced differently among the Native Americans as compared to similar practices in Australia and Africa. Therefore, the definition and meaning of totemism has always represented a big challenge for scholars and was vividly discussed among them. There have been many attempts by scholars to define the word ‘totemism’ as it will be noticed in the historical debate. This is because there have been varied forms of totemism in different regions. But despite this tendency, we find similarities and differences of totemic phenomena in these regions. These similarities and differences can be understood when seen in context of the general debate

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<sup>14</sup> See E. Sidney Hartland, “Totemism,” in *Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethic*, ed. James Hastings (New York: T&T Clark, 1921), 393.

<sup>15</sup> John Long, *Voyages and Travels of Indian Interpreter and Trader* (London: Forgotten Books, 2013), 86. The original work was published in 1792. Accessed on 21.04.2016, [http://www.forgottenbooks.com/readbook\\_text/Voyages\\_and\\_Travels\\_of\\_an\\_Indian\\_Interpreter\\_and\\_Trader\\_1000741123/10](http://www.forgottenbooks.com/readbook_text/Voyages_and_Travels_of_an_Indian_Interpreter_and_Trader_1000741123/10).

<sup>16</sup> See James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 219.

on totemism. The totemic phenomenon itself is interesting but more fascinating is its historical discussion.

### 1.3. Historical Debate of Totemism

#### 1.3.1. Background Information

Ideas have a historical background and to understand the concept of totemism and the way it has been discussed, one should understand the background historical information. Research into and discussion of a topic called “totemism” started in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This was an epoch characterized by political, economic, and cultural advancements in Europe. During that period, England and some countries in Europe expanded across the globe through exploration and colonization. In Europe :

“Were currents of thought that fundamentally conditioned the ways of progress in civilization was conceived: ideas about non-Europeans ‘savages,’ who defined ‘civilization’ by contrast; ideas about physical nature and differentiation of man, which raised the problem of its universality; ideas about the nature of the social order, which defined the specific content of civilization; and ideas about the methods appropriate to the study of human life and history, which defined the extent to which it might be subsumed within the rubric of natural science.”<sup>17</sup>

One of the problems that occupied the intellectual minds of anthropologists and ethnologists was how to explain the similarity and distinction between human beings, i.e. between the so-called “civilized” and the so-called “uncivilized”, as well as between human beings and nature. Many studies were conducted and much research was done to find out the differences and the relationships found in nature. The Bible, that for a long time had given answers to many questions concerning the origins of the world and the meaning of human life to the greater part of Europeans, no longer was looked at as the single book of reference to answer these questions. Therefore, during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, new schools of thoughts emerged from biblical hermeneutics. In trying to reconcile scientific knowledge and theology, natural theology was rediscovered.<sup>18</sup> Natural theology in this sense is “the practice of philosophically reflecting the existence and nature of God independent of real or apparent divine revelation or scripture.”<sup>19</sup> This theology became relevant again to bridge the gap between science and religion. By 1720s,

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<sup>17</sup> George W. Stocking Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 9.

<sup>18</sup> Natural theology has been a theme since ancient times of Greek philosophy until contemporary times. Philosophers and theologians have been trying to explain God using the natural powers of reason. See the historical perspectives of natural theology in Russel Re Manning ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Natural Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

<sup>19</sup> Charles Taliaferro, “The Project of Natural Theology,” in William Lane Craig, J.P. Moreland, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology* (West Sussex: Willey-Blackwell ,2009), 1.



natural theology was considered orthodox in the Church of England and was thus a lantern that was meant to illuminate but not to replace the scriptural basis of the divine attributes. One of the important topics for natural theologians was to explain the existence of God through design argument. One of the famous theologians who propagated design argument was Bishop William Paley (1743-1805). In his book, *Natural Theology*, he attempted to prove the existence of God considering the divine evidence of beauty and order in nature. Natural Theology became famous in theological circles for a short time but “the growth of evolutionary theories of development in geology, natural history, and biology gradually eroded this concept of perfect design. Thus, the relationship between scientific methodology and religious faith was also undermined.”<sup>20</sup>

Through the writing of his book, the *Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin (1809-1882) brought a revolution to the understanding of man and nature. This book became one of the most influential books ever to be written in history. It revolutionized the western intellectual tradition. The *Origin of Species* became a reference book on the understanding of nature from an evolutionary perspective. It brought with it a radical change in the understanding of nature in all scientific fields. Natural history seen as a progression of species questioned the traditional understanding of the different species created by God. Not only evolution of plants and animals and the theory of man’s descent from Hominidae, but also the idea of an evolutionary process in mankind’s history were at stake. Anthropologists and ethnologists embraced what has been termed evolutionary social theory. By embracing some variant of evolutionary social theory, however, Europeans could reaffirm the basic unity of humankind not because human nature was seen to be everywhere the same, but because the undeniable difference between human beings was understood as reflecting different stages in the same evolutionary process.<sup>21</sup> The search for the “origins” therefore became an important focus for scientific research to find out the first stage of the evolutionary process. The desire to scientifically understand the “origins” was driven by the scientist wanting to understand the present. The development from a simple origin to a present day complex organism became the point of interest for many researchers. The best place for such research was among the so-called “primitive” communities in the world. Expansion and colonization gave the

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<sup>20</sup> Josephine M. Guy, ed. *The Victorian Age: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* (London: Routledge, 1998), 203.

<sup>21</sup> See Robert Alun Jones, *The Secret of the Totem* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 21.

European researchers readymade people for this study. The travellers, explorers, colonial officials, missionaries, naturalists, wrote accounts of their travels among the so-called “primitives” and the “savages” and these ethnographic materials were scientifically analyzed by “armchair” anthropologists who were accepted as legitimate contributors to the scientific understanding of the place of a human being in nature. This brought many limitations not only to the analysis of the material level, but also to the gathering of ethnological data. How to handle ethnological data and its limitations was problematic because “contradictory and redundant data contributed to the stress in the ethnological paradigm and the range of possible theoretical alternatives though it was limited by the types of ethnological data available.”<sup>22</sup> Although historical background and types of ethnological data were limited, they offered a great contribution to the scientific understanding of other cultures.

### 1.3.2. John F. McLennan

#### 1.3.2.1. Life and Work

John McLennan was born in Inverness, Scotland in 1827. He studied in Kings College Aberdeen and obtained a Master of Arts (MA) in 1849; later he studied at Trinity College, Cambridge. He became a writer of the periodical *The Leader* and some others.<sup>23</sup> In 1857 he became a lawyer in Edinburgh and “he contributed the entry on ‘law’ to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in which he sketched the conventional theory of political development, from the patriarchal family to the tribe to state.”<sup>24</sup> McLennan is not very well known as the lawyer at the bar, but more for his contribution to the scientific study of man.<sup>25</sup> He was one of those British lawyers of his time “who studied the social structures of the non-European peoples.”<sup>26</sup> He studied social structures among other primitive societies to help understand better the social structures at that time. Later, he joined the Ethnological Society of London and published several articles related to ethnological issues. His contribution to the study of “primitive religions” lays in his social evolutionary theories of marriage, kinship, and natural laws. For McLennan:

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<sup>22</sup> Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology*, 80.

<sup>23</sup> See Adam Kuper, *The Reinvention of Primitive Society: Transformations of a Myth*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2005), 35.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>25</sup> See *ibid.*, 35.

<sup>26</sup> Hans Gerhard Kippenberg, *Discovering Religious History in the Modern Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 72.

“The chief sources of information regarding the early history of civil society are, first, the study of races in their primitive condition; and, second, the study of the symbols employed by advanced nations in the constitution or exercise of civil rights. From these studies pursued together, we obtain, to a large extent, the power of classifying social phenomena as more or less archaic, and those of connecting and arranging in their order the stages of human advancement.”<sup>27</sup>

He compared the data obtained by anthropologists and travellers of his time in the so called “primitive cultures” in order to get a solution for the enigmas of history. In that vein, he studied the law of primitive marriage and compared it with the law of civilized society. McLennan died in 1881 at Hayes Common in Kent. Some of his writings include; *Primitive Marriage: An Inquiry into the Origin of the Form of Capture in Marriage Ceremonies 1865* and *The Worship of Animals and Plants 1869-1870*.

#### 1.3.2.2. Contribution to Historical Debate

Being a lawyer by profession, McLennan opened the discussion on ethnological themes that had not been discussed to such an extent before. One of those themes was the theory of totemism. Then, followed a discussion about the so-called “secret of the totem”<sup>28</sup>, which several ethnologists and anthropologist have tried to uncover whilst others have dismissed the idea saying that there was no secret from the beginning. The discussion on totemism started when McLennan wrote a brief article on totemism in *Chamber’s Encyclopaedia*; which was published in 1867 as well as essays on totems and totemism in the *Fortnightly Review* of 1869 and 1870 under the main title *Worship of Animals and Plants*. McLennan never claimed to be the first person who wrote about totems and totemism. He quoted Sir George Grey who reported about the *kobong* phenomenon in Australia which means literary a ‘friend’ or ‘protector’ as similar with the totem phenomenon of Ojibwa in America. He cited also the account of totems in America from Mr. John Long’s report on his voyages and the account of Dr. Gallatin’s in “*Synopsis of the Indian Tribes*.” He went further and claimed also the possibility that several tribes may have passed through the “totem stage” as in the case of tribes in central Asia as reported by Captain KM Valikhanof in *The Russians of Central Asia*.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> John Ferguson McLennan, *Studies in Ancient History: The Origin of the Form of Culture in Marriage Ceremonies* (London: McMillan and Co., 1886), I. Accessed 02.05.2016 <https://archive.org/stream/studiesinancien02mclegoog#page/n38/mode/2up>,

<sup>28</sup> See the headings of the books of Andrew Lang, *The Secret of the Totem* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905) and Robert Alun Jones, *The Secret of the Totem* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005)

<sup>29</sup> See J.F. McLennan, “The Worship of Animals and Plants,” extracted from *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 6 (1869) and vol. 7 (1870) accessed 05.01.2016 <http://www.masseiana.org/mclennan.htm>. This extract from the internet has no page numbers.

In his essays, McLennan called for the study of totems with considerable care. He lamented that totems “have been regarded as being curious rather than important, and in consequence, some points relating to them are unexplained.”<sup>30</sup>

McLennan defined totems as “the name given by certain tribes of American Indians to animal or plant which, from time immemorial, each of the tribes has had as its sacred or consecrated animal or plant.”<sup>31</sup> Through his comparative method, he saw totemism as prevalent in most of the primitive societies and this led him to the conclusion that totemism had been a stage in human evolution and development at one time.<sup>32</sup> Especially Australian totemism was of a great interest to McLennan. He was curious about the structure of the Australian tribes that were divided according to localities, and within these tribes, were subdivided into stock-groups. Each of such stock groups was named after a species of animal. Nevertheless, the same names are found throughout other tribes. The stock groups have matrilineal descent and obey the law of exogamy. The most interesting thing he found was the fact, that the stock groups believed that they descended from the animal or the plant and that these beliefs unite the members of the stock group in a special way among themselves.<sup>33</sup>

McLennan did not only investigate this feature among the Aborigines in Australia and other indigenous tribes in other parts of the world but also tried to explain and give meaning to or ask more questions about the features of totemism. For historian Robert Alun Jones, the important question McLennan raised was “What is the relationship between the members of the stock group and their totem?”<sup>34</sup> However, according to George Stocking Jr, “McLennan was less concerned with the origin of totemism than with the question why the groups were held together by the religious regard for the totem.”<sup>35</sup> McLennan was, therefore, looking for answers to the question why there is a lack of categorical distinction between members of the totem group and the totem, knowing very well that plants and animals are different from humans in the civilized world. Robert Alun Jones pointed out this lack of distinction among the primitives in Australia as a problem. He noticed that “the Australians make no distinction between the spiritual and the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> See Jones, *The Secret of the Totem*, 49.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>35</sup> See George W. Stocking, Jr., *After Tylor; British Social Anthropology 1888-1951* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 49.

material, or the animate or inanimate, that the “the only benign beings they know are their totems” and they have ‘no God in the proper sense of the word’.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, for McLennan totemism became a symbol of both, the unity and the division in the thinking of the primitive people: A symbol of unity because it unites the members of the stock group with one another and with their totem; a symbol of division, because it divides the members of one stock group from another. Thus, it divides the members of matrilineal descent from the other matrilineal descent by encouraging exogamy and hence preventing intermarriage. He understood that “in primitives there was kinship through the mothers only, owing to the uncertainty of fatherhood.”<sup>37</sup> The best explanation that McLennan could give for the meaning of totem is “that primitive peoples worship fetishes which they believed to be animated by anthropomorphic spirits.”<sup>38</sup> McLennan, therefore, related fetishism with totemism. For him, the fetish beliefs of the primitive society evolved to a new religion of totemism. McLennan forged a connection between the social structures of primitive society and primitive totemic religion. In Hans G. Kippenberg’s words, McLennan’s hypothesis on totemism was giving “primitive religions a place in the social life.”<sup>39</sup> The two main totemic features of religiosity and sociology will play an important role in the coming totemic discussion.

### 1.3.2.3. Influence on the Future Debate

McLennan’s opinion on the social and religious nature of totemism opened a broad perspective for the study of the history of religion among primitive societies. Thanks to him, the interrelatedness of the religious and social perspectives had an impact on the discussion of totemism from the very beginning and remained a pivotal to all discussions that followed. Through his writing, McLennan brought the discussion of totemism to the world of ethnologists and anthropologists, not only as a mere subject of curiosity but as an incentive for study and research. This research came out of a framework of social-cultural evolution that was a common theoretical assumption. It stimulated scholars to search for the origins of fundamental human institutions, the main two being the religious and social institutions. The reasoning of McLennan was typical of the way of thinking at

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<sup>36</sup> Jones, *The Secret of the Totem*, 49.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>38</sup> Kuper, *The Reinvention of Primitive Society: Transformations of a Myth*, 86.

<sup>39</sup> Kippenberg, *Discovering Religious History in the Modern Age*, 72.

his time: He understood totemism from an evolutionary perspective. Stocking Jr. observed that:

“Loosely conceived of as a principle of both religious belief and social organization, and never systematically investigated, totemism was bequeathed by McLennan to later generations of evolutionary anthropologists, is not as a pioneering investigation ready for Tylor’s retrospective paradigmatic summary in 1888, but rather as a problematic concept that was to trouble scholars throughout the two decades around the turn of the century.”<sup>40</sup>

As a pioneer of bringing totemism to the ethnological discussion, McLennan influenced the intellectual discussion that followed later. His academic surrounding was enriched with ethnological and anthropological scholars who participated in a debate on totemism. Some of the famous European scholars of that time who were involved in the totemic discussion and influenced by McLennan were: Edward B. Tylor (1832-1917), Robert Ranulph Marett (1866-1943), Andrew Lang (1844-1912), William Robertson Smith (1846-1894), Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954) and James Frazer (1854-1941).

Edward Tylor founded the anthropological department at Oxford University, and under his professorship, anthropological themes like totemism gained international recognition. His attitude toward major anthropological themes like totemism was well known. As William Chapman wrote “his ideas on social and cultural evolution became liberal coloring of British attitudes towards native peoples and clearly affecting colonial policy in the late 19th century.”<sup>41</sup> In his article of 1889 entitled *Remarks on Totemism, with a special Reference to some Modern Theories Respecting It*,<sup>42</sup> Tylor never outrightly dismisses the totemic theories, but he calls for more exhaustive discussions and closer examination. Tylor discouraged the hurried placing of totemism at the foundation of religion.<sup>43</sup> For Tylor, totemism, as explained by McLennan, should be treated as “an introductory speculation rather than as a system.”<sup>44</sup> According to Tylor, the basis of all religions is animism, and that is why he was not very keen to admit totemism to take the place as the primordial stage in the evolution of religion. Furthermore, he considers animism as the general doctrine of souls and spiritual beings that bring life and will in nature. For him, animism can be taken as “a groundwork of the philosophy of religion,

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<sup>40</sup> Stocking, Jr., After Tylor; *British Social Anthropology 1888-1951*, 49.

<sup>41</sup> William Chapman, “Theory in Social and Cultural Anthropology”, in *An Encyclopaedia*, R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms, eds. (London: Sage Publications, 2013), 601.

<sup>42</sup> See Edward Tylor, “Remarks on Totemism, with Especial Reference to Some Modern Theories Respecting it,” *Journal of Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol.28, Issue 1/2 (1889): 138-148. accessed 02.05.2016, <http://home.iscte-iul.pt/~fgvs/Tylor.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> See *ibid.*, 144.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

from that of the savages up to that of the civilized men”<sup>45</sup> Thus, the basis of all religions, according to Tylor, is animism. What we see in most contemporary religions are the “survivals”. This was important to Tylor; he saw “survivals” as:

“Processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and thus remain as proofs and examples of the older condition of the culture out of which a newer has been evolved.”<sup>46</sup>

For Tylor, animism arises from the inability of primitive people to distinguish between dreams and conscious actions; animism is ‘rational’ but its rationality comes from a mistaken premise. Moreover, “from mistaken inferences, the idea of animism progresses through polytheism until eventually we arrive at monotheism, which Tylor dubs ‘the animism of civilized man.’”<sup>47</sup> According to Tylor, the simple thought of religion is a great achievement for the primitive people, but it is not important in the contemporary time of science. Robert Ranulph Marett (1866-1943) opposed to Tylor’s theory of animism as the simplest form of human religion. He condemned the rigid rationalization of primitive religions and stressed on the importance of feeling and emotional element. In his book *Faith, Hope and Charity in Primitive Religion*, he wrote that:

“On the hypothesis that his religion helps the savage to live, the question arises whether such help comes mainly by way of thinking, acting, or feeling. Now the thinking is of poor quality, to judge by primitive mythology. The acting, again, is symbolic, its efficacy being held to depend on the intervention of a higher power manifested only for such as are in the right spiritual condition. Thus, it is all-important that feeling should provide the necessary assurance of being in touch with this higher power, which, however, is only by gradual experiment revealed as a power making for righteousness.”<sup>48</sup>

To clarify this new understanding of primitive religion that is of the heart, R. R. Marett coined the term “animatism” or pre-animistic. For him this is the simplest form of human religion. While commenting on Marett, the anthropologist Cary Ferraro understands animatism as “a belief in generalized, impersonal power over which people have some measure of control.”<sup>49</sup> Animatism is a supernatural force that is found in people, animals, plants, and in inanimate objects. To explain this, Marett borrowed the concept of *mana* from the Polynesia culture through the study of the writings of Robert Codrington (1830-

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<sup>45</sup> Edward Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom* (London: John Murray, 1871), 1: 385

<sup>46</sup> Edward Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1871, 19.

<sup>47</sup> Beverly Clack, Brian Clack, *Philosophy of Religion: A critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), 89.

<sup>48</sup> R. R. Marett, *Faith, Hope and Charity in Primitive Religion* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1932), 1.

<sup>49</sup> Cary Ferraro, *Cultural Anthropology. An Applied Perspective*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Belmont, CA.: Thompson Wadsworth, 2008), 340.

1922) who worked as missionary in the Melanesian society in Vanuatu and Solomon Highlands. He explains mana as:

“A power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural; but it shows itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses. This Mana is not fixed in anything, and can be conveyed in almost anything; but spirits, whether disembodied souls or supernatural beings, have it and can impart it; and it essentially belongs to personal beings to originate it, though it may act through the medium of water, or stone, or a bone.”<sup>50</sup>

Marett used this meaning of mana to further his anthropological theory on animatism. As animatism is an impersonal force and not a soul or a spirit, as proposed by Tylor, therefore it is applicable to animatism because:

“Mana is often operative and thaumaturgic, but not always. Like energy, mana may be dormant or potential. Mana, let us remember, is an adjective as well as a noun, expressing a possession which is likewise a permanent quality [...] Hence it seems enough to say that mana exhibits the supernatural in its positive capacity - ready, but not necessarily in fact, to strike.”<sup>51</sup>

Further, R.R. Marett sees close relation between mana and taboo. He observes in the two forms the existence of positive and the negative qualities of the sacred. “Altogether, in mana we have what is par excellence the primitive religious idea in its positive aspect, taboo representing its negative side, since whatever has mana has taboo, and whatever is taboo has mana.”<sup>52</sup> So, according to Marett, the earliest religion was emotional and intuitive in nature.

Wilhelm Schmidt and Wilhelm Koppers (1886-1961) under the *Wien Kulturkreis* (Vienna School of Ethnology and Religion) saw the early religion as *Urmonotheismus* (primeval or primitive monotheism). All cultures in the world have originated from one centre that practiced primitive monotheism. He and the *Wien Kulturkreis*, assigned the animism, manism, and magism as a fall and distortion of the original state of *Urmonotheismus*.<sup>53</sup> From the beginning, the primal cultures or the primitive cultures received the primal revelation from God (*Uroffenbarung*) so that they perceived the existence of a High God. With examples from Africa and other parts of the world, Schmidt attempted to prove the

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<sup>50</sup> Robert Codrington, *The Melanesians, Studies in their Anthropology and Folk-Lore* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), 119, as quoted by Dale R. Bengtson, “R. R. Marret and the Study of Religion” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol.47, No.4 (Dec.1979): 653, accessed 09.12.2017, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1462279>.

<sup>51</sup> R. R. Marett, “The Threshold of Religion,” In Bryan S. Turner ed., *The Early Sociology of Religion* Volume VII (London: Thoemmes Press, 1997), 128-129.

<sup>52</sup> R. R. Marett, “Religion (primitive)” *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XX11. 11<sup>th</sup> ed., 61-67, as quoted by Dale R. Bengtson, “R. R. Marett and the Study of Religion” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol.47, No.4 (Dec.1979): 653, accessed 09.12.2017, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1462279>.

<sup>53</sup> P. Wilhelm Schmidt, *Die Uroffenbarung als Anfang der Offenbarungen Gottes* (Kempten: Josef Kösel & Friedrich Pustet, 1913), 142.



existence of this High God that all primitive cultures believed in. It is from this centre that the belief in a High God diffused to other parts of the world. Therefore, according to Schmidt, the polytheism is a product of a later development, a belief that was not in primitive religions. For him, the similarity that we find cross culturally is because of this common origin of all cultures. One of such cultural practice that is common to most of the cultures is totemism. According to Schmidt, totemism is more a desire to relate with animals (and plants) to acquire its powers and abilities or to share its protective abilities.<sup>54</sup> The *Kulturkreis* theory has been criticized by scholars like James Cox who saw *Urmonotheismus* as an invention of God by researchers in primitive societies. He saw it erroneous to try to discover a Christian God among the indigenous people.<sup>55</sup>

### 1.3.3. James Frazer

#### 1.3.3.1. Life and Work

Sir James Gorge Frazer was born on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1854 in Glasgow, Scotland as the first child of Daniel Frazer (1821-1900) and Katherine Frazer (+1899). Robert Ackermann describes Frazer's parents as "solid, respectable, God-fearing Victorian Scots [...] His father highly esteemed by all as a man of rectitude and honor; his mother sociable, cheerful and musical"<sup>56</sup> In his early life, Frazer, therefore, had a pious upbringing in the Presbyterian and Free Church. He took part in acts of Christian worship in his early life. However, later, he experienced a crisis in his belief and rejected Christian religion. Despite this, he retained a lifelong habit of reading about religious beliefs trying to explain in the first place why humanity should have ever believed.<sup>57</sup> His academic pursuits started in Larchfield Academy in Helensburgh where he learned Latin and Greek, and that gave him a foretaste for classical studies. Then, he went to Glasgow University and graduated in November 1869. In Glasgow, the professor George Gilbert Ramsay (1839-1921) directed James Frazer's interest to the love of classics and antiquity. James Frazer studied at Glasgow University, graduating with honors. He then joined Cambridge Trinity College in 1874 where he studied classics. After four years in Trinity College, he wrote a fellowship dissertation on *the Growth of Plato's Ideal Theory* under the moderation of Henry Jackson, who was a professor of ancient philosophy at Trinity College. According

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<sup>54</sup> See *ibid.*, 148.

<sup>55</sup> See James Cox, *The Invention of God in Indigenous Societies* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 11-12.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Ackerman, *J.G Frazer, His Life and Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5.

<sup>57</sup> See Stocking, Jr., *After Tylor; British Social Anthropology 1888-1951*, 128.

to Robert Alun Jones, his dissertation which had two references to the mentality of the savages, clearly predates Frazer's interest in anthropology and the comparative method.<sup>58</sup> Before delving into the anthropological field, Frazer edited classical works i.e. *Pausanias' Description of Greece* which had many ethnographic accounts of religious practices, myths, and folklore extinct in Athens at the time he wrote but still alive in the Greek countryside.<sup>59</sup> From classics, Frazer's interest shifted to anthropology where he concentrated on the search for "survivals" within the Greco-Roman and Christian traditions. These are old cultural elements, particularly old ideas, and practices that have been carried on to the new state of society by the force of habit.<sup>60</sup> His presentation entitled "*On certain Burial Customs as Illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul*" at the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in March 1885, brought Frazer a publicity in the academic circles. In the auditorium were two of the great anthropologists of this time: Edward B. Tylor and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). In his presentation, Frazer "announced two of his most fundamental anthropological presuppositions: that primitive culture is a matter of intellectual solution to cognitive problems; and that the problems of understanding these solutions are one of working backward from the customary behavior of the "theory" that explains it."<sup>61</sup>

E.B. Tylor and William Robertson Smith<sup>62</sup> are important scholars who shaped the ideas of Frazer. The importance of them for Frazer was clearly commented by Stocking Jr.: "If Tylor led Frazer to anthropology, it was Robertson Smith who guided him towards the topic of his monumental anthropological project."<sup>63</sup> Frazer and Smith became close friends, and in 1886 Smith asked Frazer to write two essays on *Taboo and Totem* in the "T" volume of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. This first anthropological writing was a turning point for Frazer; ever since in his career, he would dwell in social anthropology. Frazer later became a prolific writer in anthropology and among some major books that he wrote is *Totemism* (1887), *The Golden Bough. A Study in Comparative Religion* (1890), (in later, enlarged editions the subtitle was changed to *Study in Magic and Religion*); *Totemism and Exogamy* Vol.I-IV (1910), and many other books and articles in

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<sup>58</sup> See Jones, *The Secret of the Totem*, 107.

<sup>59</sup> See Stocking, Jr., *After Tylor; British Social Anthropology 1888-1951*, 131.

<sup>60</sup> See Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1871, 19.

<sup>61</sup> Jones, *The Secret of the Totem*, 2005, 110.

<sup>62</sup> William Robertson Smith will be treated in chapter four of this thesis that deals with totemism as kinship with Gods creation.

<sup>63</sup> Stocking, Jr., *After Tylor; British Social Anthropology 1888-1951*, 132.

anthropology. His writing was focussed on the path of the old beliefs and practices of world cultures as they transformed from a magic stage to a religious stage and lastly to science. In his attempts to interpret the worldview of the savages, he gave many details on rites, ceremonies, and myths. The motive of Frazer, according to Stocking Jr., was to show the differences in the distinctive thinking between the savages and the civilized. For him, the civilized distinguishes between the natural and the supernatural, but the savages are not able to do this.<sup>64</sup>

The topic of totemism brought together the natural realm of human beings and their totems and the religious realm of the relationship between the totems and the human beings. This created an anthropological problem to be solved that took the rest of Frazer's life to find the solution. He was knighted in 1914. He remained most of his time in Trinity College, Cambridge, until his death in 1941.

#### 1.3.3.2. Contribution to the Debate

Frazer wrote considerably more on totemism than any other anthropologist in history. In his book *Totemism and Exogamy, A Treatise on Certain Early Forms of Superstition and Society*, he presented an extensive analysis of totemism in four massive volumes, defining and identifying the types of totemism as practiced in the different ethnic groups throughout the world. Though he never did the field work, he obtained his data on totemism by sending questionnaires to missionaries, settlers, and anthropologists who lived and worked in the land of his interest. He compiled and interpreted the origin and motives of hundreds of ethnographic materials from totemic societies from all over the world. Frazer tried to analyze them and formed a theory of the meaning and the origin of totemism. From the fieldwork letters on totemism, Frazer analyzed and defined it as “a class of material objects which a savage regards with superstitious respect, believing that there exists between him and every member of the class an intimate and altogether special relation.”<sup>65</sup>

Frazer stressed from the beginning that totemism is both a religious and social institution; religious because totem is a symbol of “relations of mutual respect and protection between man and the totem,”<sup>66</sup> the social dimension entails “the relations of the clan's men to each

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>65</sup> James Frazer, *Totem and Exogamy*, vol.1, 2009, 3.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 3.

other and men of other clans.”<sup>67</sup> Frazer’s thinking on the religiosity of totemism evolved gradually while reviewing new ethnographic material from the field. Frazer suggested three theories<sup>68</sup> on the origin of totemism. The first theory was that totem originated from the belief in an ‘external soul’ because the savages were unable to conceive life abstractly. Savages thought through visible objects and hence the need for animals, plant or a natural object as totems. This first theory is very much close to the Tylor’s theory of animism that placed animism at the foundation of his theory of religion. Frazer instead placed totems at the foundation of his first theory of religion. The second theory was inspired by Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860-1929) and Francis James Gillen (1885-1912) who did field work among Arunta Aborigines of Australia. Their theory assumed that totemism is “a system of magic intended to provide a supply of food for somebody else.”<sup>69</sup> This theory saw the origin of totemism from a need to provide the members of the clan with plentiful supply of food. The taboo of not killing one’s own totem helps the other community to get plenty of food. This theory had a fundamental problem because, as noticed by Stocking Jr., this would encourage the rule of endogamy instead of exogamy.<sup>70</sup> Many anthropologists rejected the second theory because they realized that it was too rational and painted a picture too complex of the savage social organization.<sup>71</sup> The third theory by Frazer was the theory conception. This theory suggests the ignorance of savages as the origin of totemism:

“The fact that some savages believe that their offspring comes not from intercourse between men and women, but from the spirits of animals or quasi-animals seen by a woman or from the food she eats. (The Savages) think that the spirits which thus become their children are really the animals they have seen or whose flesh they have eaten before conceiving.”<sup>72</sup>

So, this last theory is based on the ignorance of the savages in the matter of procreation. Those were mere hypotheses rather than theories as Frazer did not commit himself to any theory on the origin of totemism because he realized the shortcomings of all these theories. Therefore, for him “no satisfactory explanation of the origin of totemism has yet been given.”<sup>73</sup> The similarities and differences between those theories have created more

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>68</sup> See Stocking, Jr., After Tylor; *British Social Anthropology 1888-1951*, 141-142.

<sup>69</sup> E. Washburn Hopkins, “The Background of Totemism,” In; *Journal of American Oriental Society*, vol.38 (1918): 153. accessed 02.05,2016,

[https://www.jstor.org/stable/592599?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/592599?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

<sup>70</sup> See Stocking, Jr., After Tylor; *British Social Anthropology 1888-1951*, 143.

<sup>71</sup> See *ibid.*, 144.

<sup>72</sup> E. Washburn Hopkins, *The Background of Totemism*, 153. The words in bracket are my own addition.

<sup>73</sup> J. G. Frazer, *Totemism*, (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1887), 95.

confusion for the majority of anthropologists and ethnologists. Each research on a new totemic society resulted in a different understanding of totemism.

### 1.3.3.3. Influence on Future Debate

Through his enormous amount of publications about totemism, Frazer inflamed interest in, but also brought certain confusion to the debate of totemism. He opened a wider spectrum for the debate on totemism that occupied the minds of anthropologists. Emile Durkheim criticized Frazer for collecting historical and ethnographical materials without careful pre-selection.

“In his totemism, Frazer sought especially to collect all traces of totemism which could be found in history or ethnography. He was thus led to include in his study societies the nature and degree of whose culture differs most widely: ancient Egypt, Arabia and Greece, and the southern Slavs are found there, side by side with tribes of Australia and America.”<sup>74</sup>

According to Durkheim, Frazer's approach was misleading because it separated religion from the social environment. Unaware of the fact that social environment is a part of every religion Frazer failed “to locate religion in the social environments of which they are a part, and to differentiate them according to the different environments to which they are thus connected.”<sup>75</sup> The anthropological approach of Frazer therefore never overcame the limitations caused by compiling and comparing all the totemic societies of the world. Despite Durkheim's critique, Frazer assembled abundant information on totemism, more than any other anthropologist. He regarded Australian totemism as the “laboratory for the study of totemism.”<sup>76</sup> Frazer based his discussion of totemism on Australia. Through contact with Adolphus Peter Elkin (1891-1979) who did field research in Australia, Frazer changed his understanding of totemism and became more aware of the centrality of totemism among the Aborigines. For them totemism was their worldview that regard man and nature as a corporate whole. Elkin's observations made it clear for Frazer that:

“Totemism then is the key to the understanding of the Aboriginal philosophy and universe—a philosophy which regards man and nature as one corporate whole for social, ceremonial, and religious purposes, a philosophy which from one aspect is pre-animistic but from another is animistic, a philosophy which is historical, being formed by the heroic acts of the past which provide the sanctions for the present, a philosophy which, is indeed, passes into the realm of religion and provides that faith, hope and courage in the face of his daily

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<sup>74</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Copyright 2013 (New York: Digireads.com, 2013), 67.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>76</sup> James Frazer, *Totemica, A Supplementary to Totem and Exogamy* (London: McMillan and Co., 1937), 3.

needs which man must have if he is to persevere and persist, both as an individual and as a social being.”<sup>77</sup>

The observation of Elkin gave a new perspective and meaning to Australian Aboriginal totemism, picturing it as a key to understand the philosophy and the worldview of the Aborigines. From this point the debate on totemism ceased to be a topic of British scholar’s only; it left Britain and expanded to anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologist worldwide.

#### 1.3.4. Sigmund Freud

##### 1.3.4.1. Life and Work

Sigmund Freud was born on May 6, 1856, in Freiberg, Moravia which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (today Czech Republic). His father was Jacob Freud (1815-1896) who descended from a family of rabbis, and his mother was Amalia Nathansohn (1835-1930). The Freud family migrated “from the pretty Moravian town of Freiberg with its rural surroundings to the far from clean and overcrowded Jewish quarter of Vienna, the Leopoldstadt.”<sup>78</sup> He was taught at first at home by his mother, studying the Jewish Bible and the history of Alexander the Great with his father, before entering *Leopoldstadt Kommunal-Real-und Obergymnasium* in 1865.<sup>79</sup> His academic excellence in the school and at home was unmatched. He was his mother’s ‘Golden Boy.’<sup>80</sup> He passed his final examination and in 1873 joined Vienna University in the Faculty of Medicine. Initially, he had no enthusiasm for his first year’s studies, but in the fourth year, as he studied physiology under Ernst Brücke (1819-92), Freud developed a much keener interest in it. Under E. Brücke, Freud flourished in the research of the histology of nerve cells and the evolutionary continuity of the cells in the nervous systems of the lower and the higher animals.<sup>81</sup> He later specialized in neurology as his area of research and received his medical degree in 1881. Due to financial constraints, he worked reluctantly as a doctor in the Vienna General Hospital, in 1882. In the same year, he married Martha. In 1885 Freud was appointed a lecturer in neuropathology and became a *Privatdozent* in the University until 1902. It was a prestigious position though of no monetary value.

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<sup>77</sup> A.P. Elkin, “Studies in Australian Totemism,” *Oceania*, Vol. iv, no.2 (Dec.1933):131 as quoted by James Frazer, *Totemica*, London,1937, 4.

<sup>78</sup> Barbara Sternthal, *Sigmund Freud, Life and work, 1856-1939* (Vienna: Brandstätter,2006), 23.

<sup>79</sup> See *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>80</sup> See *ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>81</sup> See Giovanni Costigan, *Sigmund Freud, A Short Biography* (New York: Macmillan Company,1968), 12.

To master his neurological knowledge, Freud went to Paris to study under the famous hysteria neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-93). From Charcot, Freud learned how to approach the study of hysteria from the psychological and functional point of view.<sup>82</sup> Charcot used hypnosis to treat hysteria and other mental disorders. He introduced Freud to hypnosis and to scientific research in this field. Freud brought those methods to Vienna. His first presentation in Vienna on male hysteria received a controversial reception,<sup>83</sup> and Freud's hypnosis method and the knowledge he obtained from Paris was heavily criticized. Freud later joined Dr. Josef Breuer (1842-1925) who, like Charcot, practiced hypnosis in curing hysteria patients, “but whereas Charcot sought to influence them (patients) as much as possible by direct suggestion, Breuer preferred to let his patients describe their symptoms and find relief by re-enacting as far as possible, under deep hypnosis, the original traumatic situation.”<sup>84</sup>

Though Freud used this technique, he became disillusioned with hypnosis. In 1896 Freud abandoned hypnosis and began to develop a new approach called psychoanalysis. He devised analytic therapy that became the overall theoretical framework of his research for the rest of his life, broadening the psychological method to a tool for analysing art, culture and religion.

The death of his father in 1896 started a period of great self-discovery. Although the two were not very devoted to each other, his father's death called up unexpected emotions in Freud:

“Found out to his surprise that he was deeply and unaccountably moved by the old man's death, and that many long-buried recollections now sprung unbidden into life. The result was the self-analysis which he began during the following summer. From his arduous and painful experiences he gained an insight into the phantasies of his childhood and his first true awareness of the phenomenon of infantile sexuality, which involve the discovery of the Oedipus complex.”<sup>85</sup>

Freud undertook a self-analysis, studied his dreams and wrote books about his experiences. However, the scientific world responded with skepticism. Later Freud was promoted from a Private Docent to an Associate Professor at the University of Vienna in 1902, where at the same time he lectured and practiced as a psychoanalyst. Together with Dr. Wilhelm Stekel (1868-1940) he founded the Wednesday Society in 1907, which soon turned into the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, and gained worldwide recognition and

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<sup>82</sup> see Costigan, Sigmund Freud, A Short Biography, 19.

<sup>83</sup> Sternthal, Sigmund Freud, Life, 37.

<sup>84</sup> Costigan, *Sigmund Freud*, 35. The word in the bracket is my own addition.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

fame as the International Psychoanalytic Association. This success brought Freud a greater reputation and more work on local and international level. His fame was cut short by the anti-Semitism that preceded World War II. In 1938 Freud, being sick, old and weak, had to flee to Paris, and then to London where he died in 1939. During his lifetime he published a substantial catalogue of books and articles. Some of his major works include *Studies in Hysteria* (1895), *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1900), *The Essay on Theory of Sexuality* (1905), *Jokes and their Relation to Conscious* (1905), *Totem and Taboo* (1913), *On Narcissism* (1914), *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1917), *Beyond Pleasure Principle* (1920), *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), *Civilization and its Discontent* (1930) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939).

#### 1.3.4.2. Contribution to the Debate

Freud's career began as a medical doctor specialized in nervous disorder i.e. hysteria. However, after his discovery of the psychoanalytic method, he reverted to other fields such as literature, history, and anthropology and began to study them from a psychoanalytic point of view.<sup>86</sup> The application of the method of psychoanalysis to anthropological topics is his great contribution to the debate on totemism. In his book *Totem and Taboo*, Freud used the psychoanalytic method to analyze the anthropological findings by theoreticians of totemism like McLennan, Smith, and Frazer. He was also inspired by the writings of the German physiologist Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) on *Völkerpsychologie* who saw totemism as a branch of animism. According to Wundt, the animal gets its special place in the clan because the members of the clan believe that the animal is inhabited by the souls of the dead and hence they make the animal an ancestor.<sup>87</sup> Freud was also closely associated with the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), who later became a dissenter from Freudian psycho-analysis<sup>88</sup> and developed the theory of the collective unconscious in his book *The Psychology of the Unconscious* (1912). Jung saw the unconscious as a place of a collective unconsciousness and even a specific mode of thought which he called 'fantasy thinking.' Freud interpreted the

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<sup>86</sup> Costigan, *Sigmund Freud*, 177.

<sup>87</sup> Jones, *The Secret of the Totem*, 267.

<sup>88</sup> Sternthal, *Sigmund Freud*, 84.



collective unconsciousness to also mean a place of memory traces of earlier generations and as a place where we find the residues of an archaic heritage.<sup>89</sup>

Freud's book *Totem and Taboo* has four parts: Horror of Incest; Taboo and Emotional Ambivalence; Animism Magic and the Omnipotence of Thoughts and the last part, Return of Totemism in Childhood. With the theories developed here, Freud joined the then contemporary discussions on anthropological aspects in totemism. In those essays, Freud mainly focused on the Australian totemism. He used the research that had been made in this field and interpreted the results through the prism of the psychoanalytic method.

From that perspective, he was aware of the deficiencies of the anthropological studies in this field, but his main aim was to encourage interdisciplinary cooperation in the research.

Freud made it clear that "the essays seek to bridge the gap between students of such subjects as social anthropology, philology, and folklore on the one hand, and psychoanalyst on the other."<sup>90</sup> He made attempts to bridge the gap and to discuss anthropological themes in an interdisciplinary and psychoanalytical manner. According to Freud, totemism and taboo are not only anthropological themes but also psychological, and they would be easier to comprehend and understood if linked with the psychology of the neurotics. For him, the "savages and the neurotics show numerous points of agreement."<sup>91</sup>

Freud researched intensively on the neurotics but according to Groenendijk, the understanding of a neurotic at that time may vary much from our understanding today. For Freud "neurosis resulted from a build-up of sexual tensions."<sup>92</sup>

Freud agreed with other anthropologists that totemism is a common feature in all cultures at an early phase of development and comparable to the first phase of child development. The childhood leaves an imprint on the whole life of the individual. Therefore, it is important, that totemism is to be seriously examined from a scientific point of view. Freud believed that psychoanalysis would be the best approach to that endeavour.

The Freud's understanding of totemism is based on Australian system of totemism. While sieving and selecting the meaning of totemism given by McLennan, Frazer, Smith and other scholars, he concludes that:

"The totem is first of all the tribal ancestor of the clan, as well as its tutelary spirit and protector; it sends oracles and, though otherwise dangerous, the totem knows and spares its

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<sup>89</sup> Jones, *The Secret of the Totem*, 270.

<sup>90</sup> Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 1953, xiii.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>92</sup> Leendert F. Groenendijk, "Neurosis" *The Freud Encyclopaedia, Theory, Therapy, and Culture*, Edward Erwin, ed., (New York, London: Routledge, 2002), 363.

children. The members of a totem are therefore under a sacred obligation not to kill (destroy) their totem, to abstain from eating its meat or from any other enjoyment of it. Any violation of these prohibitions is automatically punished. The character of a totem is inherent not only in a single animal or single being but in all the members of the species. From time to time festivals are held at which the members of a totem represent or imitate, in ceremonial dances, the movements and characteristics of their totems.”<sup>93</sup>

Within this understanding, Freud builds up a psychoanalytical theory of totemism. For him, another totemic phenomenon that has psychoanalytic significance that in totemism, “almost everywhere the totem prevails there also exist the law that the members of the same totem are not allowed to enter into sexual relations with each other; that is, they cannot marry each other.”<sup>94</sup> This prevented in-breeding, through exogamy. In order to understand this totemic phenomenon deeper, Freud utilized the Darwinian conception of “primal horde” who “speculated that the primitive man lived in small groups ruled over by a dominating and powerful father who appropriated all women and kept them from his sons and younger males. The latter then rebelled, killed the ‘primal father’ and cannibalized him.”<sup>95</sup> Charles Darwin theories attracted Freud very much to the extent that he wrote in his autobiography that; “the theories of Darwin, which were then of topical interest, strongly attracted me, for they held out hopes of extraordinary advance in our understanding to the world.”<sup>96</sup> Freud saw Darwin’s hypothesis in his book the *Descent of Man* as about the primal social state of man. According to Freud, Darwin explains the life of the primitive man who lived originally in small primal hordes in which the jealousy of the oldest and strongest male prevented sexual promiscuity by controlling the sexual access of all females. In primitive societies, there is always a contest for mastery, and the strongest of all kills and drives out other males and establishes him as the head of the community.<sup>97</sup> The younger males who were ejected by the powerful male may have been successful in winning and stealing sexual partners, and therefore found their own hordes and thus ensured the healthy consequence of out-breeding.<sup>98</sup> The ‘Darwinian primal horde’ was transformed by Freud into Oedipus complex because “the remorse by the sons for their ‘primal crime’- killing and cannibalism of their father- was transformed into

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<sup>93</sup> Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 2013, 9.

<sup>94</sup> Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 2013, 9.

<sup>95</sup> Richard J. Smith, “Darwin, Freud, and Continuing misrepresentation of Primal Horde,” in *Current Anthropology*, vol.57, No.6. (Dec. 2016):838. Accessed 07.02.2018, <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/688885>

<sup>96</sup> Sigmund Freud, Autobiographical Study. In Standard Edition, 1925,20 :3-70 as quoted by Frank J. Sulloway, Freud, *Biologist of the Mind* (London: Burnet Books,1979),13.

<sup>97</sup>See Freud, *Totem and Taboo*,2013, 91.

<sup>98</sup> See Frank J. Sulloway, Freud, *Biologist of the Mind* (London: Burnet Books, 1979), 375.

Oedipus complex, which phylogenetically transmitted to subsequent generations.”<sup>99</sup> Freud concluded that, the “origin of totemism is to be found in the oedipal situation.”<sup>100</sup> Oedipus inspired Freud to invent the theory for the Oedipus complex for understanding the early sexual development of human beings and the formation of primitive societies. For him, the childhood is very important stage for the later psychological development. This applies also to the early primitive societies; they also underwent the oedipal stage. Freud claims that the oedipal stage is “the great event with which culture began and which ever since has not let mankind come to rest.”<sup>101</sup> This oedipal stage according to Freud is the primitive totemic stage which according to him is the beginning of primitive religion. Freud sees the primitive parricide or murder as the foundation of totemism and other surrogate totemic figures like gods and kings.

Freud explained that the totem animal symbolized the primal father that was killed and cannibalized by the sons. The members of the clan are symbolized by the sons who killed the primal father. However, as the sons killed the father, they experienced “emotional ambivalence,” because they loved and at the same time hated, they envied and at the same time feared the dead primal father:

“Thus, after a long lapse of time their bitterness against their father, which had driven them to their deed, grew less, and their longing for him increased; and it became possible for an ideal to emerge which embodied the unlimited power and the primal father against whom they had once fought as well as their readiness to submit to him.”<sup>102</sup>

Those feelings of love and hate made the figure of the father to “become stronger in death than he had been while alive.”<sup>103</sup> Freud extrapolates this further to explain the reason why totem animals are not killed or eaten and if killed it is sacrificed through a ritual. According to him:

“Psychoanalysis has revealed to us that the totem animal is really a substitute for the father, and this really explains the contradiction that it is usually forbidden to kill the totem animal, that the killing of it results in a holiday and that the animal is killed and yet mourned. The ambivalent emotional attitude which to today still marks the father complex in our children and so often continues into adult life is also extended to the father substitute of the totem animal.”<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Richard J. Smith “Darwin, Freud, and Continuing misrepresentation of Primal Horde,” in *Current Anthropology*, vol.57, No.6. (Dec. 2016):839. Accessed 07.02.2018, <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/688885>

<sup>100</sup> Jones, *The Secret of the Totem*, 284.

<sup>101</sup> Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 1953, 145.

<sup>102</sup> Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 1953, 148.

<sup>103</sup> Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 1953, 148.

<sup>104</sup> Freud, *Totem und Taboo*, 2013,101.

According to Freud, totemism is the origin of the modern-day rituals and sacrifices and, therefore, the origin of taboos and morality. His opinion is that through the study of savage totemism, one can go deep to the sub-conscious of the society that has been handed from generation to generations in the psychological continuity<sup>105</sup> and doing that we can understand better what is happening in our society today.

#### 1.3.4.3. Influence on the Future Debate

The contribution of Freud to the debate on totemism from the psychoanalytic perspective is immense, and his book *Totem and Taboo* is a classic in our modern times. A hundred years after its publishing, Freud's book remains an important subject of discussion among psychoanalysts and human sciences scholars.<sup>106</sup> Robin Fox invites the scientific community to look again at the book and see the “*ewige Wahrheiten*” (eternal truths) there.<sup>107</sup> In his opinion, the rediscovery of *Totem and Taboo* will eventually lead to new discussions and critiques of this book. The psychological approach of Freud to totem and taboo as parallel phenomena to those found amongst neurotics has called for more research in a new field of psychology and ethnopsychology. Gerhard Kubik in his book, ‘*Totemismus, Ethnopsychologische Forschungsmaterialien und Interpretationen aus Ost- und Zentralafrika, 1962-2000,*’ gives a new impulse to the approach of Freud totemism in our time. Kubik shows that totemism is common phenomenon in East Africa. He made research on psychological anthropology with a psychoanalytic approach to the phenomena of totemism that helps to understand the relationship between the culture of people and their thinking.<sup>108</sup>

The status of psychoanalytic in anthropology has been growing with the aim of understanding the relationship between the individual and social-cultural phenomena.<sup>109</sup> The Freudian psychoanalytic interpretation of culture has enriched the anthropological research from the psychoanalytic perspective.<sup>110</sup> The impact of Freud and psychoanalysis on anthropology cannot be underestimated in our time. With respect to the importance of

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<sup>105</sup> See Jones, *The Secret of the Totem*, 288.

<sup>106</sup> See Eberhard Th. Hass (Hg.), *100 Jahre Totem und Tabu, Freud und die Fundamente der Kultur* (Giessen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2012), 7.

<sup>107</sup> See Robin Fox, “Ein neuer Blick auf Totem und Tabu” in: *100 Jahre Totem und Tabu, Freud und die Fundamente der Kultur*, 33.

<sup>108</sup> See Gerhard Kubik, *Totemismus, Ethnopsychologische Forschungsmaterialien und Interpretationen aus Ost- und Zentralafrika, 1962-2000* (Munster: Lit Verlag, 2004), 120.

<sup>109</sup> Philip Bock, *Re-Thinking Psychological Anthropology* (New York, Oxford: W.H. Freeman, 1988), 1.

<sup>110</sup> See Géza Róheim, “Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Culture,” in *Man and his Culture*, ed. Warner Muensterberger (New York: Taplinger, 1969), 31.

animals for psychoanalysis, Salman Akhtar and Vamik Volkan, in their book *Mental Zoo*, although not directly connected with the topic of totemism, show the influence of animal symbolism on our internal images that serve as a reservoir of our projections.<sup>111</sup> The relationship between man and animals is important in the human life. It can be a positive relationship that has healthy effects on the mind, or it can be pathological in the sick mind:

“Freud emphasized the essential similarity between man and animals both in the physical and mental realms [...] Freud offered a panorama of notions about the kinship between man and animals, the role of domesticated and wild animals in the mental development of a child, and significance of animals in evolution or amelioration of psychopathology.”<sup>112</sup>

Today, we observe the interest in animal symbolism in the psychoanalytic field and the psychiatric practice. The importance of animal symbolism in human development and growth is continuously increasing. Animals have had a meaning for us in the past societies and also today. It is because “our internal and external worlds are inextricably intertwined, and that animals play an important role in both of them”.<sup>113</sup> Philip Escoll who is a practicing psychiatrist, writes how dogs in the past and today have an ambivalent relationship with human beings. On the one hand, dogs are “men’s best friends”, and on the other hand, they can be a source of many phobias.<sup>114</sup> Also Gerard Lucas, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst revisits totem and taboo in his book *The Vicissitudes of Totemism: One Hundred Years after Totem and Taboo*. This book exposes the complexity, the limitation and the relevance of Freud’s book *Totem and Taboo* after hundred years.<sup>115</sup> Totemism, therefore, fits into this rich understanding of the intrapsychic and interpersonal relation between animals and human beings and in the extension with the whole natural world.

### 1.3.5. *Emile Durkheim*

#### 1.3.5.1. Life and Work

David Emile Durkheim was born in 1858 at Epinal, France. He was born in a Jewish family and was predestined to be rabbi just like his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He studied at a rabbinical school in his early life, but later he decided not to follow the rabbinical tradition of his family. He joined the College d’Epinal and became

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<sup>111</sup> Salman Akhtar and Vamik Volkan, eds. *Mental Zoo, Animals in the Human Mind and its Pathology* (Madison: International University Press,2005), xiii.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., xiii.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., xvii.

<sup>114</sup> See Philip Escoll, “Man’s best Friend,” in Salman Akhtar and Vamik Volkan, eds. *Mental Zoo*, 2005, 127-159.

<sup>115</sup>See Gerard Lucas, *The Vicissitudes of Totemism: One Hundred Years after Totem and Taboo*, (London: Karnac,2015), 1.

an outstanding pupil and graduated with a baccalaureate.<sup>116</sup> He undertook preparatory studies in Paris before being admitted to the Ecole Normale Supérieure in 1879 which was “[...] a total institution bringing the young men of the elite from all over the France into close proximity and under rigorous discipline. It had a powerful effect upon them: here were formed lasting friendships that are fruitful for science, and ex-students retained fond memories of their intense years there.”<sup>117</sup>

In the Ecole Normale Supérieure he studied philosophy and psychology and graduated in 1882 with a thesis on *The Division of Labour in Society* which he dedicated to Montesquieu. In 1885, Durkheim visited universities in Germany meeting with famous scholars, especially Wilhelm Wundt. Durkheim acknowledges owing much to the Germans, to their schools where he acquired the sense of social reality, its organic complexity, and development.<sup>118</sup> After his return to France, Durkheim:

“Had a firmer grasp of observable and comparable elements of social life—customs, moral and legal codes, religious beliefs and practices, he had become more keenly aware of interdependence of economic and moral phenomena; he was clearer about the importance of looking for unintended consequences and at causes of which men are unconscious; he was even more firmly convinced of usefulness of organic analogy.”<sup>119</sup>

He briefly taught philosophy in the Lycee de Troyes and in the years 1887-1902 he taught social science and pedagogy at the University of Bordeaux. During this time, he published *On the Division of Labour* (1887), *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895) and *Suicide* (1897). Between 1902 and 1917 Durkheim joined the faculty of science in pedagogy in Sorbonne in Paris, and later the faculty of Science of Education and Sociology. At that time, he wrote his important major work *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912) which is a sociological study of the elementary forms of religion within the Aranda tribes of Australia after the research of Spencer and Gillen. Durkheim became a successful professor and administrator, and his courses and lectures were compulsory and obligatory for students seeking degrees in philosophy, history, literature, and languages.<sup>120</sup> His academic and administrative success was distracted by the outbreak of the First World War that killed some of his students and, especially, his son Andre. Durkheim died of stroke in 1917, leaving his book on morality unfinished.

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<sup>116</sup> See Steven Lukes, *Emile Durkheim, His Life and Work: A Historical and Critical Study* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 39.

<sup>117</sup> See *ibid.*, 46.

<sup>118</sup> See *ibid.*, 93.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

### 1.3.5.2. Contribution to the Debate

Durkheim's contribution to the debate on totemism is to be found in his book *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, maybe his most acknowledged work, certainly his main contribution to the sociology of religion. He called his insight of the importance of a sociological understanding of religion a "revelation":

"It was not until 1895 that I achieved a clear view of the essential role played by religion in social life. It was in that year that, for the first time I found the means of tackling the study of religion sociologically. This was a revelation to me. That the course of 1895 marked a dividing line in the development of my thought, to such an extent that all my previous research had to be taken up afresh in order to be made to harmonize with these new insights [...]. This re-orientation was entirely due to the studies of religious history which I had just undertaken, and notably to the reading of the works of Robertson Smith and his school."<sup>121</sup>

In book two of *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Durkheim differentiated explicitly the topic of totemic beliefs from the sociology of religion. For him, totemism is a social-religious institution giving examples of research done by anthropologists in Indian tribes of North America and Australia. The theories of McLennan and Smith influenced Durkheim's understanding of totemism. These two presented religion as a social phenomenon, maintaining the values of the group and consisting in the idealization, indeed divinization of then clan, which is composed of human beings, animals, and God, bound together by ties of blood and symbolized by the totem.<sup>122</sup>

The contribution of Durkheim to the debate on totemism took social meaning because for him; a totem is a name and emblem and more so it has a social function in the clan and the tribe at large because the totem of the clan is also the totem of each of the members of the clan. Totem becomes, therefore, a uniting emblem in the society. He compares a totem with a coat-of-arms. He stated that "the totem is not merely a name; it is an emblem veritable coat-of-arms whose analogies with the arms of heraldry have often been remarked."<sup>123</sup> Totem is therefore, the uniting symbol of the clan, and totems are not only drawn on the walls but also on the bodies of clan members. Durkheim stresses that "they do not put their coat-of-arms merely upon the things which they possess, but they put it upon their persons; they imprint it upon their flesh, it becomes part of them, and this world of representation is even far the more important one."<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>122</sup> See *ibid.*, 288.

<sup>123</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 2013, 79.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

The symbolization of totems plays a very important role in the thinking of Durkheim because this totemic representation in the form of totemic images, totemic tattoos and totemic symbols signifies the sacredness of the totem. He stresses that “totemic images are not only sacred things they are also the beings of the totemic species and the members of the clan.”<sup>125</sup> For Durkheim, therefore, totems are part of the sacred world of the primitive societies because for those societies:

“The field of religious things extends well beyond the limits within which seemed to be confined at first. It embraces not only the totemic animals and the human members of the clan; but since no known thing exist that is not classified in a clan and under a totem, there is likewise nothing which does not receive to some degree something of a religious character.”<sup>126</sup>

According to Durkheim, totemism deals substantially with the demarcation of the sacred and the profane. He noted that:

“[...] for the most part, these are animals or plants. The profane function of vegetables and even of animals is ordinarily to serve as food; then the sacred character of the totemic animal or plant is shown by the fact that it is forbidden to eat them. It is true that since they are sacred things, they can enter into the composition of certain mystical repasts, [...] they sometimes serve as veritable sacraments, yet normally they cannot be used for everyday consumption, whoever oversteps this rule, exposes himself to grave dangers.”<sup>127</sup>

To be sacred does not mean to be worshiped. Durkheim drew a clear line between totemism and animal worship. Totems are not gods but they belong to the sacred world, the relationship is not that of adoration but rather of two beings who are at the same level.<sup>128</sup> What brings about the sacredness of the totemic beings is the impersonal, anonymous force. Durkheim declared that:

“Totemism is the religion, not of such and such animals or men or images, but of anonymous and impersonal force, found in each of these beings but not to be confounded with any of them [...] We may say that it is the god adored by each totemic cult. It is an impersonal god, without the name, or history, immanent in the world and diffused in an innumerable multitude of things.”<sup>129</sup>

Durkheim compares the impersonal force, which is the totemic principle, with *mana*. Durkheim stated clearly that this impersonal religious force is the clan. For him, therefore, the totemic principle is the clan.

“Since religious force is nothing other than the collective and anonymous force of the clan, and since this can be represented in mind only in the form of the totem, the totemic emblem is like the visible body of the god. Therefore, it is from it that those kindly or dreadful

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>128</sup> See *ibid.*, 98.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 133.



actions seem to emanate, which the cult seeks to provoke or prevent; consequently, it is to it that the cult is addressed.”<sup>130</sup>

Therefore, the totemic principle is the collective and anonymous force of the clan only signified by the totem object that is projected and objectified. He asserted that the society is god and totem is an object of the society. For Durkheim totemic symbols played a dominant role. He stresses that:

“Without symbols, social sentiments could have only a precarious existence, though very strong as long as men are together and influence each other reciprocally, they exist only in the form of recollections after the assembly has ended, and when left to themselves, these become feebler and feebler; for since the group is now no longer present and active, individual temperaments easily gain the upper hand.”<sup>131</sup>

#### 1.3.5.3. Influence on the Future Debate

Durkheim introduces the sociological aspect to the debate on totemism and underlines the importance of the totem as a symbol of collective representation. He calls it an emblem of the society and compares its role with the role of the coat of arms or a flag in the society. He considers totems also as sacred because “the world of religious things is not one particular aspect of empirical nature; *it is superimposed upon.*”<sup>132</sup> According to him, social thought and social unity are factors which create religious objects; “Social thought, owing to imperative authority that is in it, has efficacy that individual thought could never have; by the power which it has over our minds, it can make us see things in whatever light it pleases; it adds to reality or deducts from it according to its circumstances.”<sup>133</sup>

Totems, therefore, are objects that represent the idea of the community. The object i.e. totem and the idea i.e. social thought are both important. Durkheim differentiates between ‘sacredness’ and ‘religion’, ascribing different meanings to each of them. By locating the sacred within the society, Durkheim brought a new meaning to the social and sacred nature of totems. For him the society is everything, the society is the real subjective totemic principle. The society gives meaning to objects, and individual members of the society follow it. That is why the sacred objects, according to Durkheim, varied depending on the meaning given them by the society. It is the society to decide what is sacred and what is profane. The socio-sacred nature of totems was never a great theme of debate. However, this thesis emphasizes the element of the inseparability of the religious

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<sup>130</sup> See *ibid.*, 161.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>132</sup> See *ibid.*, 162.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

nature from the social nature of totems in the totemic societies. The sacred and the social are intertwined within the society, and it cannot be separated. Durkheim concluded that the social is sacred and the sacred, according to him, is the society.

### 1.3.6. *Albert A. Goldenweiser*

#### 1.3.6.1. Life and work

Albert Alexandrovich Goldenweiser was born on January 29, 1880, in Kiev, Ukraine, in a Russian Jewish family. In 1900 his family emigrated to the United States of America. After attending school, Goldenweiser entered the Harvard University to study philosophy. Later he joined Columbia University with interest in the study of religion, and further specialized in anthropology. In 1910, he graduated with a Ph.D. under the guidance of the great American anthropologist Franz Boas (1858-1942). The title of his doctoral dissertation – published in the *Journal of American Folklore* in 1912 – was *Totemism: An Analytical Study*. He became an instructor at the Columbia University and, while in New York, he took an active part in a discussion group of young anthropologists, among them Robert Lowie (1883-1957) and Paul Radin (1883-1959). Between 1911 and 1913, Goldenweiser travelled several times through the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario for research purposes. He taught and lectured on social and cultural anthropology and theory at the Rand School of Social Science; the University of Oregon-Portland, Reed College, and the University of Wisconsin. He also became a member of the editorial board of the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*. He died of heart attack on July 6, 1940. His major publications include *Early Civilization: Introduction to Anthropology* (1922), *Robots and Gods: An Essay in Craft and Mind* (1931), *History Psychology and Culture* (1932), and *Anthropology: Introduction to Primitive Culture* (1937).

#### 1.3.6.2. Contribution to the Debate

Goldenweisers' main contribution to the debate on totemism can be found in his Ph.D. thesis, considered to be his most significant contribution, according to Wallis.<sup>134</sup> Another important contribution is his article the *Form and Content in Totemism*.<sup>135</sup> In his approach to cultural anthropology, he was strongly influenced by Franz Boas, the famous German-

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<sup>134</sup> See Wilson D. Wallis, "Alexander A. Goldenweiser," *American Anthropologist*, vol.43, no.2 (Apr.-Jun. 1941): 251, accessed 22.01.2016, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/662956>.

<sup>135</sup> See A.A. Goldenweiser, "Form and Content in Totemism," *American Anthropologist*, vol.20, no.3 (Jul., -Sep. 1918): 280-295, accessed 22.01.2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/660628>.

American anthropologist, who challenged the social evolutionary theories of 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>136</sup> Boas critiqued the stress on the similarities among primitive cultures and the effort to draw principles from this similarity. For Boas, “man was everywhere essentially the same, and men everywhere would react in the same fashion, given the same stimuli.”<sup>137</sup> Therefore, the similarities in cultures give no proof of their common origin. Boas stressed the individuality of each culture and the possibility of cultural diffusion among so-called “primitive” societies. For him, the emphasis should not be put on looking for common principles when studying cultures and their respective history and media; cultures have a complex background that should be analytically studied with the accent on individual variations within society.

This Boasian anthropology was the starting point for the approach of Goldenweiser to the study of totemism. In his doctor thesis, he critically analysed and compared totemic features from different cultures in Australia and British Columbia. He depended at first on Frazer’s definition that clan totemism “is both a religious and a social system.”<sup>138</sup> He formulated the list of characteristics typical for totemism; an exogamy clan, a clan’s name derived from the totem, a religious attitude towards the totem as a ‘friend’, ‘brother’, ‘protector’ etc., taboos or restrictions regarding the killing, eating (sometimes touching and seeing) the totem, and a belief in the descent from the totem.<sup>139</sup>

Goldenweiser believed that the division of community into exogamous groups is the core of the social nature of totemism. But by comparing analytically the clans of Australia with British Columbia he found out that although there are exogamous groups in both areas, “any attempt, however, to elaborate that most general analogy reveals a fundamental difference in development and present significance of social groups.”<sup>140</sup> The clans in Australian tribes are exogamous tribes, but “as a social unit, the Australian totem clan is conspicuously weak. Being in most cases exogamous only as part of the phratry, it is important only in the ceremonies; even hear the functions of the phratry are of equal, often of greater prominence.”<sup>141</sup> But in British Columbia, the local clan or the family unit is more important than the totem clan.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> See Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society*, 125-151.

<sup>137</sup> See *ibid.*, 131.

<sup>138</sup> Alexander Goldenweiser, “Totemism: An Analytical Study,” *The Journal of America Folklore*, vol.23, no.88 (Apr., -Jun. 1910): 180, accessed on 05.11.2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/534841>.

<sup>139</sup> See *ibid.*, 183.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>142</sup> See *ibid.*, 189.

However, if the clan name is derived from the totem, Goldenweiser finds this characteristic as superficial one. According to his research in British Columbia and Australia, they have indeed adopted the animal names for social groups but when analyzed further “the dissimilarities of conditions in the two areas becomes striking.”<sup>143</sup>

Despite the existence of totem names, they still have their difference because:

“If analysed still further, the dissimilarity of conditions in the two areas becomes striking. In Australia, the social groups that have totems invariably derive their names from them. If we take the crests of British Columbia to correspond roughly to the Australian totems, the eponymous functions of former appear to be more restricted and less uniform.”<sup>144</sup>

From the religious aspect of totemism Goldenweiser analyses the totemic religious belief under the descent from the totem and he comes to the conclusion that:

“We may say that the concept of the descent from the totem animal as an integral part of the totemic system is absent in British Columbia; but here the interaction of two distinct concepts-human descent and guardian spirit resulted in curious modifications of the human descent idea, some of which approximate rather closely the concept which is universal in Australia.”<sup>145</sup>

Goldenweiser further analyzed taboos and restrictions regarding the killing, eating, and sometimes touching or even seeing the totem. He accepted that taboo as important in Australian totemic system. To eat the animal or to kill the totem animal in some communities in Australia was taboo. The taboo phenomena were common in Australia, but according to him, there were not only totemic taboos, but also other taboos without relation to totemism. As he further analyzed, he discovered that in British Columbia taboo does not figure among the features of totemism.<sup>146</sup> So, for Goldenweiser taboo phenomena are not exclusive traits of totemism. Furthermore, taboos associated with totemism are not found in all societies practicing any form of totemism. Goldenweiser continued to discuss and analyse the totemic magical ceremonies which have been considered to be an important aspect of totemism. As he analysed further, he found out that:

“Magical ceremonies intended to preserve or increase the food-supply are thus seen to be a by no means a unfamiliar not unimportant feature in the daily life the tribes of British Columbia. Here, however, these ceremonies have no reference whatsoever to totemic animals, and stand quite apart from all totemic beliefs and practices.”<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 207.

The association of the reincarnation of ancestral spirits with totemism was also considered to be important. But Goldenweiser found out that:

“The belief in reincarnation may thus be said to be entertained to greater or less extent by the tribes of British Columbia. In Australia, however, this belief has become an integral part of a complex system of beliefs and ceremonies, and in a great many tribes the central fact of their totemic organization. In British Columbia, on the other hand, no such process has taken place. The belief in reincarnation exists as a psychological detail in the lives of these Indians; but it has not affected their other beliefs and practices. We find no trace of it in the ancestral traditions of their clans and families; nor did it become associated with the many rites and ceremonies which form part of their totemic clan organization and of their secret societies.”<sup>148</sup>

The idea of the guardian spirits and secret societies as a common aspect of totemism was analysed by Goldenweiser. He found out that these are common in the thought and the life of the tribes of British Columbia. But in Australia, the guardian spirits are not familiar, or if they are there, they are not very important to the natives. Goldenweiser finds out that the guardian spirit aspect fails to assert itself to any marked degree.<sup>149</sup>

Another important religious aspect of totemism is the totemic art in the form of totem poles.<sup>150</sup> In British Columbia the totem poles are important features “erected in front of the houses and decorated with carvings, which generally represent the legendary history of the clan or family, but may also represent the other history, or the crests of the husband, the wife, or both.”<sup>151</sup> The totemic poles and other animal designs and carvings formed the British Columbian art and the material carvings. Totemic poles therefore were one of many forms of people’s culture.

“Designs and carvings figure prominently in the myths of these peoples, and through the medium of totem-poles become the material depositories of their mythological concepts. Here masks and carvings, together with songs and dances, are the property of the clans, families, and individuals; and their possession leads to that most cherished goal, social rank. The relation, finally, of this art to the crests, being part passive, is also active: it does not merely reflect the totemic ideas of the people, but creates them.”<sup>152</sup>

However, in the central Australia, Goldenweiser found out the existence of decorative elements but, “a total absence of suggestive realistic motives prevents the art of this region

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>149</sup> See *ibid.*, 220.

<sup>150</sup> Totem Poles are native art (especially in British Columbia) of long poles and on it the natives engrave their totem emblems. They were not worshiped but they were highly respected, revered and held sacred because of their historic importance of the curved figures. These curved figures depicted, myths, legends, tribal traditions of the natives. These poles were placed strategically in front of the individual house or in front of the leader of the clans, so that I will represent every individual that belonged to the clans. For more information about Totem Poles see Marius Barbeau, *Art of the Totem* (Surrey, B.C.: Hancock House, 1984), 6-7, and L. L. Bales, “Totem Poles,” *Outdoor Life- A Sportsman’s Magazine of the West*, Vol.21, no.5 (1920), 423-441.

<sup>151</sup> Goldenweiser, “Totemism, An Analytical Study,” 220.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

from playing an active part in the inner or outer life of the totemite.”<sup>153</sup> The art of central Australia therefore does not qualify to be totemic in its nature.

After comparing the Australian and British Columbia features of totemism, Goldenweiser found out, as also noticed by Lang, that “the differences, not the resemblance are ‘great and numerous’, and they must appear very convincing to the general reader.”<sup>154</sup> After analytically comparing all totemic features between British Columbia and Australian tribes, Goldenweiser concludes that “the comparison of totemism of British Columbia and of Australia brings out a rather striking contrast. Only in two points - exogamy and totemic names - does there seem to be agreement, but even here the conditions are not really analogous.”<sup>155</sup>

Despite the big dissimilarity between totemism in British Columbia and Australia, Goldenweiser gives three related definitions of totemism. The first definition is that; “totemism is the tendency of definite social units to become associated with objects and symbols of emotional value.”<sup>156</sup> The second related definition is that; “totemism is the process of specific socialization of objects and symbols of emotional value.”<sup>157</sup> The last definition which becomes the summary of all other definitions is that “totemism is the specific socialization of emotional values”. Goldenweiser calls these definitions ‘dynamic’ and ‘general’ that cover a totemic phenomenon that is complex. In his article in 1918, he comes to the conclusion that it was even unreasonable to define the complex totemic phenomenon. Instead, a conceptualized description can be enough.<sup>158</sup> What is visible in his definition is the disappearance of the religious aspect of totemism. He found out that there is too little religiousness in totemism and saw it right to replace it with the aspect of “emotional value of totemism.” Because the religious aspect of totemism is “so attenuated, that it seemed impossible to particularize the content in a definition, and hence the concept ‘emotional values’ was introduced for the totemic content.”<sup>159</sup> The social aspect of totemism remains in his definition of totemism because at the end of a critical survey he “arrived at the conclusion that the social aspect was all-important in totemism,

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>154</sup> Andrew Lang, “Discussion and Correspondence: Method in the Study of Totemism”, in *American Anthropologists*, vol.14, no.2 (Apr.-Jun.,1912): 370, accessed 05.11.2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/659938>.

<sup>155</sup> Goldenweiser, “Totemism, An Analytical Study”, 229.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>158</sup> See Goldenweiser, “Form and Content in Totemism”, 282.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 281.

in the fact that totemism or any particular totemic complex represents a specific socialization of certain religious attitudes.”<sup>160</sup> Goldenweiser, therefore, gives totemism a new meaning: he does away with the idea suggested by anthropologists before him, that totemism was an initial stage in the history of religions. The older standpoints in the debate on totemism became obsolete, contradictory, and some of the fieldwork it rested upon was shown to be methodically wrong. While responding to Mr Lang on the method in the study of totemism, Goldenweiser emphasises that: “Thus the concept is reached that in totemism we deal with a phenomenon of association of various ethnic features, of features essentially heterogeneous in their natures, and independent in their histories.”<sup>161</sup>

### 1.3.6.3. Influence on Future Debate

Goldenweiser is one of the major anthropologists who changed the future debate on totemism. In his analytical approach, the idea that totemism was a uniform phenomenon found in different cultures as a stage in the evolution of social life was deconstructed, the religious component of totemism was abandoned, and the stress was put on the differences of phenomena lumped together under the concept of “totemism”. With this approach, the understanding of totemism was totally changed. The understanding of totemism as an important natural, objective symptom of a primitive society was challenged. Totemism was seen more like an artificial and subjective feature ascribed to primitive societies. The totemic phenomena disintegrated, the totemic secret was laid bare in the sense that there is a) no relation between all features labelled as “totemic”, and b) between “totemic” communities there are more differences than similarities.

The stress on the distinctiveness in character in different areas challenged the central understanding of totemism, and the theory of totemism could not be sustained. The questions that had been central for Victorian anthropologist<sup>162</sup> were not important any longer. Goldenweiser opened the discussion for a new group of young anthropologists who not only questioned the approach of the former anthropologists in answering central questions raised on the topic but were also conscious about those questions in themselves, as questions of that sort that anthropologist no longer asks.<sup>163</sup> One of the major

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>161</sup> A.A. Goldenweiser, “Andrew Lang in the Study of Totemism,” *American Anthropologist*, vol.14, no.2 (Apr.-Jul. 1912): 383, accessed 04.02.2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/659939>.

<sup>162</sup> See Jones, *The Secret of the Totem*, 2005, 304.

<sup>163</sup> See *ibid.*, 303.

anthropologists who was influenced by the American Boasian anthropological approach to totemism, was Claude Lévi-Strauss.

### 1.3.7. Claude Lévi-Strauss

#### 1.3.7.1. Life and Work<sup>164</sup>

Claude Lévi-Strauss was born on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1908 in Brussels, Belgium. He is regarded as one of the most important anthropologist of contemporary anthropology and as the main representative of the theory of structuralism in anthropology. Although not seen as an ethnographer with merits in fieldwork, his contributions to anthropology and other social sciences made him one of the most famous ethnologists, anthropologist, and philosopher of the twentieth century. In this vein, Kuper commented in his obituary that; “Claude Lévi-Strauss had only slightest experience of ethnographic fieldwork, and had no formal training in anthropology. Nevertheless, his ideas transformed the discipline and profoundly influenced the other human sciences.”<sup>165</sup> Lévi-Strauss studied philosophy and law at the Sorbonne University of Paris and graduated in 1931. His interest in ethnology arose when he joined the French contingent to Brazil from 1934 to 1939. There, he taught sociology at the University of Sao-Paolo while doing fieldwork research among some of the indigenous inhabitants of Brazil. The outbreak of the Second World War forced him to return to France. He, later, went to New York and became an informal member of the anthropological circle at Columbia University. The crucial experience for Lévi-Strauss was the period he spent in New York during the World War II. At this time, he met important scholars among them the American anthropologist Franz Boas and the Russian phonologist and semiotician Roman Jakobson. who introduced him to the methods of structural linguistics, which he later applied in his work. Lévi-Strauss became French attaché in New York and later returned to France. In Paris, he received the doctor title at Sorbonne University after defending his two doctoral theses on *The Family and Social Life of the Nambikwara Indians* and *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Later, he was appointed the chair of comparative religion at the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* at the Sorbonne. In 1960 he took up the chair of anthropology in *Collège de France*. In 1973

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<sup>164</sup> See Christopher Johnson, *Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Formative Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Adam Kuper, Obituary, “Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009),” *Nature, International Weekly journal of Science*, 482,862(Dec. 2009), accessed online on 08.02.2016 <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v462/n7275/full/462862a.html>

<sup>165</sup> Adam Kuper, “Obituary, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009)”, In *Nature, International Weekly journal of Science*, of 16<sup>th</sup> Dec.2009, accessed 08.02.2016, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20016590>.



he was elected to the *Académie Française*. After his retirement, Lévi-Strauss became an active researcher and author, receiving honors and awards from several famous universities and institutions. Lévi-Strauss died in 2009, one week before his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday.

In his lifetime, Lévi-Strauss published numerous books and wrote a lot of academic articles. Some of his major works include *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949), *The World on the Wane* (1955), *Structural Anthropology* (1961), *The Savage Mind* (1962), *Totemism* (1962), and four volumes of *Mythologiques* (1964-1971). He published a lot of other books and articles on music, poetry, and art. He also held numerous interviews and talks. Lévi-Strauss' most important contribution to anthropology is his theory of structuralism. According to Christopher Johnson; "Lévi-Strauss believed that linguistics, following the groundbreaking work of Ferdinand de Saussure earlier in the century, had been the only discipline within the so-called human sciences to have achieved a level of analytical consistency comparable to that of natural science."<sup>166</sup>

He wanted, therefore, to follow the same methodology to produce an analytical system in anthropology. For him, the culture is a system with structures that are common in all societies in the world. When these cultural structures are found out, it is possible to analytically explain and understand the complex societal phenomenon based on a method with scientific consistency. He searched for a real, simplifying and explanatory approach to anthropology. He put a great hope in structural linguistics which, according to him, could be of a great help for scientific anthropology through its objective and rigorous approach. He rejected evolutionist's and diffusionist's interpretations of society advocated by British functionalism.<sup>167</sup> He concluded his critique that: "The 'cycles' or cultural 'complexes' of the diffusionist, like the 'stages' of the evolutionist, are the product of an abstraction that will always lack the corroboration of empirical evidence. Their history remains conjectural and ideological"<sup>168</sup>

Lévi-Strauss believed that the structural approach to anthropology and other human sciences would bring consistency in anthropology. For him, the theory of structuralism reduces the massive information that we find in anthropology and human sciences to the

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<sup>166</sup> Johnson, Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Formative Years*, 2.

<sup>167</sup> See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 5.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

essential elementary structures which can be scientifically analyzed. After finding the elementary structures through structural analysis, they can be compared with other structures of similar phenomena in other cultures. The phenomena and the origin of the phenomena are not as important as the relationship between the phenomena.

#### 1.3.7.2. Contribution to the Debate

Lévi-Strauss' contribution to the debate on totemism is found mostly in his two books *Totemism* and *The Savage Mind*. He began this discussion by stating that; "totemism is like hysteria, in that once we are persuaded to doubt that it is possible arbitrarily to isolate certain phenomena and to group them together as diagnostic signs of an illness, or of an objective institution, the symptoms themselves vanish or appear refractory to any unifying interpretation."<sup>169</sup> Because the mind of the scholar plays a greater role than the mind of the studied, Lévi-Strauss concluded that the mind of the anthropologist created totemism to differentiate societies. He observed that:

"Totemism made possible a differentiation of societies which was almost as radical, if not by relegating certain of them into nature ( a procedure well illustrated by the very term *Naturvölker*), at the least by classing them according to their attitude towards nature, as expressed by place assigned to man in animal kingdom and by their understanding or alleged ignorance of mechanism of procreation."<sup>170</sup>

Totemism, therefore, was helpful for anthropologist to separate the savage man from the civilized man and, according to the analysis of Lévi-Strauss, totemism was rather a creation of Victorian anthropologists than a phenomenon to be found among the so called "savages". According to him the cultural phenomena are artificially united and hence, cause a confusion to the understanding of the phenomena labelled as "totemic". He underscores that:

"When we speak of totemism we really confuse two problems. The first problem is that posed by the frequent identification of human beings with plants or animals, which has to do with the very general view of the relationship between man and nature, relations which concern art and magic as much as society and religion. The second problem was that of the designation of groups based on kinship, which may be done with the aid of animal or vegetable terms but also in many other ways. The term "totemism" covers only cases in which there is a coincidence of the two orders."<sup>171</sup>

According to Lévi-Strauss, totemism is an illusion that fascinated great minds for a long time but today is unreal.<sup>172</sup> In reality, "totemism" had been created by the scholars, as

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<sup>169</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, trans. Rodney Needham (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), 1.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>172</sup> See *ibid.*, 15.

mentioned in this work. It only existed in the imagination of evolutionist anthropologists who constructed a system out of the culture of the primitive people. For him totemism is nothing more than a savage classification tool, which; “is a privileged example from which to disengage transcendent structures of thought [...] as a form of concrete intellectuality, a homemade science (bricolage) using categories that were “on hand” in natural environment.”<sup>173</sup> Although totemism has been a problem to scholars for a long time, for Lévi-Strauss totemism was not a problem at all. Instead, it was an ordinary way of savage thought, and the natural species are chosen not because they are “good to eat” but because they are “good to think.”<sup>174</sup>

### 1.3.7.3. Influence on the Future Debate

Lévi-Strauss influence on the future debate on totemism was tremendous. He can be counted as the anthropologist who attempted to put an end to the decades-long discussion of totemism, although the idea of dismissing that concept had already started in the United States during his life-time.<sup>175</sup> He was the one who gave totemism a “final blow”. In her book *Thinking with Things*, Esther Pasztory claims that; “Lévi-Strauss put an end to almost a century of European obsession with totemism.”<sup>176</sup> In our opinion, it was not about putting an end to the “totemism” phenomenon but rather to the Victorian understanding of it as an irrational aspect of the primitive people. For Lévi-Strauss the totemic classification is a rational system and not traditional mythic mumbo-jumbo.<sup>177</sup> Lévi-Strauss understood the primitive mind as a rational and logical thinker. He saw the reason and the logic in the totemic phenomena and so totemism is one of the logical categories in that primitive men as well as civilized men classify and order their experience of natural phenomena spontaneously and frequently irrespective of the economic and social value of objects classified.<sup>178</sup>

An implementation of rationality to totemism was a radical approach; it meant to rationalize the totemic phenomena, to dismiss an old meaning of totemism, and to redefine the name totemism anew. The Boasian anthropologists and Lévi-Strauss opened

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<sup>173</sup> James Clifford, *Person, Myth* (London: Duke University Press, 1992), 177.

<sup>174</sup> Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, 89.

<sup>175</sup> See Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, 8.

<sup>176</sup> Esther Pasztory, *Thinking with Things, Toward a New Vision of Art* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2005), 17.

<sup>177</sup> See *ibid.*, 17.

<sup>178</sup> See C. R. Badcock, Lévi-Strauss, *Structuralism and Sociological Theory* (London: Hutchison & Co., 1975), 44.

up a new horizon in the understanding of totemism. The old Victorian irrational totemism had to “die” but unfortunately, a “new” rationalized totemism lacked all the former anthropological attractiveness. The word totem was deprived of any meaning it had before. Totemism, therefore, never fitted well with the structural and analytical rationality method of the anthropologists of late 20<sup>th</sup> century. For them, totemism critically analysed as a universal phenomenon, became an illusion. Lévi-Strauss is criticised for his radical scientific understanding of totemism. But when totemism is understood from another perspective, the perspective of traditional people, then it will make an important topic to the cultures practicing it and even to the researching anthropologists. The mistake of Lévi-Strauss approach was his desire to make totemism intelligible to himself and to his readers by using rigorous structuralists scientific methods. With this method totemism lost its lustre.

In 21<sup>st</sup> century, cultural practices should be understood from the perspective of the people practicing it. From such perspective, the cultural practice, that previously seemed to be meaningless, might become meaningful and attractive to the research. Totemism, therefore, should be revisited and understood anew.

#### **1.4. General Critique to the Historical Debate**

##### *1.4.1. Encouraging Elements in the Debate*

The complexity of totemic phenomena is visible in the forgoing debates. Despite its complexity, one should not miss the fact of the general development of the debate. The discussion progressed in collaboration with the general development of thought in the ethnological and anthropological sciences. The thought in the British and French Enlightenment and its philosophical environment of social evolution brought a great interest in the primitive societies. It is interesting that the topic of primitive societies was very important at universities to the extent that it was one time treated as a branch of legal studies.<sup>179</sup> The phenomenon of totemism was brought into the academic world by McLennan. He was a lawyer who investigated the development of marriage, the family and private property and state.<sup>180</sup> The totemic discussions were opened firstly to anthropologists and sociologists, and later also to psychoanalysts, hence making the

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<sup>179</sup> See Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society*, 3.

<sup>180</sup> See *ibid.*, 3.

debate more complex but simultaneously more attractive. The interesting part of the totemic discussion at this early stage was the political and religious interest in the origins of humanity, the origins of religion and the origin of social structures, like marriage laws. This interest was accompanied by scientific research and fieldwork that was aimed at finding out the primitive reality on the ground. The interest in a primitive mentality was boosted by European expansion in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its intellectual, political, social and religious superiority. This expansion to other lands or new territories, the encounter with new cultures, waked interest and encouraged to research all over the world. In this time, many writings about the life and culture of the primitive societies were published. Most of research were done under aspect of comparison the primitive societies with the civilized societies of Europe. Most of the classical books written about the culture and the way of life of the indigenous societies were written at this time. The European universities became the melting pot of these anthropological and ethnological discussions. The ethnological journals became the academic field of discussion. The old information was compared and updated with the new fresh information coming from the field of research. The comparative method of specific cultures of the world generated a lot of information and encouraged more research. It was an intellectual fascination for some researchers to see similarities between primitive cultures. The four volumes of Frazer's *Totem and Exogamy* falls on this comprehensive totemic information attempted to compare totemic phenomena present in the world. Although it has its own methodological weakness, one should not underrate the importance of its information. The research that was carried out produced a pool of information that was not only useful for the past but also for today. The new scholars of anthropology and the members of these communities can refer to them and see how these cultures are at the present. Considering a dynamic character of culture, one can observe whether some elements of culture of 18<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century have disappeared or are differently practiced today. The wide research and publications on totemism are today classical books. They are materials of cultural reference for today's and for the future generations. This cultural written reference material is not congruous, but as a scholar, one should have the courage to peruse them and to pick up the essential information that can be helpful to the present and the future generations. One should not end in reading the anthropological data of the past societies only as historical prose but should see its value to the present time. The research of the past cultural phenomena like

totemism was more aimed for a better understanding of the present time and an attempt to shape the future.

#### *1.4.2. Negative in the Debate*

The historical debate on totemism and research, though healthy, was always performed within a historical period and within a school of thought. In the historical debates, the ethnographers, anthropologists, and psychoanalysts understood totemic phenomena as a historical and philosophical framework. From the discussion, it is noticeable that the framework always shifts and so likewise the shift in the understanding of totems. The debate on totemism, therefore, has seen different understanding and interpretation that has necessitated different definitions, different theories, and meaning of totemism. This shift was also enlivened by the new research methods and new discoveries in the field.

The already mentioned European expansion and cultural evolution philosophy of 19<sup>th</sup> century not only encouraged movement from Europe and scientific research but also propagated the European worldview. Evolutionism was the philosophy of the time, and that is why totemism was understood firstly from the social theory of social evolutionism of placing all cultures within stages in evolution. The anthropologists, Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881), Edward Burnet Tylor (1832-1917) and Lubbock (1834-1913) spread unilineal social evolutionism that affected the anthropological thinking in Europe and in America in the 19th century.<sup>181</sup> The cultures were all classified into specific phases of evolution. The primitive stage or the savage stage signified the lowest and simplest stage of development. Totemism was therefore placed at this stage, and was interpreted as a stage of primitive religion, which was extended to mean the origin of religion. The social evolution theories of totemism are today interpreted differently. Totemism cannot be understood as the first stage in the development of religion because totemism is a more complex phenomenon as it was once thought. It is part of the complex whole of the culture of the people.

Boasian school of thought and Lévi-Strauss rejection of social evolutionary approach, signify the change in historical and philosophical framework. The “revolution in anthropology”<sup>182</sup> shattered the social evolutionary foundation that totemism was founded and understood. They “criticized the evolutionist’s preoccupation with the speculative

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<sup>181</sup> See Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society*, 64.

<sup>182</sup> Stocking, Jr., *After Tylor; British Social Anthropology 1888-1951*, 10.

search for origins of various aspects of culture, especially for their faith that certain contemporary primitive peoples represent primordial cultures.”<sup>183</sup> This paradigm shift of evolutionary foundation of totemism changed the understanding of totemism. The Boasian school stressed more diversity, particularity, and singularity of cultures. Moreover, Elman R. Service sees this as “the essential negativity of Boasian anthropology especially in its aversion to classification and generalization.”<sup>184</sup> This approach to the debate on totemism has created a danger to the understanding of totemism which throughout has been founded on generalization. There was, therefore, a need to understand totemism anew, and this project was stressed by redefining totemism. This effort of redefining totemism robbed totemism of its attractiveness by depriving its universality and its religious element. This made the term totemism anthropologically irrelevant and contributed to the disappearance of totemism in the anthropological debate as noticed by Lévi-Strauss.<sup>185</sup>

### 1.5. Resume

The concept of totemism has undergone a long historical period of understanding and misunderstanding through research and discussion. The above discussion is only a part of the big totemic discussion in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The long historical, intellectual fascination of the phenomena of totemism and its disappearance today is raising questions: Was totemism an illusion? Or was totemism misunderstood? Alternatively, was totemism over-understood or over analyzed using the wrong method? The questions call for more research in this theme of totemism.

The big problem of indigenous cultural practices is that they have been denied rationality in the past and are even today. Pasztory captures this core problem in the historical scholarship of indigenous people that:

“Totemism and the associated denigration of the primitive reasoning faculty lapsed in the Western imagination in the second half of the twentieth century, even before Lévi-Strauss gave it a final blow. It has been replaced by an equally exaggerated appreciation of irrational, especially in the form of shamanism. The concept of primitive mind has not changed; the emphasis is still on the irrational, the magic, and the ecstatic, but now they are seen in positive terms. These days’ primitives are accorded extrasensory perception and sensitivity that is beyond plodding ‘rational’ Westerners. Thus, although primitives have become overvalued, yet again they are denied rationality.”<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Service, *A Century of Controversy*, 168-169.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>185</sup> Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, 1962, 5.

<sup>186</sup> Pasztory, *Thinking with Things*, 18.

Totemism therefore needs to be revisited to discover its value and rationality.

Bradd Shore is one among the modern cultural anthropologist scholars who attempts to discover rationality in totemism. His book *Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the Problem of Meaning*, links the relationship between multiculturalism and cognitive theory. According to Shore, anthropologists have overlooked the tension that arises between psychic unity and cultural diversity. He observes that:

“Despite its status as theoretical and moral bedrock of modern anthropology, the idea of psychic unity has always had uncomfortable relationship with the idea of culture as a key element in human life. The philosophical commitment of Enlightenment anthropology has had uneasy relationship with the empirical evidence of human diversity-evidence amassed by generations of travellers, missionaries and professional ethnologists. Yet long with psychic unity, cultural anthropology had adopted cultural diversity as its defining issue. Anthropologist have typically defended cultural difference as a defining human characteristic while repeatedly affirming their faith in humankind’s psychic unity, usually without noting the apparent tension between these two views.”<sup>187</sup>

Shore highlights the importance of culture as element of the mind and, therefore, its importance in a cognitive science. Shore rightly observes that: the idea of culture as a component of the mind adds a critical and often under-developed middle level of analysis in cognitive science.”<sup>188</sup> Cultural cognition that comes in form of cultural models can link anthropology and cognitive science. Shore linked culture and cognitive science and he found out that culture is important in the development of the mind and therefore has to be taken seriously. The human mind develops because it is open to the human world, which is a world of culture. Mind and culture therefore should not be separated as it was done by the Victorian anthropologists.<sup>189</sup> Cultural knowledge in a big way affects the thinking of the people. Totemism is a cultural knowledge and is a part of the thinking of the people who practice it. Shore notes the different kinds of rationality namely; logical rationality, contemplative reason, conscious reason, causal reason, calculating rationality, functional rationality, communicative rationality, empirical rationality and contextual rationality.<sup>190</sup> Therefore there is not only one type of rationality. According to Shore, the empirical and contextual rationality is relevant in the understanding of totemism. However, totemism can violate logical rationality but it is in line with empirical and contextual rationality.<sup>191</sup> Totemism, therefore, is reasonable and constitutes a part of

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<sup>187</sup> Bradd Shore, *Culture in Mind*, (Oxford Uni. Press, New York, 1996), 15.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>189</sup> See *ibid.*, 18.

<sup>190</sup> See *ibid.*, 169-170. It is a complex attempt of Shore to highlight the types of rationality. This study cannot delve deeper because it is a very wide academic field.

<sup>191</sup> See *Ibid.*, 181.



cultural knowledge. According to Shore; “Totemism will not be simply dismissed as a crucial problem of anthropologists to puzzle over. The attempt to reduce those peculiar and fascinating symbolic associations between humans and other forms of life that we call totemic to a logical operation devoid of practical interest will not close ethnographic study.”<sup>192</sup> Totemism should be taken as a practically logical cultural knowledge and as such, it affects the thinking and the actions of the people who practice it. Thus, totemism today should not only be perceived a survival of a primitive culture but more a culture present and alive in the mind of the people. Shore observes that:

“Not only is totemism equated with a single mode of thought, but it is profoundly misleading to associate totemism with certain kinds (or, even worse, stages) of culture. Though its forms have been transformed in relation to changes in the forms of social and physical reproduction, totemism is very much alive in the post-industrial world.”<sup>193</sup>

Totemic worldview, therefore, is in the mind and in the life of the people and that is why it should be revisited and understood anew today. The totemic “problem” that was an important theme for anthropologist in the early years was not really solved. The discussions and research on totemism proceeded for a very long time between anthropologists but were not totally concluded. Lévi-Strauss and Goldenweiser attempted to conclude it by pointing out the illusionary nature or non-existence of totemism. This conclusion has not settled some minds in the academic world, especially of those scholars coming from the totemic societies. Shore luckily points out one of the many problems of former debate:

“Part of the difficulty anthropologists have had in interpreting totemism has been a failure to take the natives seriously in their accounts of totemism and to consider totemic thought to be a kind of serious philosophical speculation on certain real-world problems. Paying serious attention to what the people whom we study have to tell us can prove quite enlightening, not simply as data for our theories but as a genuine contribution to our own theoretical speculations.”<sup>194</sup>

The present silence on the modern understanding and relevance of totemism in academic discussions has motivated the author of this thesis to rekindle the discussion again. This study revisits totemism as an intrinsic religious and social relationship between human beings and their totems. As part of the cultural inheritance of the people, it can be helpful in solving modern challenges, especially the challenge of relationship between human beings, and human beings and nature.

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 183.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. AFRICAN SACRED UNIVERSE AND TOTEMISM

#### 2.1. Preamble

Totemism is an inseparable part of the traditional understanding of the sacred. Therefore, to understand totemism one should understand the religious worldview of the indigenous people. Newell S. Booth Jr, formulates this important perspective of omnipresence of religion and its problematic that:

“It is precisely this omnipresence of religion that makes it difficult to get a secure grip on the subject; in fact, it was this that misled the Portuguese traveller into thinking that Africans had no religion. The distinction between all-pervasive religion and no religion at all is rather difficult to make and may depend on the perspective of the observer and the definition of religion with which he begins-consciously or unconsciously.”<sup>195</sup>

The sacred and the profane are intertwined because the sacred phenomena permeates in the daily activities. Although it is very difficult to generalize, most scholars have found out that religion is a common aspect in most ethnic communities. One of these aspects is the relatedness of all elements in the universe. The best word that can explain this relatedness is kinship. In the universe, the kinship exists between all members. These ties are generated by religion that animates every aspect of life. Jacob Olupona stresses the interconnected universe that:

“A porous border exists between the human realm and the sky, which belongs to the gods. Similarly, although ancestors dwell inside of the earth, their activities also interject into human space. African cosmologies portray the universe as fluid, active, and impressionable, with agents from each realm constantly interacting with one another.”<sup>196</sup>

This interactive perspective makes these cosmologies sacred and interrelated at all levels. The generalized approach to religions is made from the stand point of the Keiyo community, which is the main area of study in this thesis. This approach has been also encouraged by the writing of Booth who stressed that:

“Generalization be made on the basis of sympathetic knowledge of one local group. From this perspective, it is possible to look over the larger scene and identify continuities as well as discontinuities. All treatments of “African religion” are undoubtedly written from perspective of one part of Africa; this however is not always made clear to the reader, perhaps because it is not clear to the author. It is inevitable that African religion be approached from the perspective of the local position [...]”<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Newell S. Booth, Jr., “An Approach to African Religions,” in Newell S. Booth, Jr. ed., *African Religions* (New York: NOK Publishers International, 1977), 1-2.

<sup>196</sup> Olupona, *African Religions*, 4.

<sup>197</sup> Newell S. Booth, Jr., *African Religions*, 1977, 6.

## 2.2. Distribution of Totemism

The anthropologist and ethnologists have researched the existence of totemism in Africa. Frazer collected many ethnographic materials related to totemism in various parts of the world, Africa included. For him, totemic societies are well distributed in Africa especially in Central, East and Southern Africa, and few only in the northern part. Though, they were more developed and modern compared to the totemic systems in Australia.<sup>198</sup> Since Frazer was looking for the most primitive totemic system in the world, the African totemism never impressed much neither him nor most of the ethnologists. Totemism in Africa showed signs of development and contact with other communities. Frazer therefore just compiled and briefly explained the various totemic systems he had found out in Africa. It was Bernhard Ankermann (1859-1943), who compared and analysed the totemic forms and their distribution in Africa. In his article entitled "Distribution and Forms of Totemism in Africa" (*Verbreitung und Formen des Totemismus in Afrika*), Ankermann had an in-depth study of African totemism from what Frazer had compiled.<sup>199</sup> In his article, Ankermann thoroughly explained the following: the definition of totemism, the distribution of totemism, the types of totem, the type of relationship with the totem, how to treat the totem, totem names and the clan, the inheriting of the totem, and totem and exogamy.

At first, Ankermann used the definition of Frazer, and then went further to formulate his own definition which according to him meets the African understanding of totemism. For him "totemism is the belief that there exists a specific, everlasting and indissoluble kinship relationship between a clan and species of animals, plants, etc. which imposes upon both groups certain obligation."<sup>200</sup> Ankermann pointed out an important aspect in African totemism that between the totem and the clan exists a specific, everlasting and insoluble kinship (*ein Spezifisches ewiges und unlösbares Verhältnis.*) The relationship is everlasting and insoluble because 'clan and totem' are permanent and everlasting through procreation.

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<sup>198</sup> See Frazer, *Totem and Exogamy*, vol.4, 1910, 30.

<sup>199</sup>See Bernard Ankermann, "Verbreitung und Formen des Totemismus in Afrika" in; *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol.47, no. 2/3 (1915), 114-180.

<sup>200</sup> A personal translation from the original definition according to Ankermann that states "Totemismus ist der Glaube, das zwischen einer Gruppe von Blutsverwandtschaft (Sippe) einerseits und einer Gattung von Tieren, Pflanzen usw. andererseits eine Spezifisches ewiges und unlösbares Verhältnis besteht, das in der Regel als Verwandtschaft aufgefasst wird und beiden Teilen gewisse Verpflichtungen auferlegt." Bernard Ankermann, "Verbreitung und Formen des Totemismus in Afrika," 116.

The distribution of totemism in Africa was an important factor for Ankermann. He drew a map to show how common the totemic belief among the African clans is.<sup>201</sup> Looking at the map, totemism seems to be widely distributed in Africa, especially in the East Africa, where Ankermann calls it the headquarter of Totemism (*Hauptsitz des Totemism*).<sup>202</sup> From Niger to South Africa and even to Madagascar, there are traces of totemism. One can conclude that the totemic phenomena are common cultural practices in Africa.

Majority of various types of totems found in Africa, are animals. According to Ankermanns research, there are following types: 451 animal totems, 24 animal parts totems, 67 plant totems, 22 natural phenomena totems, and 65 who do not fall into these categories.<sup>203</sup> African totems, therefore, form a big part of the natural world. The common African totems are lion, leopard, hyena, dog, elephant, hippopotamus, wild pig, monkey, buffalo, antelope, cow, goat, sheep, birds, snakes, crocodile, lizard, frog, and insects. These are just a few types of totems.

What is essential about African totems is the art of the relationship between them and the clan. Ankermann noticed that this relationship is varying among communities, but most parts Africa consider totems as their relatives. Some clans, i.e. the Asante, call their totem animal “grandfather.”<sup>204</sup> That is linked to the belief that the clan originated from the totem, a belief in descendance from the totem (*Glauben an Abstammung*). Others, like the *Kadimu* clan, believe that the totem is the father of the clan (*Stammvater*).<sup>205</sup> Other clans, like Bena Lulua in Congo, call their totem “brother.”<sup>206</sup> Some clans believe that the totem animals possess the soul of the dead relatives of the clan. There are many different ways to express the relationship between the clan and its totem, but at the root of all is the belief in the close kinship. Ankerman classified names of totems in two groups. In the most African clans, the first group of the names for totem means something forbidden (*Verbotenes*). In other groups, the names of totem, show a sign of kinship (*Verwandtschaftsbezeichnung*).

Due to the belief that the clan and the totem are related, the totem must be revered and treated as a brother or a relative. Totemic rites and cults of totem are not very common in

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<sup>201</sup> See the map drawn by Bernard Ankermann, in: *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol.47,1915, at the end of the article

<sup>202</sup> See Bernard Ankermann, “Verbreitung und Formen des Totemismus in Afrika,” 122.

<sup>203</sup> See *ibid.*, 130-131.

<sup>204</sup> See *ibid.*, 134

<sup>205</sup> See *ibid.*, 137.

<sup>206</sup> See *ibid.*, 139.

Africa. But it is an imperative for the clan members to take care of their totem, do no harm, and in certain cases, it is a taboo to even eat the meat.<sup>207</sup>

According to Ankermann, totems are considered to be the members of the community and, in certain cases, welcomed to the clan celebrations. That happens when the ancestor cult meets with totemism. Some communities go even further, and have a celebrative communion with their totems to remember their blood brotherhood (*Blutsbrüderschaft*). This custom is practised especially among the Pangwe as reported by Trilles.<sup>208</sup> There are also some totem clans that can talk to their totems as a brother and hear them, i.e. the Kalenjin ethnic group in Kenya.

The naming of the clan after the totem name is a very common custom in African totemism. He gives an example from the Herero from Southern Africa who have clans who call themselves after the name of their totem chameleon (*essembi*) and the clan is called *Oroesembi*. Another clan call themselves after the sun (*ejuva*) and the clan name is *Ekuejuva*, while another clan call themselves after the rain (*ombura*) and the clan name is called *Ekuenombura*.<sup>209</sup> Among the Wachagga ethnic group there is a clan called *Muni-si* after the name of their totem. The name *Muni-si* means the Lord of Underworld, and is the name of a big snake. Concluding, within the whole African land, there are some clans that call themselves after the name of their totem but there are also exceptional cases.

An important part of Ankermann research was the theme of inheritance. How is the totem inherited from the parents? His research, based on Frazer's material, brought to light that in most clans, the children inherit the totem from the father. This is because most of the African ethnic communities are patrilineal. However, among the Chewa ethnic group whose lineage matrilineal, children inherit the totem from the mother. There is also a double inheritance (*Doublevererbung*) among the *Usukuma* and *Ukerewe* of East Africa. Then every child has more than one totem. That is a rather complicated system of totem inheritance.<sup>210</sup>

Totemism and exogamy in Africa, as stated by Ankermann show complex system of totemism. For a long time, the relation between totemism and exogamy was considered to be two sides of the same thing (*als zwei Seiten einer und derselben Sache*), because it was discovered that most of the communities practicing totemism, are also practicing

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<sup>207</sup> See *ibid.*, 153.

<sup>208</sup> See *ibid.*, 151.

<sup>209</sup> See *ibid.*, 154.

<sup>210</sup> See *ibid.*, 161.

exogamy. But is totemism and exogamy really the same thing? Most scholars have searched for the existence of exogamy in totemism but they have realised that exogamy and totemism are not the same thing. For example, the Bunyoro consists of many clans which bear the same name but have different totems, while other clans have the same totem but different names. But all practise strict exogamy to avoid marrying the person of the same totem or of the same name.<sup>211</sup> Comparing many examples across Africa, it was found that exogamy and totemism, in their origin, do not mean always the same thing.<sup>212</sup>

When we see totemism in Africa, there are differences in practice of totemism but there are also common features. Obviously, for totemic ethnic communities it is of a great importance to keep the relationship with their totem, with one another within the clan, and with the spiritual world of the ancestors. Though Ankermann removes the religious aspect of totemism from his definition, it remains an important traditional phenomenon. In order to understand the cultural art of thinking, one cannot separate it from the religious universe. This is because “the African world and practically all his activities in it are seen and experienced through a religious understanding and meanings in them.”<sup>213</sup> Cultural practices should be therefore understood from this perspective, otherwise they will be misunderstood. The great Nigerian poet and novelist Chinua Achebe ( 1930-2013) put it clearly that; “Africa is not only a geographical expression; it is also a metaphysical landscape - it is in fact a view of the world and of the whole cosmos perceived from a particular position.”<sup>214</sup> Contemplating the map of Ankermann, the collection of Frazer materials, and considering the historical migrations of people, one notices the importance of totems in various cultural communities. It is therefore feasible to understand totemism from the cultural philosophical point of view. This is because totemism is not an isolated belief system but it is part of the cultural worldview and a belief pattern of the ethnic communities. Although there are differences among ethnic groups, one cannot miss to notice a religious-philosophical connection between them especially in the understanding of totems. This is because totems are an integral part of the African philosophical and

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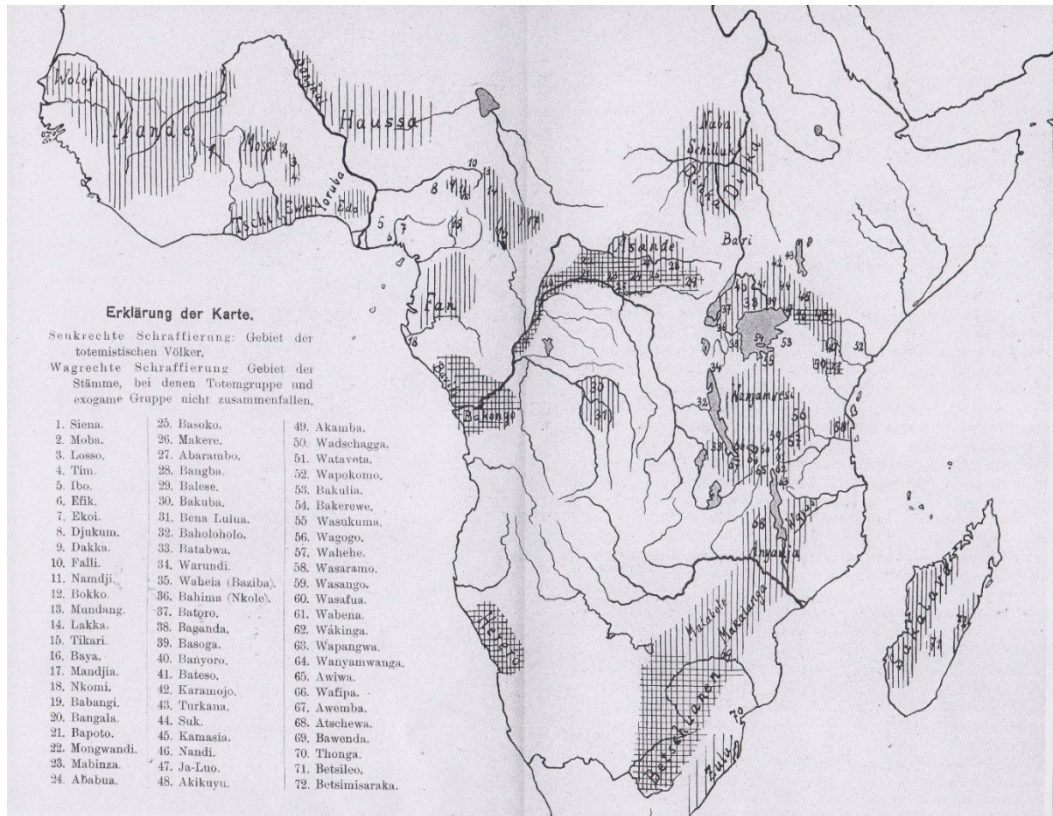
<sup>211</sup> See *ibid.*, 164.

<sup>212</sup> See *ibid.*, 164.

<sup>213</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 15.

<sup>214</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Hopes and Impediments* (New York, Doubleday,1989), 92. Also cited by T. C. McLuhan, *The Way of the Earth, Encounters with Nature and Contemporary Thought* (New York: Touchstone Books,1994),275.

religious worldview. So, to understand the concept of totemism in Africa one has to comprehend the common African philosophical and religious worldview as advocated mostly by ethnophilesophers. Apart from ethnophilesophy, Africa offers other philosophical trends worth mentioning.



The Map Showing distribution of totemism as drawn by Bernard Ankermann.<sup>215</sup>

## 2.3. Philosophical Discussions

### 2.3.1. Philosophical Trends

Africa is a large continent with more than fifty countries and hundreds of ethnic groups and languages that are distributed all over the continent. This diversity of ethnic communities and languages means diversity of cultures, and diversity of philosophies and religions. Guttorm Fløistad articulates this aspect that; “those who look to Africa for a unified conception of philosophy will soon be disappointed. The philosophical discourse in Africa appears to be just as complex and controversial as on other continents.”<sup>216</sup> But

<sup>215</sup> See Bernard Ankermann, “Verbreitung und Formen des Totemismus in Afrika,” in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol.47,1915, attachment at the end of the article.

<sup>216</sup> Guttorm Fløistad, Introduction, in Guttorm Fløistad ed., *Contemporary Philosophy, A New Survey* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 1.

despite this wide diversity in African, there are also common beliefs and intercultural connections that runs through many cultures. Both the diversity and the unity in the cultural beliefs in Africa has produced philosophers who stress on the unity of African culture, while others have stressed how every ethnic community is different from the other. Other philosophers have tried to harmonise the unity and diversity in African cultures.

Although, the philosophical debate in detail is not the aim of this study, it is worthy to view the complexity of this dynamic philosophical enterprise. This can be helpful in understanding the concept of totemism in Africa. The opinion of Odera Oruka (1944-1995), who promoted the Sage Philosophy Project on African philosophy, showed clearly the path of African philosophical approaches that have been found in the modern Africa. He classified the African philosophical trends in six groups. These include ethnological, philosophic sagacity, nationalist-ideological, professional, hermeneutic trend and the artistic or literary trend.<sup>217</sup>

The first trend is ethnophilosophy which involves scholars' attempt to expound the African thought system within a specific ethnic group or the thought system of the whole of Africa. Ethnophilosophy has been explained as:

“The bodies of belief and knowledge that have philosophical relevance and which can be re-described in terms drawn from academic philosophy but which have not been consciously formulated as philosophy by philosophers. The bodies of belief and knowledge are manifested in the thoughts and actions of people who share a common culture.”<sup>218</sup>

The ethnophilosophy is an attempt to interpret the African common customs and beliefs of all communities or of a specific community. They did this “by examining the system of thought of existing and pre-colonial African communities in order to determine what can be ideal ‘authentic’ African philosophy and praxis in the emerging post-colonial situation.”<sup>219</sup> This was done in the environment of diversity of cultures and thought patterns. As Kwame Anthony Appiah postulated; “we do not have a common traditional culture, common languages, common religious or conceptual vocabulary [...] We do not even belong to the common race; and since this is so, unanimism is not entitled to what

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<sup>217</sup> see Odera Oruka, *Sage Philosophy* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1990), xx.

<sup>218</sup> Karp-Masolo, “African Ethnophilosophy” in Routledge *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol.3, 110-111 also cited by Maurice M. Makumba, *Introduction to African Philosophy* (Nairobi: Pauline's, 2007), 119.

<sup>219</sup> “Ethnophilosophy, Africa” in Edward Craig ed. *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* 3, London: Routledge, 1998),446.



is, in my view, its fundamental presupposition.”<sup>220</sup> Despite this, the ethnophilosophers saw the need to understand individual community and culture but at the same time have a global overlook. Appiah cites the explanation of Paulin Hountondji who is a fierce critic of ethnophilosophical approach. Hountondji calls ethnophilosophy “an attempt to explore and systematise the conceptual world of the Africans traditional cultures. It amounts to adopting the approach of a folklorist: doing the natural history of traditional folk thought about the central issue of human life”<sup>221</sup> For him, the positive stress on African culture as a worldview and calling it philosophy, is just an anthropological perspective and not actual meaning of true African philosophy. The greatest problem to ethnophilosophy is the lack of a philosophical critical attitude in its methodology. Because other philosophers who do not subscribe to this school believe that true philosophical discourse involves critical analysis of the past and the present cultures. The ethnophilosophical approach conforms with ideas of such scholars like Placide Tempels (1906-1977), Marcel Griaule (1898-1956), Alex Kagame (1912-1981), John S. Mbiti (1931- ) and their followers.

The second trend is the sage philosophy which is the main philosophical project of Odera Oruka. For him sage philosophy:

“Consists the expressed thoughts of wise men and women in any community and it is a way of thinking and explaining the world that fluctuates between popular wisdom (well-known communal maxims, aphorisms and general common sense truths) and didactic wisdom (an expounded wisdom and rational thought of some given individuals within the community). While popular wisdom is always conformist, the didactic wisdom is at times crucial of the communal setup and popular wisdom. Thoughts can be expressed in writing or as unwritten says and argumentations associated with the same individual(s).”<sup>222</sup>

According to Oruka, there are wise men and women in African community who possess insight and ethical inspiration. He called these wise men and women “sages.” Sages play an important role in every community. If their way of thinking could be documented, then it would help to protect the purity of African cultural customs. Odera Oruka emphasizes the importance of the sages saying that:

“Sages are among the custodians of the survival of their respective societies. A society without sages would easily get swallowed up as undignified appendage of another. All societies use their sages or at least their ideas of their sages to defend and maintain their existence in the world of inter-social conflict and exploitation.”<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father’s House; Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (London: Methuen: 1992), 41.

<sup>221</sup> K. A. Appiah, “Ethnophilosophy and its critics,” in P.H. Coetzee, A. P. J. Roux, *The African Philosophy Reader* (London: Routledge,1998), 117.

<sup>222</sup> Oruka, “Sage Philosophy: Basic Questions and Methodology,” in *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, 28.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, xviii.

This is an acclaimed trend of African philosophy, but like all other philosophical trends it has its shortcomings. This was pointed out by Lansana Keita who saw very close relationship between ethnophilosophy and sage philosophy, and understood it as a revision of the principles of ethnophilosophy.<sup>224</sup> Peter O. Bodunrin with an uncompromising attitude to ethnophilosophy, and against the folk philosophy as a source of African philosophy, criticised the sage philosophy. In the article *The Question of African Philosophy*, he pointed out several issues:

“Whose philosophy does the philosopher produce as a result of such research? The joined inquiry of the traditional sage and trained philosopher is a new phenomenon. What they come out is a new creation out of their reflections on the beliefs previously held by them [...] philosopher and the sage are doing their own thing.”<sup>225</sup>

Orukas’ aim of producing uncontaminated African philosophy is therefore questionable. The third trend is the nationalistic-ideological philosophy which includes writings of nationalistic leaders during the time of African liberation. There are works of Julius Nyerere’s (1922-1999) *Ujamaa*, Kwame Nkrumah’s (1909-1972) *Consciencism*, Léopold Senghor (1906-2001) *Nationhood and the African Road to Socialism*, and Ali Mazrui’s (1933-2014) *The African Condition*, just to name a few. They wrote political and philosophical books that dealt with thematic of liberation from colonial occupation and highlighted the importance of African humanism and socialism rooted deeply in the African culture. They are therefore the founders of African political philosophy. Nkrumah, for example, says “our philosophy must find its weapons in the environment and the living conditions of the African people.”<sup>226</sup> Hountondji criticized the views of nationalistic and ideological philosophers who relied on the accepted unified thesis of African cultural identity, the African personality or communalism or family-hood (*ujamaa*) and saw it as contradictory with the African pluralistic reality.<sup>227</sup> Hountondji is against any unanimistic or universalistic approach to philosophy because for him ethnophilosophy and nationalist philosophy are alike. For him, a single philosophical trend or a worldview in Africa does not exist. His understanding of African philosophy gives room to plurality of African philosophy. “ ‘African philosophy’ I mean a set of

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<sup>224</sup> See F. Ochieng- Odhiambo, *Trends and Issues in African Philosophy* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 128.

<sup>225</sup> Peter O. Bodunrin, “The Question of African Philosophy,” *Philosophy*, Vol. 56, No. 216 (Apr. 1981), p. 168. (accessed on 21.06. 2017)

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3750739.pdf?refreqid=excelsior:fed1470eda8f65ecb010a2e1a5ed0d8b>

<sup>226</sup> As quoted by Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 40.

<sup>227</sup> See *ibid.*, 42.

texts, specially set of texts written by Africans and described as philosophical by their authors themselves.”<sup>228</sup> This description of African philosophy shows the possibility of having different forms of African Philosophy.

The fourth trend is the professional philosophy, the philosophy undertaken by trained African philosophers who studied philosophy at local and international universities and have written books of philosophical nature. Professional philosophers approached philosophy from:

“[...] a universalist view of philosophy. Philosophy, many of them argue, must have the same meaning in all cultures although the subjects that receive priority, and perhaps the method of dealing with them, may be dictated by the cultural biases and existential situation in the society within which the philosophers operate. According to this school, African philosophy is the philosophy created by African philosophers whether it be in the area of logic, metaphysics, ethics or history of philosophy.”<sup>229</sup>

The school of trained philosophers was just emerging and Oruka identified four African philosophers who were engaged in professional philosophy; these were Kwasi Wiredu, Paulin Hountondji, P. O Bodunrin, and himself.<sup>230</sup> Thus actually, African professional philosophy has been elaborated by these four. But the strongest critic, as noted by F. Ochieng-Odhiambo, is that “the school has been criticized for serving Eurocentric interests, a charge which, interestingly and ironically, some proponents of the professional school had leveled against ethnophilosophy [...] what the professional school regards as constituting African philosophy is not purely African.”<sup>231</sup> So what the professional philosophers mean as ‘African’ is a scholar exercise rooted in the western way of thinking and western philosophical methodology, but not African.

The fifth trend is the African philosophical hermeneutic. The previously mentioned four approaches to African philosophy have their own strengths and weaknesses. Because of these weaknesses that most of the African scholars have looked for another method that would avoid the errors of the precedent trends. Odhiambo points out that; “the four approaches discussed seem concerned with two things. They focus either on documenting the worldviews of ethnic Africans or on philosophically engaging African problems and concerns.”<sup>232</sup> Hermeneutical approach brings two important factors, the respect and the reverence for African traditional wisdom and, at the same time, exposes the African

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<sup>228</sup> Paulin Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality* (London: Hutchinson University Library for Africa, 1983), 33.

<sup>229</sup> Peter O. Bodunrin, “The Question of African Philosophy,” 162.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>231</sup> Ochieng-Odhiambo, *Trends and Issues in African Philosophy*, 108.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

traditional wisdom to the critical analysis. This attitude has merged two approaches to African philosophy - the universalistic approach and particularistic approach. The universalistic approach requests African philosophy to join the world of philosophy. This trend should have the features that are not bound by categories of space and time. It is the philosophy of rational human beings. So, this approach goes beyond culture, space, and time. And because of this approach; "African philosophy can therefore not be excused from the methodology of philosophy."<sup>233</sup> The professional and sage philosophers fit into the group of the universalists. The particularistic position on the other hand; "sees philosophy as an expression of the problems and proposed solutions of a people within a specific historical and cultural context."<sup>234</sup> The particularistic approach is accepting that philosophy is not a universal approach but rather a historical, a bound within cultural context. African philosophy should, therefore, look for its own methodology that complies with the African context. A scholar supporting the hermeneutic approach to African philosophy, is Theophilus Okere who stressed the importance of the right hermeneutical approach in the study of culture. He criticized the ethnophilosophers for being not worthy of word philosophy but who collected ethnographic materials and named it philosophical after being interpreted hermeneutically. According to him:

"The correct path to African philosophy is hermeneutic route, for this would guarantee a meaningful philosophy relevant to African context. It would not merely be an explication of the cultures and beliefs of African peoples but more manufacturing African philosophy from the African raw materials of culture and by doing this creating something new."<sup>235</sup>

The hermeneutic approach, therefore, is a middle point between professional philosophy and ethnophilosophy.<sup>236</sup> The ethnophilosophers and nationalistic and ideological philosophy, therefore, approached philosophy from this particularistic hermeneutic approach, but their greatest problem is that they "are guilty of romanticizing the African past. Certainly, not everything about our past was glorious [...]. Any reconstruction of our past must examine features of our thought system and our society that made this possible."<sup>237</sup> The hermeneutic approach brings the required critic of the society without losing its African context.

The last trend is the artistic or the literary trend. This is philosophy conducted by the African writers who write about African issues. This trend emanates from African literary

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>236</sup> See *ibid.*, 191.

<sup>237</sup> See Peter O. Bodunrin, "The Question of African Philosophy," 167.

intellectuals such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thiongo, Okot P’Bitek, and other African writers. They are not professional philosophers but they produce the narrative elements of African philosophy. A sign that philosophy is not only the field for a few trained and chosen philosophers but also for other African wise men and women. The African philosophical discussion is a complex subject and still in a process of searching for its own identity. This is conforming to the observation of Chinua Achebe, “there isn’t a final identity that is African. But at the same time, there is an identity coming into existence.”<sup>238</sup>

### 2.3.2. *Ethnophilosophical Approach*

In this study, totemism will be approached from an ethno-philosophical perspective because this approach will make it possible to understand cultural concepts better than totemism. Ethno-philosophical approach in this case brings a better understanding to both the particular and the collective view of the ethnic communities. The mystical, religious, and ritual perspective of the ethnophilosophy is very relevant in this study of totems. Because as K. C. Anyanwu points out:

“There are many symbols and myths in African culture which focus attention on values, virtues, attachments, loyalties, faithfulness, diligence, etc. For example, the value and implication of the African myth or symbol of nature as Mother-Earth has not been examined by African philosophers, who may dismiss it as an unworthy theme of philosophical reflection.”<sup>239</sup>

This study attempts to capture these important elements that could be easily dismissed as non-philosophical. Despite much limitation and criticism, ethnophilosophers attempted to understand African cultures in particular and cross culturally. An approach that is also advocated by Richard Bell in his book *Understanding African Philosophy: A Cross Cultural Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues*. For him:

“We can and understand another culture’s life and practice ‘well enough’, more or less ‘as (they are).’ We can describe many aspects of another culture’s world and how it is inhabited just as they can describe ours; we can go on to understand them to a degree hindered only by particular limitation in how we understand our own point of view. It is primarily by virtue of limits we have in ‘seeing something as it is’ in ourselves and our own culture that we are inhibited in understanding another’s world ‘as it is’.”<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Interview with Chinua Achebe as cited by Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In my Father’s House: African Philosophy of Culture*, 117.

<sup>239</sup> K. C. Anyanwu, “The Idea of Art in African Thought,” in Guttorm Fløistad ed., *Contemporary Philosophy, A New Survey*, 241.

<sup>240</sup> Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 3.

A better understanding of a single culture means a better understanding of other cultures. Ethnophilosophers attempted to interpret ethnographic materials in order to know the universe of a particular ethnic group or general African worldview. Bodunrin accurately comments:

“Ethnophilosophers and ourselves and indeed all who engage in cognitive endeavours have a common object (not objective) of enquiry. What we all wish to know more about is this universe of ours; its contents, the events and activities which take place within it. About these things several questions may be asked to which different answers are expected. The kind of answers expected depends both on the kind of question posed and on the method of enquiry. Different disciplines approach the study of the world in different way and seek understanding at different levels and with different goals.”<sup>241</sup>

The writers like Tempels, Mbiti and Kagame were attempting to show not only the worldview common within one ethnic group but also the worldview which is cross-culturally common in many other ethnic communities. The traditional cultures are diverse, but possesses a similar core of beliefs that is very relevant to the understanding of totemism. Totemism is not an isolated worldview but a part of the bigger cultural web of the ethnic group. So, in order to understand totemism better one has to understand the so called common religious ontology that is found in most ethnic groups. This approach was proposed by Mbiti and includes God and spirits, human beings, fauna and flora as well as natural objects and phenomena.<sup>242</sup>

## 2.4. The Meaning of Totemic Kinship

### 2.4.1. Kinship in Religions and Philosophy

Kinship is a central part of socio-religious organization and also central force in the traditional cultural life. Anthropologist A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, in his detailed exposé, noticed the centrality of African kinship when he realized that, “for the understanding of any aspect of the social life of an African people-economic, political, or religious, it is essential to have a thorough knowledge of their system of kinship and marriage.”<sup>243</sup> In order to understand totem as a relative, one has to understand the concept of kinship. In most of the African ethnic groups, kinship can be gained either by blood or by marriage or by a ritual. Every birth and every marriage extend the web of kinship. The member of the ethnic group is born into the web of relationships. Moreover, when one marries a

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<sup>241</sup> Peter O. Bodunrin, “The Question of African Philosophy” in Tsenay Serequebergan ed., *African Philosophy, The Essential Readings* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 76.

<sup>242</sup> See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 16-17.

<sup>243</sup> A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, (eds.) *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* (London: Oxford Press, 1950), 1.

woman from another clan, he extends the relationship not only to the family of the wife but to the whole clan including the totem. Through marriage, two clans enter into a relationship. Kinship, therefore, governs the life of ethnic communities at all levels. African people are community people; they are kinship people. Mbiti comes with the phrase, “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am,”<sup>244</sup> to stress the importance of complex kinship-web in African life. One is born into a web of relationship, lives in a web of relationships and dies in a web of relationships. Kinship is the soul of Africans and stretches in his life in every direction on all socio-religious and socio-economical levels. Mbiti continues and describes the importance of kinship that; “It is kinship which controls social relationships between people in a given community: it governs marital customs and regulations, it determines the behavior of one individual towards another.”<sup>245</sup>

Kinship extends horizontally to include a wide range of members of the clan and the ethnic community, and the natural world. It extends vertically to include the departed ancestors. So, to hear someone calling another a brother, does not automatically mean they have the same father; it can be a cousin brother, or even the “brother”, who is a member of the same clan. It is, customary in Africa, that when two people meet, the first thing they do is to express how they are related.<sup>246</sup> This relation between them will determine their behavior to each other. If they discover they are brothers, they treat each other equally as brothers, when one realizes that the woman, he encountered, is the “mother-in-law”, he treats her with great respect. So, the kinship determines their manners and behavior.

#### 2.4.2. *Totems as Kin of the Clan*

What the traveller John Long observed and wrote in his memoirs about the Ojibwa word ‘totem’ has attracted curiosity of anthropologists and ethnologists. They were confronted with a rare relationship between a clan and a totem. The biggest question of that time was: How can an animal be related to a group of people? By the way, this question applies to every type of totem. But for totemic communities, this question is neither interesting nor worth of any discussion. For them it is the matter of fact and lies within their philosophical thinking of kinship. For clan, totems are relatives because “kinship binds together the

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<sup>244</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and philosophy*, 108-109.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>246</sup> See *ibid.*, 104.

entire life of the tribe, and is even extended to cover animals, plants, and non-living objects through the totemic system.”<sup>247</sup>

The totemic system is a system governing the kinship between the clan and their totem. The fact is that every clan has a totem, and the totem is acclaimed as a member of the clan. Mbiti says that; “the totem is a visible symbol of unity, kinship, of belongingness, of togetherness and common affinity.”<sup>248</sup> Kinship and the family bond, as Ikenga-Metuh expresses, are like a spider web in which all beings are linked together by a network of relations and interact reciprocally. The harmonious interactions lead to the strengthening of beings while pernicious influences led to the diminution of beings in both socio-biological and ontological-spiritual levels.<sup>249</sup> The relation, mutual respect and communication, are very important. The totem communicates with the members of the clan and vice versa. In case of disharmony with the totem, i.e. the totem kills the member of the clan, a special ritual is celebrated in order to reinstate the harmony and good relationship. Totem is, therefore, not only a symbol of kinship in the clan but also part of the kinship web in the clan.

The totem is the kin of the clan, of a higher position than other clan members, because he represents the whole clan, and is closely associated with the ancestors.

Therefore, totems are sacred symbols of kinship. A religious African thought is that “all beings both, animate and inanimate, are interrelated and interdependent, including God. This interrelatedness and interdependency can be expressed through *umokowa* (totem), a special identification of a clan with the animate and inanimate object.”<sup>250</sup> The kinship meaning therefore extends to the natural and spiritual world. In the natural world totems are present within the environment of the clan. On the other hand, it has kinship with the spiritual world because totems possess spiritual powers, and therefore, can be used as a medium in the communication with the ancestral world. The harmonious relationship between the members of the clan and with their totems, as demanded by clan kinship regulations of respect and care, is assuring and brings peace and prosperity to the clan. This relationship takes place within the totemic land.

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 104

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>249</sup> See Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, “The Concept of Man in African Traditional Religion: With Particular Reference to the Igbo of Nigeria.” In: E.M. Uka (ed.), *Readings in African Traditional Religion: Structure Meaning, Relevance, Future*, (Bern: Peter Lang, 1991), 58.

<sup>250</sup> Molefi Kete Asante, and Ama Mazama, *Encyclopedia of African Religion 1* (Los Angeles, London: Sage, 2009), 119.



### 2.4.3. *Clan, Land, and Totem*

Land, in a traditional understanding is a very important sacred property. Many wars and battles are being fought in the name of the land. For Africans, the land is not only an economic resource but, first of all, the sacred resource. This sacred meaning is the reason that the value of the land outranges anything else. The land has a very emotive character. Many cultures in Africa have a strong connection to the land, and this connection has religious connotations.<sup>251</sup> People are dying, defending the sacred land against intruders and aggressors. Mbiti underscores:

“Africans are particularly tied to the land because it is a concrete expression of both, the Zamani and their Sasa. The land provides them with the roots of existence, as well as binding them mystically to their departed. People walk on the graves of their forefathers, and it is feared that anything separating them from these ties will bring disaster to family and community life”<sup>252</sup>

This sacredness of land has been many times highlighted by African poets and novelists. Commenting on the great African writer Chinua Achebe Sam, A. Adewoye wrote, that for Achebe, “Man’s life is tied to the land. The man is dogmatically tied to the land because it is the land that links him to the living, the dead and the unborn [...] Achebe uses land motif as a communal, ritual and cultural point of linkage between man and his cosmic environment.”<sup>253</sup>

The land never belongs to an individual, but to the clan and to the ancestors of the clan. The ancestors are always asked for blessing for this member of the clan who needs to use the land or when a stranger asks for permission to use the clan’s land. The Dinka of South Sudan, have a sacrifice ritual in order to inform the ancestors that a stranger is intending to use the clan’s land. The indigenous person introduces *Larkuryamoi* (a stranger) to the ancestors saying:

“Earth of my clan, accept this offering, I entreat you, drink the blood which I pour on you. This goat, which is the goat of *Lakuryammoi*, is price of your beauty. Deal kindly with *Lakuryamoi*, for he is our friend: and stranger, though he be, grant him harvest as rich as our own. Let Nagitak the grain blight, shrink from touching his garden, and let the beasts of the forest and birds of the air know that *Lakuryamoi* is as one of us.”<sup>254</sup>

It is worth remembering that the land is not only sacred space but also populated by the spirits of ancestors. The land is therefore closely linked with totems because the clan’s

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<sup>251</sup> See Ed. A. J. G. van der Borght, *The God-given land' Religious perspectives on land reform in South Africa: papers from a theology conference held at VU University Amsterdam, October 2004*. Amsterdam, Rozenberg Publishers, 2009.

<sup>252</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 27.

<sup>253</sup> Sam A. Adewoye, *The Concept of Land in the African Novel* (Ibadan: Evans Brothers, 1989), 19.

<sup>254</sup> John Mbiti, *The prayers of the African Religion* (London: S.P.C.K.,1975),63.

land is also the totem's land. Most of the totems of the clan are active members because they lived together with clan members on the same land. The human, and non-human members of the clan interacted daily as kins. Land is therefore a place of relationships.

## 2.5. Vitalogy and Totemism

### 2.5.1. *Spirits and Spiritual World*

Africans are notoriously religious because of their deep belief in the spiritual world. Their world is populated with spiritual beings, spirits, and the living dead. The spirits form the spiritual universe that dovetails with the physical universe, so it is hardly possible to distinguish the spiritual from the natural.<sup>255</sup> E.Bolaji Idowu, ethnologist and theologian from Nigeria, comments that “the spirits are not clearly defined. They may be anthropologically conceived, but they are more often than not thought of as powers which are almost abstract, as shades or vapors which take the human shape; they are immaterial and incorporeal beings.”<sup>256</sup> On the other hand, Mbiti tries to systemize the world of the spirits, by dividing them in two main groups: the nature spirits and the human spirit. Among the nature spirits are those who reside in the sky and those on the earth. The sky residing spirits are: rain, sun, thunder, etc. The earth spirits are trees, rivers, plants of all types, etc.

The human spirits are the long dead spirits of the human beings (almost forgotten) and the living dead which are the dead people but who are still in the memory of the people.<sup>257</sup> The spirits and spiritual worlds are complex and manifested in every community. Idowu sees this complexity that; “spirits according to African belief, are ubiquitous; there is no area of the earth, no object or creature, which has not a spirit of its own or which cannot be inhabited by the spirit. Thus, there are spirits of trees, that is, the spirit which inhabits trees [...]”<sup>258</sup>

Most of the African communities believe that spirits are invisible; that is why people with special abilities use them as media to help them to communicate with the spiritual world. But also, spirits can use humans, animals, plants, and others, as medium. The human specialists are people which the spirits are using to pass the messages from the spiritual

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<sup>255</sup> See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 75.

<sup>256</sup> E.Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion, A definition* (Ibadan: Fountain Publication, 1991), 174.

<sup>257</sup> See John Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Oxford: Heinemann Education books, 1991), 81.

<sup>258</sup> Idowu, *African Traditional Religion, A definition*, 174.

world. Such specialists are among the leaders of the community and perform as rainmakers, medicine men, priests, prophets, or kings.<sup>259</sup> The spirit medium appears to be in a trance state, and the personality of the specialist seems to disappear, and the verbal and nonverbal communication patterns are distinctively different. Edona M. Alexandria highlights the relationship between the spirit medium and the spirits that; “The spirit media do not become possessed by the spirit of the ancestors; they share their mental and physical body with these spiritual entities.”<sup>260</sup> When the spirit uses other beings, it is always noticeable because they show quite unique features from their normal state. Therefore, the spirits are not silent, invisible beings, they are very active in the life of the community.

The belief in the spirits helps African to understand what is happening or not happening in the universe. The spirits, therefore “are an integral part of the religious heritage of Africa. People are deeply aware of the spirit world, and this awareness affects their outlook and experience in life for better or for worse.”<sup>261</sup> For the most people it is a simply way to comprehend the mysteries of the universe that cannot be logically explained. What cannot be understood is comprehensible through the prism of the spirit. This thinking fits into the African cosmology, because as Mbiti explains; “in African view of the universe, the spirits fill up the area between God and man. This too can be a beneficial contribution to people's understanding of their own existence and that of God and the universe at large.”<sup>262</sup>

Spirits can either be good, bad, or neutral. The good spirits are believed to be helpful to the community, and contrary, the bad spirits are harmful to the community. This type of cosmology understands the interplay between the spiritual and the human world. The human being is therefore at the center of forces of the universe; spirits are above him, in him, and below him. Human powers, therefore, must at any time interact with spiritual powers. Because of this, human beings have to cultivate good relation with the good spirits and always try to dispel the bad spirits. The good spirits are beneficial to the community and are always welcomed to commune with the members of the community. Through prayers, offerings, libations and sacrifices, the community maintains contact with the good spirits. On the other hand, people dreadfully fears the bad spirits. Idowu

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<sup>259</sup> See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 166-193.

<sup>260</sup> Edona M. Alexandria, “Spirit Medium,” in *Encyclopaedia of African Religion*, 119.

<sup>261</sup> Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, 81.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

acknowledges this great fear among African communities that; “one human spirit with which Africa has had to reckon very painfully, very disastrously, is the spirit of the witches. In Africa, it is idle, to begin with the question whether witches exist or not [...] to Africans of every category, witchcraft is an urgent reality.”<sup>263</sup> It is believed that witches use bad spirits to cause havoc in the community. The fear of the bad spirits is alive in the life of the people despite the Christianisation and Islamisation of most African communities.<sup>264</sup> Hence, spiritual world is an ambivalent force in the community.

### 2.5.2. *Vital Force and Totems*

The complex spiritual world has been the subject of continuous studies. One of the attempts to expound and study the importance of the spirit was done by ethnophilosophy under the leadership of Placide Tempels. A missionary priest who also became ethnographer and philosopher. For 29 years, he lived among the African people in the French West Africa. He studied Kiluba language as well as the worldview and philosophy of the people. He published his first book *Bantu Philosophy* in French (*La Philosophie Bantoue*) in 1945 and in English in 1969. Tempels tried to understand the thought system of Bantu people. His book comes after the first African Congolese philosopher and theologian Stephano Kaoze (1890-1951), who wrote *La Psychologie des Bantu* (the Psychology of Bantu) in 1910. Stephano Kaoze “opposed the weakness of traditional system to the conquering force of western philosophy and *Weltanschauung*.”<sup>265</sup> He was aware that the Christianity in Africa must use African languages, patterns, and the worldview of local people. The proposal seemed weird at that time, when African people were considered to be primitive people, with primitive pre-scientific and pre-philosophical mentality. The original idea that the “primitive mind” needs to be civilized was shattered, when some missionaries and ethnographers at the field discovered that Africans had “their philosophy of the universe, of man and of things which surround him, of existence, life death and of the life beyond.”<sup>266</sup>

Tempels made efforts to search and to discover the core of Bantu thinking and worldview. He found out a very important and controversial point that:

“We, Europeans, conceive the transcendental notions of ‘being’ by separating it from its attributes ‘force’, but the Bantu cannot. ‘Force’ in his thought is a necessary element in

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<sup>263</sup> Idowu, *African Traditional Religion*, 175.

<sup>264</sup> See Burghart Schmidt, Rolf Schulte (Hg.), *Witchcraft in Modern Africa* (Hamburg: DOBU, 2007)

<sup>265</sup> V.Y. Mudimbe, *Parables and Fables, Exegesis, Textuality and Politics in Central Africa*, (Wisconsin: Wisconsin Press, 1991), 32.

<sup>266</sup> Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959), 14.

'being' and the concept of 'force' is inseparable from the definition of 'being'. Bantu think that idea of 'being' is inseparable with the idea of force. Without the element of 'force', the 'being' cannot be conceived [...] Force is not for them (Bantu) an adventitious, accidental reality. Force is even more than a necessary attribute of beings. Force is the nature of being, force is being, being is force."<sup>267</sup>

The vital force increases as one moves towards God, who is himself the source of this force. All beings in the universe has some degree of vital force. The Bantu universe is the universe of the interaction of forces that stems from God and descends to divinities, spirits, ancestors, living human beings, animals, plants, and down up to the inorganic world. This is how Tempels understood Bantu philosophy and worldview. Despite much critic, he tried to show the deep Bantu dynamic principal force existing in all beings, and interconnecting them.

This worldview of interconnectedness is a field that needs to be revisited, studied, and openly discussed in the present time, when human beings are trying to rediscover the unity with nature. There is a new interest on the place of the spirit as the source of vital force in most ethnic communities. Nkemnkia, in his book *African Vitalogy*, articulates this new interest:

“In the beginning; there is Life common to all creation, identical in all human beings and in all created things. All things having existence live a life of their own, proportional to the species and genus to which they belong; this is the basis of the hierarchy of values and the superiority of one genus to another. Not only is the African soul at the roots of this principle of vital force, but we can safely affirm that the African soul is this vital force itself, the principle of everyday life.”<sup>268</sup>

As in the Bantu philosophy, also in many other African ethnic communities, one can find the presence of the so called vital energy. The concept of the spirit, is philosophically presented as vital energy in the universe and is present in the worldview of most of the ethnic communities. The concept of vital force stresses the importance of spirit as the principle of life and inter-relatedness of all beings. Totemism can be better understood from this point of view because it means that totems have the vital energy of the clan in them. Generally, they are united with the clan through this special vital energy that connects also every part of nature. Therefore, the relationship between the totem animal and the clan is based on the vital energy that exists within the clan. The vital energy brings the synthesis of energy flow within the spiritual, the human and other forms of creation. This brings a vital union in the network of relations. Nevertheless, through a scientific analysis of every part of this issue, one may miss the basic truth being behind the union.

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<sup>267</sup> Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 34-35.

<sup>268</sup> Nkemnkia, *African Vitalogy*, 166.

On the other hand, one can gain a deeper understanding when they are understood as parts of an extensive network. The existence of the vital force or the vital energy was interpreted as animism to such an extent that most of the traditional religions were seen as animistic.

## 2.6. Animism and Totemism

Totemism and animism were two important topics in the study of religion in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fetishism, totemism and animism were the origin of religion. The word animism, comes from the Latin *anima/animus*, and means the soul; etymologically it means a belief that everything has a soul. However, the *anima* has various meanings in different cultures and religions.<sup>269</sup> Animism became an official academic term through English cultural anthropologist Edward B. Tylor.<sup>270</sup> In his book *Primitive Culture*, Tylor systematized and theorized animism. For him, animism is the belief of spiritual beings and comprises the general doctrine of souls. He comments that; “the souls of animals are recognised by natural extension from the theory of human souls: the souls of trees and plants follow in some vague partial way, and the souls of inanimate objects expand the general category to its extremest boundary.”<sup>271</sup> For him, this theory of the soul, unites the primitive religions with the Christian religion. He observed that in all religions exists this belief in souls, spirits, and ghosts, and however all religions are false but they are united with animism through this belief. He stated that; “the theory of the soul is one principal part of a system of religious philosophy, which unites in an unbroken line of mental connexion, the savage fetish-worshiper, and the civilized Christian.”<sup>272</sup> He saw animism as the origin of religion that later will undergo the further development. He noted that; “animism in its full development, includes the belief in souls and a future state, in controlling deities and subordinate spirits, these doctrines practically resulting in them the same kind of active worship.”<sup>273</sup> Tylor extensively studied the relationship between animism and religion and, according to him religion was a “false and superfluous belief because it is incompatible

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<sup>269</sup> See Graham Harvey; “Animist Paganism”, in James R. Lewis and Murphy Pizza (eds.), *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism* (Leiden. Boston: Brill,2009), 394.

<sup>270</sup> See Edward Tylor and the theme of animism was also handled on Chapter One of this thesis.

<sup>271</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1871, 452.

<sup>272</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,1871, 452 also quoted by Elman R. Service, *A Century of Controversy; Ethnological issues from 1860-1960*, 159.

<sup>273</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1913, 426-427

with scientific thinking which is assumed to be true.”<sup>274</sup> According to him, religion will die out when people will gain scientific knowledge. The mistaken animistic beliefs will be thrown away and replaced by the proper scientific knowledge that provides a true understanding of the world. The anthropological theories of researchers alleged that “in animistic societies, there is no clear differentiation between personal spiritual beings and impersonal forces. These powers are thought to exist side by side and interact with each other.”<sup>275</sup>

Despite all the anthropological research on animism, the pejorative slur remained in the mind of anthropologists. Their distaste of animism was feasible in the work of missionaries. Animism and Christianity have been comprehended as contradictory and incompatible competing belief systems. Gailyn Van Rheenen, who worked among Nilotic Kipsigis in Kenya, expounded the complexity in evangelizing people who are indigenously animistic. In most of the ethnic communities the existence of spiritual powers was never questioned. His observation is that the church is impotent and has power if she does not develop a perspective of spiritual powers and actively control these powers.<sup>276</sup> The animistic powers had to be controlled or removed. Animism like most African religious worldviews had to be removed before an African became a Christian. This “de-animising” project is proceeding continuously up to today but with little success. Animistic worldview and Christian religion exist together in the same person. Van Rheenen states that; “animists perceive the world as so pervaded by spirits and forces that human beings have the little free will. Fears pervade life where freedom in Christ should reign. Even Christians who believe in Christ continue to believe in the power of spirits and impersonal forces over their lives.”<sup>277</sup> The Christian Independent churches or the Christian Spirit Churches have attempted to merge the traditional concept of spirits and forces together with that of Christianity. They have incorporated the traditional worldviews into Christianity by stressing the centrality of the Holy Spirit.<sup>278</sup> The new approach to animism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is an unexpected development. The slur word of the 19<sup>th</sup> and part of 20<sup>th</sup> century is becoming modern again in what Harvey called

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<sup>274</sup> Robert A. Segal, “Animism for Tylor,” in Graham Harvey (ed.), *The handbook for Contemporary Animism* (Durham UK: Acumen, 2013), 53.

<sup>275</sup> Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library), 19.

<sup>276</sup> See *ibid.*, 98.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>278</sup> See Anne Marie Bak Rasmussen, *Modern African Spirituality, The Independent Churches in East Africa 1902-1976* (London: British Academic Press, 1996) 161-162.

“new-animism.”<sup>279</sup> According to Harvey there is an attempt to reclaim “animism” that was condemned as simple primitive religion and a failed epistemology. American anthropologist Irving Hallowell (1892-1974) was one of the anthropologists who viewed animism positively within the context of relational epistemology.

“Animism is projected in the literature as a simple religion and a failed epistemology, to large extent because it has hitherto been viewed from modernist perspectives. In this paper previous theories, from classical to recent, are critiqued. An ethnographic example of hunter-gatherer people is given to explore how animistic ideas operate within the context of social practices, with attention to local constructions of relational personhood and to its relationship with ecological perception of the environment. A reformulation of their animism as relational epistemology is offered.”<sup>280</sup>

The revival of the new understanding of animism in anthropological and religious studies comes under the new flag of Paganism, New Age Movements, New Religious Movement, Shamanism, and Environmentalism. It is returning almost free from the past slur but with a slight undertaste of the past. Graham Harvey writes; “the new and old approaches to animism are about quite different understandings of the world and result in distinct modes of discourse and practice [...] The old animism may use evidence from brand new ideas while the new animism may better explain what generations of people have inherited from their ancestors.”<sup>281</sup>

This new approach has been partially initiated by indigenous communities with the intention to save the remainings of traditional worldviews. This attempt is still present, yet the negative attitude to the “old animism” remains in the minds of the people. Kuel Maluil Jok from the South Sudan, revisits animism free from an archaic derogatory sense inherited from the past studies of African culture. His study of Nilotic in Sudan (Nuer, Dinka, Shilluk), found out that for; “Nilotes, animism is the vestige of continuity from their past ancestral religion, traditions, knowledge, customs and philosophy to current cultural linguistic and religious state. They have intertwined it with the prophetic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.”<sup>282</sup> Therefore, “animism” may not be after all a dead worldview. It has survived many generations of indigenous communities. “Animism” is expressed in the daily life and daily worldview of people who sees the environment not as a dead but as a living object in the world. This worldview is

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<sup>279</sup> Graham Harvey, “Animist Paganism,” in: *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, 394-396.

<sup>280</sup> As quoted by Nurit Bird-David, ‘Animism’ revisited: Personhood, Environment, and Relational Epistemology, in Graham Harvey ed., *Readings in Indigenous Religions* (London, New York: Continuum: 2002), 72.

<sup>281</sup> Graham Harvey, “Animist Paganism,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, 397.

<sup>282</sup> Kuel Maluil Jok, *Animism of Nilotics and Discourses of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2010), 21.



encouraging and a respectful for living with each other, and with nature. Therefore, revisiting indigenous peoples “animism” and other forms of “animism” with respect, opens up a deeper understanding of its relevance to today.

“Animism” is closely related with totemism not only by common features of indigenous religions but also because it brings the relationship between the society and nature. The historical discussion showed totemism and animism as opposing motions of human culture and non-human culture. Harvey expresses this historical understanding that; “animism has been seen as the projection of human culture onto inanimate nature, while totemism has been seen as the use of nature to categorize human social groups.”<sup>283</sup> However, the recent studies show that totemism and animism exist side by side, even within the same ethnic community. Totemic systems and animistic systems are complementary. Kaj Arhem, in his fieldwork among the *Makuna* in Northwest Amazon, hinted the relationship between totemism and animism in eco-cosmology, that:

“Both imply a relationship of continuity between nature and society with compelling experiential and behavioral implications (*cf. Willis 1990*). Intellectually, totemism and animism are complimentary and commensurate strategies for comprehending reality and relating humans to their environment; the one making use of nature images to make sense of human society and the other using sociological representations to construct order in nature. Experientially they form part of totalising eco-cosmologies, integrating practical knowledge, and moral values. As holistic cultural constructs, eco-cosmologies engage and motivate; they mold perception, inform practice, and supply meaningful guidelines for living.”<sup>284</sup>

This eco-cosmologies show the interconnectedness between humanity and nature. Harvey combines the relationship in the new understanding of totemism, and animism that “the new totemism adds to the new animism by clarifying a way in which some relationships are closer than others while, conversely, not all relationship are equally valued by all persons and groups.”<sup>285</sup> The new understanding of both, totemism and animism, can open up a new horizon that enables us to learn from the traditional knowledge, free from historical and present bias.

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<sup>283</sup> Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (Hust & Company, London, 2005), 166.

<sup>284</sup> Kaj Arhem, The Cosmic Food web: ‘Human-Nature Relatedness in Northwest Amazon’ in Philippe Descola and Gísli Pálsson (eds.): *Nature and Society: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1996), 185-204.

<sup>285</sup> Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World*, 168.

## 2.7. Resume

As seen from the map from Ankermann, as well as the study of James George Frazer and other anthropologists in the past and today, totemism is common among African ethnic communities. The differences in the totemic practices are noticeable, but the similarities and the interconnectedness of different totemic practices in among Africa ethnic communities should be researched further. Among the few communities researched by Ankermann and Frazer, there are visible differences and similarities. The difference shows a sign of individuality of each community, while the similarities show a sign of common philosophical and religious worldview. The differences and similarities in African worldviews are an open theme for debate on various levels of African study. In this time of divisions and wars between ethnic communities, the stress should be put more on what unites the people than on what divides the people. Totemism is one of this worldviews that unites people socially and religiously with one another and with nature. The subject that once was attracting the great interest of the first anthropologists, but unfortunately is fading with the time among the modern anthropologists. The disappearance and the change in many traditional practices should not hinder modern researchers to dig and filter through the old traditions, and to come out with valuable and interesting results. African religiosity is one of the most important basic worldview that goes across all ethnic communities. The African religiosity has become a fertile ground that has boosted the growth of Christian and Islamic faith. This is because the religiosity of most of the Africans ethnic communities is an integral part of their culture. Totemism, in its practice, falls within the traditional religiosity and sacred cosmology. To understand totemism means to understand the cultural sacred universe which is full of religious ideas and practices that interchange with the secular practices of the people. To separate totemism from other cultural practices and from the religious perspective, hinders its holistic understanding. Sacred ontology permeates all spheres of culture. Those researchers, who feel uncomfortable with religion, will have a challenging time to come out with good research results. The African totems cannot be separated from the religious aspect. Totems are part of the sacred universe, a universe that is greater than the sacredness of totems. Totemism therefore is an important factor that brings kinship with one another and with nature. The kinship commences with the clan totem, then extends to other clan totems, and further to other parts of the natural world. This kinship eventually, forms a network of relations with nature, with one another, and with God, the source of sacredness. The vital force becomes the uniting factor in the nets of relationship. It unites the spiritual world with the world of humans and the world of nature. This energy,

however, under different names in different societies, always remains the principle of unity. One cannot overlook the negative forces that destroy life in the community, i.e. forces used by the witches and wizards who do harm. The positive and negative effects of vital force are ambivalent in the understanding of force in the ontology. There is a force that brings goodness and unity in the community and there is a force that brings evil and fear.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> See Burghart Schmidt, Rolf Schulte (Hg.), *Witchcraft in Modern Africa*, 40.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. KEIYO PEOPLE

#### 3.1. Preamble

The Keiyo ethnic group is the main subject of this thesis. The first who wrote about the Keiyo people, was J.A. Massam, the ethnographer and the British colonial administrator. Massam in his book the *Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, recorded that:

“Various communities met and divided the country between them. All the boundaries were fixed to run to the east and west, so that each section had a portion of the *Ndo* River - a more or less permanent supply of water in its territory. Probably about this time the leaders of different parties, aiming possibly at a rapid fusion of the various communities and also the prevention of in-breeding, agreed upon the system of totems [...]. Each location adopted what totems it fancied, though care seems to have been taken that no particular totems predominated.”<sup>287</sup>

He went further to comment on the existence of totemic groups that:

“Each location, that is, each of sixteen chief locations of people in the district, contains several hamlets, each of which is a totemic group [...] each of the groups has associated with it the totem adopted in those early days. Animals (elephant, leopard, frog, etc.), birds (hawk, etc.), the moon, and the thunder are among the things then chosen.”<sup>288</sup>

Massam also noticed the same feature as quoted by Frazer that “the object associated with each totemic group does not appear to be regarded with special reverence. All the native delight in killing big game, black ants, totems of one group, take the same risks as any others. In no case is the homage of any kind paid to the totem.”<sup>289</sup> These early comments made by Massam, though not totally correct, brought up to the world the fact of the existence of totems among the Keiyo.

The author of this thesis born in Keiyo sub-tribe grew up with totemic system. To his experience, totems are the central social and religious elements for the Keiyo. Therefore, he developed an academic interest in the topic which led him to study the meaning of totems and their functionality through research and fieldwork among the Keiyo people. Thus, this work, with a focus on the religious and the social issue, has been done with a great zeal for the cause of Keiyo totems. Maybe late, but hopefully it is not too late to collect and to save the remains of totemic worldview after all changes the Keiyo people had undergone during the last hundred years.

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<sup>287</sup> Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 16.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, 152,

### 3.2. Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The author of this study undertook fieldwork between August and September 2014. This fieldwork was done in five stages. The first stage was a semi-structured qualitative group and individual interviews among the Keiyo elders. The main aim of this first interview was to get general information about the Keiyo sub-tribe, and information about the types, the origin and the importance of Keiyo totems. The second stage was interview conducted among other Kalenjin neighbouring sub-tribes and this included the Marakwet elders and one Nandi elder. The aim of this interview was to find out the relationship between the Keiyo totems and their neighbouring Kalenjin sub-tribes. The third stage was through open-ended and closed-ended questionnaire method of collecting information from some Keiyo teachers and students. The aim of this questionnaire was to find out the relationship between Keiyo traditions, especially totems with the formal schooling in Keiyo. The fourth stage was the interview with Keiyo theologians. This part of interview aimed to get information about the relationship between the Keiyo culture, especially totems with Christianity. The last stage was the field observation by participating in a Keiyo marriage engagement ceremony. The aim of this field observation was to see the role of totemism in marriage preparation ceremony today. Simultaneously with data collection was also data analysis using Grounded Theory. “A theory that begins with inductive data, invokes iterative strategies of going back and forth between data and analysis, uses comparative methods, and keeps you interacting and involved with your data and emerging analysis.”<sup>290</sup>

The data gathered and analysed from fieldwork found out that Keiyo totemism is not very much established in the degree of Australian totemism. This however does not hinder the study of Keiyo totemism, but encourages to study more in order to find out role of totemism in the past and today. So far, very little has been written about the Keiyo and, specifically, about totemism in the community. A lot of information is still among the elders of the community, but with the death of each old member, a part of information is dying with him. Hence, it is important to encourage the elders of the community, to record the unwritten information they still remember. Through interviewing the groups and individuals of the clan, the author of this study made an endeavour to trace the information from the past and from the present times.

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<sup>290</sup> Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2014), 1.

### 3.3. Who Are the Keiyo People?

#### 3.3.1. Origin of Keiyo

The Keiyo people, also known as *Elgeyo*, are a sub-tribe of the Kalenjin tribe which is a part of the Sudanese agro-pastoral tradition of the southern Nilotic group.<sup>291</sup> In the past, the Keiyo people used to speak languages like Sabiiny, Sebei, Sabaoot, and Myoot.<sup>292</sup> Shortly before the independence, the name Kalenjin was coined with the reference to the language spoken by this tribe. To attract the attention of the listener, they have a habit to say, “*ka a lee nychi iin or ka-a-le-nchi-in (yee)*” which means “I have told you”. Today the Kalenjin tribe speaks languages and dialects like Sebei or Kony, Pokot, Marakwet, Keiyo, Tugen, Nandi, and Kipsigis.

There are a lot of oral and written theories about the origin and the dispersion of the Kalenjin. Almost every sub-tribe has its own theory, but according to C. Chesaina, “the most popular theory says that the Kalenjin are of an origin from a country in the north of Kenya known as *Emetab Burgei*, which means the hot country. It is speculated that this country could be either Sudan or Egypt. The people are said to have traveled southwards along river Nile passing through Mount Elgon or *Tulwetab Kony* in Kenya.”<sup>293</sup> The Mount Elgon is still fresh in the oral traditions of the Kalenjin people; it was the last biggest point where people dispersed from. At present, the Kalenjin tribe is living on the highlands and lowlands of western Kenya and the Rift Valley, on the Mount Elgon of eastern Uganda, and on the highlands of the north-central Tanzania.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> See Christopher Ehret, *An African Classical Age, Eastern and Southern Africa in the World History, 1000 B.C to A.D. 400* (Charlottesville: University Press Virginia, 1998), 7.

<sup>292</sup> See Kipkoech araap Sambu, *The Misri Legend Explored, A Linguistic Inquiry into the Kalenjin Peoples Oral Traditions of Ancient Egypt* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2011), 4-5.

<sup>293</sup> C. Chesaina, *Oral Literature of the Kalenjin* (Nairobi: East African Publishers Ltd., 1991), 1.

<sup>294</sup> See Sambu, *The Misri Legend Explored*, 3.

### 3.3.2. Land and People<sup>295</sup>



The Keiyo land is a part of the present Elgeyo Marakwet County. It is a narrow strip of land, approximately of 1,150 square kilometers, and lies between 0° 20' and to 1° 30' northern latitude, and 35° 0' and 35° 45' east longitude.<sup>296</sup> In the east, the Keiyo land is outlined by the Kerio River (Endo), and its western borders go along the Keiyo escarpment up to the highlands and extend further to Uasin Gishu. In the north, the land borders with the Marakwets, in the south with Kipsigis, and at the eastern part with the Tugens Kalenjii-speaking sub-tribes.

<sup>295</sup> Accessed on 20.01.2018 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elgeyo-Marakwet\\_County](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elgeyo-Marakwet_County). The part coloured red is the Keiyo area where the Keiyo people live.

<sup>296</sup> See Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*, 1 quoting the Survey of Kenya.

Originally, the Keiyo land was divided into eight areas, called *bororiosiek*, each *bororiet* consisted of clans, and each clan was grouped according to their totems – one or more per each clan. The boundaries were always marked with stones (*koita*), some of these stones are still visible today. Before the British administration, the Keiyo followed the rule of a patrilineal clan and the totemic system. But British administration changed the traditional clan system and grouped two or three clans together in order to form the location for easy administrative purposes. The British created locations, as noted by J.A. Massam, were; “*Mutei, Maan, Irong, Cheboror, Kapchemutwa, Kiptani, Rokocho, Changach, Sego, Marichor, Mwen, Kawachi, Tomeiyo, Maoi, Kapkwon, and Metkei.*”<sup>297</sup> Today some of those locations have been divided and some even have changed their names. At present Keiyo locations include *Irong, Cheboror, Sirgoit, Kamogich, Kiptuulong, Mutei, Kapchemutwo, Keu, Kamoi, Kokwao, Kabiemit, Marichchor, Nyaru, Mosop, Kaptarakwa, Kitany, Kapkitony, Kimworor, Kocholwo, Metkei, Tumeiyo, Mao, Chemoibon, Kibargoi, Soi and Chepsigot*. Those names who remained unchanged include *Mutei, Irong, Kapchemutwa* and *metkei*. Every location has more than one clan and every clan has more than one totem. The only location that represents a clan after the British creating its own boundaries and later becoming administrative boundaries is *kamoi* location. Despite the change of the name of the present administrative locations, the clan and totem names have always remained unchanged but unwritten. The population of the Keiyo counted 182,873 people, as per census of 2009.<sup>298</sup>

The Keiyo land is rich in geographical features, like the Elgeyo escarpment dividing the highlands (*tengunin*) from the Keiyo Valley (*keiyo*). The Keiyo highlands rise up to 2400 m above the sea level, and the Keiyo Valley slopes to 1200 m when reaching the Endo River. The Keiyo ecological zones run along the north-south direction. The highlands are richly covered with forests (*tumoo*) which are making the climate mild and humid. The highlands are outlined by the Uasin Gishu and the Keiyo escarpment. The Keiyo Valley is divided in three zones; the upper part of the Valley, called *Mosop* of a mild climate, is covered with forests. The middle part, called *Korgeet* is the most habitable area, with agro-land and scarce forests. The lowest zone *soin* is the grazing-land, very hot and dry. The different altitudes and the climatic conditions made the Keiyo land rich in various species of flora and fauna. The highlands had rich green vegetation and a good soil for

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<sup>297</sup> Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 17.

<sup>298</sup> See Keiyo Statistics accessed on 03.07.2017 from, <https://www.knbs.or.ke/download/elgeyo-marakwet/>



agriculture. J.A. Massam described flora and fauna of Keiyo as a wonderful area with a multitude of flowers, birds, reptiles, and animals.<sup>299</sup> The land gave people the food to eat, the clothes to wear, medicines, and religious inspiration; for all these they were grateful to nature. They lived in a symbiotic bond with nature, guided by the totemic system and the taboos. Unfortunately, the changes have caused many damages to the flora, many species are disappearing every year. The old trees have been cut to give way to the trees suitable for the wood industry. The fauna is becoming increasingly extinct. Two arts of the elephant, the large one call *ongen* and the smaller one called *kapketieny*, which were symbol of totems, are on the edge of extinction.<sup>300</sup>

J.A. Massam described Keiyo people in the following words, they are “surprisingly honest people; in fact, their tradition does not know thefts, except that a starving man occasionally stole one goat, or an ox for food [...]. They do not make or accept advances readily, they are friendly towards anyone who has been among them long enough to gain their trust [...]. They have their standards, which on the whole strictly observed.”<sup>301</sup> However of a friendly nature, the Keiyo people had been forced sometime to fight and to defend their land. In the time of peace, they interacted peacefully with their neighbors and made better trade with them. They traded with Swahili people from the coast, selling them some ivory.

During the colonial time, after a hard resistance, the Keiyo were forced to accept their fate. That time had an important impact on their life as their culture and social system had been changed, for good and for bad, up to today. The colonial rulers forced the Keiyo people to have a Paramount Chief, a post they did not know before. They were forced to live with the monetary system, to work on colonial farms and to pay taxes. S. Chebet and T. Dietz called this big change the “Climbing the Cliff”. The “Cliff” for the Keiyo should be understood as an economic, social, and religious development that has been accompanied by cultural changes.<sup>302</sup> Some people did not climb the “Cliff,” yet they were also affected by those changes. After independence in 1963, the Keiyo dispersed and could buy land and settle in any part of Kenya. Some of them went seeking jobs and education in other parts of Kenya. All in all, some Keiyo people went out of the valley and left behind some of their cultural traditions. This group formed the Keiyo in diaspora.

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<sup>299</sup> Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 230-250.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-9.

<sup>302</sup> Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*, 190.

From that time on, some Keiyo were living outside their homeland and mixed with other tribes. The traditional values therefore have been fading and giving way to new modern values. Nevertheless, despite the complexity of changes, some of the Keiyo people still cherish their old culture although not in its original form.

### 3.3.3. Religion and Religious Worldview<sup>303</sup>

J.A. Massam left the first written account on the Keiyo religion. He wrote what he saw and understood, that “the religion of the Elgeiyo (Keiyo) is too vague to afford them any protection against sorcery. They are best described as pagans, but some case might be made out that they are sun-worshippers. They have a showy idea of the Supreme Being, but it is not easy to find any unanimity as to the nature of the Deity.”<sup>304</sup> Massam conception of the religion of the Keiyo was based on his own peculiar perspective, where the religion makes a very clear distinction of the Supreme Being. As S. Chebet states, “Keiyos have no terminology for religion in their vocabulary. Any reference made to the sun, to Assis high up in the sky or to ancestral spirits; *oiik* below the earth was made through the descriptive activities dictated by specific situations.”<sup>305</sup> The Keiyo had no religion comparable with the Christians, but they had a religious worldview that formed and embraced all aspects of their lives. They lived in a religious cosmos and perceived everything as sacred. The Assis symbolized the omnipresent Supreme Being. “In a moment of crisis, men appeal to him and are deeply conscious of his omnipresence and concern. However, regular prayers are not said to him, and he appears remote as to have an immediate effect on the day-to-day activities.”<sup>306</sup> Yet, Assis was omnipotent and omnipresent in every moment of people’s life.

The people assigned to him a lot of attributes (*salanik*), like *Chepokipkoiyo* (provider), *Chaptalil* or *Cheptailil* (one who shines), *Chebet* (light provider), *Chepkochor* (riser), *netoror* (the highest) and many others.<sup>307</sup> Nobody ever tried to explain logically his existence. The Super Natural Being was taken for granted, he always existed. His power was believed to permeate all creations and the entire life of people. Catastrophes like earthquake, drought, epidemics, and other calamities were understood as the anger of

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<sup>303</sup> See Mr Changwony arap Chebos, Interviewed by author, *Research Fieldwork attachment Aug.-Sep.2014*, 2.4.3 (111).

<sup>304</sup> Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 187.

<sup>305</sup> Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*, 97.

<sup>306</sup> Kipkorir, *The Marakwet of Kenya*, 8.

<sup>307</sup> Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*, 98.

Assis, and as punishment for wrong doing. The offerings and sacrifices had to be made to restore good relationship with Assis. The natural phenomena, like rain, thunder, lightning, wind, etc., were understood to be a living phenomenon and full of spiritual and mystical powers. The Heaven of the Keiyo was inhabited by the Assis and the spirits (*oiik*). The Keiyo made clear distinction between the good ancestral spirits and bad spirits. The ancestral spirits were the spirits of the departed members of the community. The good spirits brought blessing and protection, while the bad spirits brought harm and worry to the society. Both type of spirits, good and bad, could be found in the natural features like rivers, mountains, caves, and stones etc. They also might inhabit people, animals, and even plants. The good ancestral spirits were welcomed to clan ceremonies and rituals. It was believed that during the naming ceremony the spirit of the ancestor was entering the body of a newborn child. “When a young man, whose father is dead, has a son born to him, the old people of the village come to his hut and name the child after the deceased. The spirit of his dead grandfather enters the child.”<sup>308</sup> These spirits might also enter into people who were acknowledged as specialists in the community, such like rainmakers and medicine men or women (*chepkericho*).

Apparently, Keiyo people were living with and within the spiritual forces, and their main task was to live in the harmony with the Assis and with the spiritual world. Health was a sign of a harmonious bond with those forces, in the contrary, an illness or a bad luck were the sign of the spirits anger. Keiyo people always strived to maintain the good relationship with the spiritual world. Therefore, prayers (*saet*) in different forms and for many purposes were at the centre of Keiyo life. The highest form of prayer was a sacrifice (*korosek*) which was performed at a sacred place (*kapkoros*) either by the family or by the clan or by the whole community, depending on the scale of the problem. For the family, it was the father who was in charge to do the offering. Traditionally, every father woke up early in the morning and invoked to Assis to see whether God shows a sign of rage. The morning sun in very red or abnormal colour, was a sign of disharmony and unhappiness. Then, the father had to proceed immediately with the morning sacrifice (*kemugut*). The man appeased the sun by burning a wild olive tree (*emtit*), with sodom apples - symbol of cows (*labotiet*), stomach contents of the goat (*eiyat*), traditional cedar tree (*tarakwet*) and rams oil (*mwaitab kechet*). When the smoke went up straight,

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<sup>308</sup> Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 193.

the sacrifice was accepted by Chepokipkoiyo.<sup>309</sup> Similar rituals were done by the elders when the problem concerned the whole clan (*kokwet*). The rituals on a greater scale were performed when the problem concerned the whole community. In the case of a drought or epidemic, the whole community under the guidance of the elders, went up to a specific hill. There, they killed a sheep by strangling, poured honey over it, and burned the whole sheep. Another art of prayers were offerings. The first fruits of the harvest were offered to Assis as thanksgiving. Women also made prayers, and in case of lack of rain they performed the ritual of *ratetab oret*, to the benevolence of the entire community. The libations (*kenachta*) were also a common way of staying in contact with the world of the spirits. Every man while drinking a beer should spill a few drops on the ground, saying to the ancestor spirit “let me drink this beer with you”.<sup>310</sup> There was a large variety and many ways of praying to God and to nature. The Keiyo people considered the world as a living organism, and they used natural elements to express thanks to God and to appease the spirits. Religion was a guarantee for an effective communication with the spiritual world. The Keiyo world was everything that surrounded them, natural phenomena, animals and plants, the people and their social and cultural life, everything was full of spiritual meaning. Some cultural forms were more religious than others, but all have spiritual meaning.

This traditional religious worldview has been challenged by the arrival of a new religion brought by the Christian missionaries. The new religion was supported and forced by the British administration. The “main agenda of the missionaries were to open up the ‘dark continent of Africa’ in response to reports from explorers and travellers about heathen people who needed salvation through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”<sup>311</sup> The Keiyo people were among the last in this region to be confronted with the new religion. It was only after 1930 that the Keiyo people surrendered to the Christian faith. The first centers of Christianity were located in Kessup, Tambach, Singore and Iten. In all these places, the schools were established as centers of education and conversion.<sup>312</sup> The main task of education was to teach the new religion and to implement the new way of Christian life. The traditional way of life and the traditional world view had to give way for the

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<sup>309</sup> See Mr Changwony arap Chebos, interviewed by author, *Research Fieldwork attachment Aug.-Sep.2014*, 2.4.3 (111) see also Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*, 100.

<sup>310</sup> Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 193.

<sup>311</sup> Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*, 147.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 147-148.

modern world. The Keiyo people, especially the youth attending school, were forced to abandon their traditional religion and customs. The Christian God, also named as “Jehova”, took the place of their traditional god, named Assis or Cheptail. Although the Catholic Church has tried to maintain the traditional name *Cheptail* for God, this subject is till today a point of controversy between the Catholics and other Christian churches. Thus, the Keiyo community like other communities in Kenya were uprooted from their traditional religious worldview but up to today they are not fully replanted into the Christian religion. Their old religious and social-cultural practices had been restricted as not compatible with the new religion. Therefore, Keiyo people were torn between Christianity and the traditional way of life.<sup>313</sup> Nevertheless, Christianity has prevailed. The new religion brought many educational, social, religious, and economic benefits for the people. The thorny issues like polygamy and women passage rites remained a big hindrance to the Christian religion.

Although Keiyo have accepted Christian religion, they have not fully abandoned their traditional religious and cultural practices. Now, they are living in a divided life; they practice Christianity but sometimes especially during calamities they go back to their old traditional religious practices. That is why most of them are Christians but of a rather moderate conviction.<sup>314</sup>

#### 3.3.4. *Social Structures*

Prior to the British colonisation, the Keiyo people lived within their old functional social structure. Chebet and Dietz remarks on that the Keiyo social structure:

“Strongly knitted social system which catered for the welfare of its people: the sense of belonging was so great that one person’s problem was seen as a problem for the whole community. Likewise, the behavior of individuals was conditioned by norms in the society which acted as a common bond for everybody. This norm, though not written or given as instructions verbally, were very real and yet invisible but they had a lot of impact in the way the members of the society related to each other.”<sup>315</sup>

The family (*kapchi*) was a base of this social structure. The children were considered as God’s blessing, so it was almost a religious duty for every Keiyo man and woman to marry or to be married, and to have children. That is why even the institution of polygamy was allowed. The family was of patrilineal descent and consisted of all closely related

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<sup>313</sup> See *ibid.*, 155.

<sup>314</sup> See Pastor Simon Kiptum, Interviewed by author, *Research Fieldwork attachment Aug.-Sep.2014*, 2.8.2.

<sup>315</sup> Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*, 31.

and in-law members. Also, the living dead, i.e. the dead ancestors living still in the memory of the family as well as the forgotten ones, and the totem, belonged to the family. The social set up started with the family *kapchi*, and several blood related families formed the clan *oret*. The neighbouring clans formed the *kokwet*, and the cluster of clans formed *bororiet*, then several *borosiek* formed the entire *emet* which was the Keiyo sub-tribe. This organization, from the single family up to the sub-tribe, was a guarantee for a peaceful co-existence, sharing natural resources, and the defence of the community. This organization made it possible to trace the origin of every member of the community. No one was an anonymous member of the community.<sup>316</sup> The Keiyo distinguished people after gender, age and character. Material wealth prosperity was unknown and irrelevant criterion.

The distinction by age (*binda*) classified men and women according to their period of initiation rite, which was a passage rite from a boy to a man, and from a girl to a woman. Men were classified in the eight cyclic age groups: *Kipkoimet*, *Kaplelach*, *Kipnyigiei*, *Nyongi*, *Maina*, *Chumo*, *Sowe*, and *Korongoro*.<sup>317</sup> Women were classified accordingly, thus wives of *Kipkoimet* were called *Kosanja*, those of *Kaplelach* were called *Chelemei* and those of *Kipnyigiei* were called *Chebalgamai*, the Nyongi wives were called *Silingwich*, the *Maina* wives were called *Chesiran*, and the *Sawe* were called *Chesur* and finally those of *Korongoro* were called *Kwanyor*.<sup>318</sup> Every age group was aware of its position and function as well as its duties and obligations in the community. During the important ceremony, *sakobei*, every age group was promoted to the next position in the community, i.e., the youth was promoted to warriors, and the warriors became the elders of the clan.<sup>319</sup>

There was a special ceremony, *bore*, to appoint the leaders from the elders. The elders had chosen few among themselves, and these went in seclusion for eight days and nights, performing special rituals and learning the highest secrets of the clan.

After return, they had to change their names, and the new name had to begin with *Bar-*, the prefix which means the leader of the eldest and the priest. Some names were *Barkokwet*, *Barmasai* and *Bartilol*.<sup>320</sup> These were the names of those eldest who had the

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<sup>316</sup> See *ibid.*, 37.

<sup>317</sup> See Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 54.

<sup>318</sup> See Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*, 132.

<sup>319</sup> See Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 55.

<sup>320</sup> See Mr. Joseph Kwambai, Interviewed by author, *Research Fieldwork attachment Aug.-Sep.2014*, 2.4.5 (VI).

power and the authority to make the final decision for the clan and community.<sup>321</sup> All the rituals are top secrets of the community and the deep details are only allowed to some members of the Keiyo community, especially those who have undergone the ritual themselves.

After a long period of implementation of colonial and missionary education, the old social system has been partially disrupted. Only few elements of the old structure have survived till today, like the initiation of boys, the age groups, and totems, but even these few are either slowly disappearing with time or have been updated in such a manner that they lose their original meaning and purpose. A symptomatic is the example of the preparation for marriage, where the main attention has been reverted to the negotiation of the dowry. Today most Keiyo people appreciate wealth more than moral values. Quite unlike the Keiyo community in the early 1920's, when Massam wrote that, "personality counted more than wealth."<sup>322</sup>

The devaluation of old values is remarkable in all aspects of social relations. Kinship with God, with one another, and with nature, have lost the previous profound sincerity and affection. Traditional social structures are crumbling but there is no any viable alternative to them. Totems are just one example for those fading elements.

### 3.4. The Keiyo Totems (*tióng'ik*) pl. (*tiondo*) singl

#### 3.4.1. Brief History of Keiyo Totems

In the language of the Keiyo people, totem is called *tiondo*, which literally means an animal. In fact, the real meaning of *tiondo* is applied not only to the animals but also other natural objects. There is a wide variety of animals, from big animals like elephants to very small like safari ants, and many of them are used as an emblem for the totem. The real origin of totems cannot be defined precisely. During research for this study, the interviewees could not answer fully the questions in this regard. They knew only that from remote times totems have been passed from generation to generation.<sup>323</sup> There are more than thirty types of totems among the sixteen clans of Keiyo (see Chart 1). Few clans have only one totem, but the majority possess more than one. The *kimooi* buffalo totem is the most popular totem, because it is not restricted to the clan and location.

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<sup>321</sup> See Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 74.

<sup>322</sup> Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 25.

<sup>323</sup> See Kimooi Kopchebet, Interviewed by author, *Research Fieldwork attachment Aug.-Sep.2014*, 2.4.1.

According to Massam the reason for this could be that *kimooi* buffalo totems may have been given to those newcomers who came without their own totem, and settled among the Keiyo. Totems have defined the origin of the Keiyo people. Massam presumed that the totemic system has been introduced when the Keiyo sub-tribe arrived at their present homeland in order to prevent in-breeding. Another theory implicates that Keiyo people carried their own totemic system during the migration. This theory is supported by the fact that the same art of totems can be found also among other Kalenjin sub-tribes.



Chart 1 Keiyo Totems<sup>324</sup>

CLAN and MAN NAME	TOTEM ( <i>tiondo</i> )	WOMAN'S NAME	LOCALITY
1. Mooi	Buffalo ( <i>soet</i> )	Kimooi	Kapmooi
	Antelope ( <i>boinet</i> )		
	Crane ( <i>kongonyot</i> )		
	Bee ( <i>segemnyat-kapchemburinik</i> )		
	Quail ( <i>kuure/taiywet</i> )		
2. Saniak	Bush Baby ( <i>chereret</i> )	Sanieko	Kapsaniak
3. Kobil	Wild pig ( <i>toret</i> )	Kobilo	Kapkobil
	Porcupine ( <i>sabtit</i> )		
	Crow with white collar ( <i>chepkirak</i> )		
4. Kongato	Fire ( <i>mat</i> )	Kongato	Kapkongato
	Black monkey ( <i>kipemset netui</i> )		
5. Targok	Guinea fowl ( <i>terkekchat</i> )	Targok	Kaptargok
	Rhinoceros ( <i>kibewit</i> )		
6. Talai	Frog ( <i>mororochet</i> )	Talaa	Talai
	Leopard ( <i>melildo</i> )		
7. Sokom	Hawk ( <i>chepsireret</i> )	Sokome	Kapsokom
8. Kabon	Baboon ( <i>moset</i> )	Kabon	Kapkabon
	Rat ( <i>muriat-ornegei</i> )		
9. Terik	Big elephant ( <i>ongen</i> )	Teriki	Kapterik
	Small elephant ( <i>kapketieny</i> )		
10. Toiyoi	Rain ( <i>ropta</i> )	Toiyoi	Kaptoiyoi
	Lightning ( <i>ilat</i> )		
	Safari ants ( <i>birech</i> )		
11. Mokicho	Moon ( <i>arawa</i> )	Mokicho	Kapmokich
12. Shakwei	Colobus monkey ( <i>koroit</i> )	Shakwei	Kapschakwei
	Aggressivebees ( <i>chebiriryot, kapkosetiek, kapchebirinik</i> )		
	Bird ( <i>chepngasiet</i> )		
13. Tingo	Hyena ( <i>kimaget</i> )	Tingo	Kiptingo
14. Soti	Burning sun ( <i>kipangau</i> )	Soti	Kapsot
	Normal Sun ( <i>chamalus</i> )		
15. Tula	Fox ( <i>lelwot</i> )	Tula	Kaptula
16. Ringoi	Snake ( <i>erenet</i> )	Ringo	Kapringo

<sup>324</sup> See Keiyo Elders Group Interview, Interview by Author, *Research Fieldwork Report Attachment*, 2.2 (X).

### 3.4.2. Meaning and Function of Keiyo Totems

#### 3.4.2.1. Identity of an Individual and the Clan

Totems were an integral part of a religious and social network of the Keiyo clan. The totemic system played a very important role in the life of people. As we explained previously, the word *tiondo* which is translated as totem means an animal regardless if used for an animal or a natural object. The Keiyo totems were the symbol of the clan and of each individual member. The totem was the symbol of identity. A typical characteristic of the Keiyo people was to identify themselves (*kabarunetabgei*) to the very last detail. They needed to know with whom they talk or socialize. The stranger had to be recognized beforehand. J.A. Massam wrote, that the Keiyo “do not make or accept advances readily, they are very friendly towards anyone who has been among them long enough to gain their trust.”<sup>325</sup> They trusted only people they knew.

Totems were symbols and the marks of identity of each clan member. If the stranger wanted to settle among the Keiyo clan, after receiving permission to stay, the clan gave him as the totem buffalo (*kimoi*).

To be “totemless” meant to be a stranger, alienated from the community. By an encounter with the stranger, the conversation begun by asking him where he was coming from (*bororiet*), from which clan (*oret*), what was his totem (*tiondo*), and finally what was the family name. These questions were helpful to identify the origin and the land of the stranger. Totems were, therefore, constituent symbols of identity for the clan and its members. The identity was extended up to the domestic animals; the ears of animals were marked with the symbol of totem. It enabled to keep control over clan possession or to trace the lost animals.<sup>326</sup> The totem was essential for all important ceremonies like circumcision or marriage. It identified the clan and the relationship with other clans.

#### 3.4.2.2. Symbol of Kinship with Clan Members<sup>327</sup>

Totems has been a symbol of kinship within the clan. Those who shared the same totem were closely related by blood with an exception of the buffalo clan. It was a taboo to marry a member of the same totem because this meant marrying close blood relatives,

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<sup>325</sup> Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 7.

<sup>326</sup> See Joseph K. Kwambai, *Keiyo, Kalenjin Mirror 3000 years BC* (Iten: Keiyo Cultural and Education and Research Centre, 2009), 3-6.

<sup>327</sup> See Axial Coding, Interviewed by the Author, *Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment*, 5.1.2.

like brother or sister. However, as the clan grew bigger, this strict taboo had been lessened and extended up to the fourth grade of blood relation. The marriage might be allowed prior to a special permission from the elders of the clan.

Also in the case of very serious disagreement within the clan, if some members decided not to share the same totem, it meant a real separation from the clan. The separated party proclaimed their new totem and the kinship with their old clan has been ceased.

Always and in every situation, the members of the clan sharing the same totem were obliged to care for each other.

Especially the marriage ceremonies expressed the importance of the kinship between clan members. Marriage was an institution that united totems of the bride and the bridegroom. Prior to marriage, the elders of the clan proceeded with the marriage preparation (*koito*). They had to prove the kind of blood relation between the couple and the compatibility of their totems. In the case of marriage between members of the same totem, the permission was given from the fourth degree of blood relation. Then, the elders had to undertake series of the cleansing ceremonies before giving their consent. The marriage between close blood relatives was strictly prohibited.

For example, among the Kipsigis and other Kalenjin sub-tribe's marriage is impossible with all blood relations on the male side however far remote.<sup>328</sup> Marriage was a very important socio-religious institution underlining the role of totem as the symbol of identity and of the kinship of the clan.

#### 3.4.2.3. Totem as Symbol of Kinship with Nature and Land<sup>329</sup>

The Keiyo people comprehend totems not as passive symbols or objects for personal identity and kinship. For them, totems were the living creatures and the part of the clan thanks to a special spiritual interrelation. Among the Keiyo people is a custom to address someone *chitaporenyu*, meaning "my kin". A special bond exists between the totem and the clan also in the present time. Totems are, therefore, living symbols of kinship with nature. The course of the cultural changes has diminished the intensiveness of this relation. Yet, as it had been observed during interview sessions, the remains of this bond are still recognizable among the Keiyo, but in the changed form.

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<sup>328</sup> See Ocharadson, *The Kipsigis*, 76.

<sup>329</sup> See focused Coding of Individual Interview, Interviewed by the Author, Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment, 2.5.4

One particular case of this special relationship with the totem exists among the Toiyoi, the rain clan. During the time of drought or lack of rain, the Toiyoi *ropta* clan members played an important role in performing the ritual invoking the rain. After many prayers, the whole community went down to the river and immersed one of the clan member deep in the water, praying the Assis to bring them rain.<sup>330</sup> The Toiyoi-clan was believed to have close spiritual relations with their totem *ropta*. When the rains failed to come in the usual season, also other clans invited the Toiyoi clan to pray and to perform special rain making rituals for them.

The hyena (*kimagetiet*), as a totem and as an animal, is believed to be a communication medium which brings the messages from the spiritual world. The Tingo clan respected their totem and always tried to read the messages the hyena brought to them. Of course, only the elders were able to interpret the messages because they were familiar with the spiritual world.

No one from the community was allowed to kill the hyena unless it became dangerous to the human or other living creatures.

Another case is the Shakwei (bee) clan, well known for their special relation with their totem. It is believed that in a grave situation every member of the clan is able to talk with the bees and they would listen and obey because they are relatives. Mr. Hollis wrote about his experience with the Nandi sub-tribe and their totem bees. He was present when the clan member talked to the bees, and the bees did not hurt him when he had collected Mr. Hollis' luggage which was deposited near to the feared insects.<sup>331</sup>

Totems create the bond between the clan and nature. The community is not related with totems but there is a spiritual connection with the land and with the space occupied by the totem. For example, the elephants *teriki*; the area where animals live, the plants they eat, the water they drink, all these objects are important to the community because they keep their totem alive. Moreover, what keeps the totem alive, like the environment, is also important to the community. Totems therefore created a physical and a religious bond between the community and the environment.

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<sup>330</sup> See Kimooi Kopchebet, Interviewed by the Author, *Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment*, 2.4.1.

<sup>331</sup> See A.C. Hollis, *The Nandi: Their Language and Folk-lore* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1909), 6.

#### 3.4.2.4. Totem as Character Symbol of the Clan Members<sup>332</sup>

The Keiyo totems were impersonating the characteristic features of the clan members. There was a saying that people are like their totems. The actual interviews with the elders also have disclosed this characteristic. The character was an important criterion by selecting the matching partners for marriage. For example, the elder Changwony Arap Chebos said that the totem *soti kipangau*, hot sun, shows the nature of this clan. People are “hot and burns” and anyone marrying to this clan must be aware of their impulsive character and ready to withstand their hot nature, especially by the women.<sup>333</sup>

Another totem which represents typical characteristic of clan members is the bee *teberer kamakirob*, a very aggressive type of bees. The Keiyo people believe that members of the bee-clan are also very tough people. To marry their women, one has to be prepared for a sweet but a tough wife.<sup>334</sup>

The particular feature of the totem is taken into consideration when the elders must check and decide whether the couple are suitable and compatible for the marriage. They prove also the relevance and the compatibility of their totems and then they proclaim their decision. This tradition is still present, however in a remnant form.

The Keiyo people believe that totems have an influence on the behaviour of the clan members. They believe that the spirit that animates the totem also animates the members of the clan, hence the similar characteristics with the totem, and a spiritual connection within the members of the clan. In this manner, totems have an influence and may moderate the social behavior of the clan members. The mystical relationship between the clan members and the spirit of totem generates not only the interconnectedness at all levels of relation in the community but also the responsibility and the respect among them. The spirit of the totem from the animal world can be used as medium transmitting information from the spiritual world, sometimes warnings and sometimes good news for the clan. Apparently, totems are the channels of communication. At the same time, the clan members are obliged to pay respect and to be in the kinship with totems. In the old times, it was a taboo to kill intentionally the animal which was the symbol of the totem. The totem was seen as a relative and therefore deserving the same respect as the relatives of the clan.

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<sup>332</sup> See Axial Coding of Fieldwork, Interview by Author, *The Research Fieldwork Attachment*, 5.1.2

<sup>333</sup> See Changwony Arap Chebos, Interview by Author, *Research Fieldwork Report Attachment*, 2.4.3.

<sup>334</sup> See Changwony Arap Chebos, Interview by Author, *Research Fieldwork Report Attachment*, 2.4.3.

The Keiyo and most of the Kalenjin people never worshiped the animal totem as a god but respected it as a relative which is mystically connected with every member of the clan. They shared the name and the spirit hence they were in the mystical relation with the totem. Thus, totems are considered as sacred because of this particular spiritual bond they shared with the members of the clan.<sup>335</sup>

### 3.4.3. Neighbourhood of Keiyo – Marakwet and Nandi

#### 3.4.3.1. The Marakwet<sup>336</sup>

The Marakwet (*Markweta*) ethnic group is one of the sub-tribe of the Kalenjin tribe. Today they occupy the Marakwet sub-county of the Elgeyo-Marakwet county. Along with *Almo*, Cherangany (*Sengwer*), Endo and Kipatani is the land of the Marakwet sub-county. The Marakwet territory spreads out through the Kerio Valley, the moderate highlands, and the Cheranganyi Hills. Just like other Kalenjin sub-tribes, the Marakwets came from the Mount Elgon (*kapkuko*). After reaching the Katalel (Kitale), they splited, and several groups migrated to the Baringo, while other settled in Trans Nzoia and in Uasin Gishu. Some of them had remained in those areas, while other clans went further to the Kerio Valley and settled there. As attested by B.E. Kipkorir and through the collected interviews, the “Marakwet society is divided in thirteen patrilineal clans, and each is divided into two or more exogamic sections distinguished by totems.”<sup>337</sup> According to the Marakwet people, totems are sacred symbols of the clan. For example, the *Toyoi* had a personal relationship to rains and some of them were the rain makers.<sup>338</sup> The *mooi* buffalo clan had no personal relations with the animal. However, they respected animals in the society as the clan symbol and identity of the Marakwet people.<sup>339</sup> Totems had been said to take the characteristic of the clan members, and vice versa, some clan members are said to liken to their totem. The name of the animal, therefore, indicates the character or the behaviour of individual clan members.

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<sup>335</sup> See Axial Coding of Fieldwork, Interview by Author, *The Research Fieldwork Attachment*, 5.1.2.

<sup>336</sup> See Kipkorir, *The Marakwet of Kenya*, xvii.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>338</sup> See Marakwet Elders, Interview by Author, *Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment*, 2.6.1 (IV)

<sup>339</sup> See Marakwet Elders, Interview by Author, *Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment*, 2.6.1. (IV)

Chart No. 2 the Marakwet totems:<sup>340</sup>

CLAN and MAN NAME	TOTEM	WOMAN NAME
1. Kobil	Dog ( <i>sukei</i> )	Kobilo
	Porcupine ( <i>sabit</i> )	
	Antbeer ( <i>kipkut</i> )	
2. Mooi	Bufallo ( <i>soet</i> )	Kimoi
	Bird ( <i>osit</i> )	
	Ground bees ( <i>kosomyo</i> )	
3. Tul	Fox/Jackal ( <i>cheptibi</i> )	Tula
4. Talai	White Neck Crow ( <i>chepkirak</i> )	Talaa
	Monitor Lizard ( <i>cheringis</i> )	
	Leopard ( <i>cheplanga</i> )	
5. Shokwei	Duiker/Buck ( <i>ngemur</i> )	Shokwei
	Crane ( <i>ngongonyo</i> )	
6. Terik	Big Elephant ( <i>belio-kabongen</i> )	Teriki
	Small Elephant ( <i>belio kapkatien</i> )	
7. Saniak	Colobus Monkey ( <i>cherere</i> )	
	Brown or Red Bees ( <i>sekem</i> )	
8. Tungo	Hyena ( <i>chepkechir</i> )	Tungo
9. Kabon	Baboon ( <i>moso</i> )	Kabon
	Frog ( <i>kipchotwa</i> )	
	Rat ( <i>muriat</i> )	
10. Mokich	Moon ( <i>Arawet</i> )	Mokicho
	Fire ( <i>mat</i> )	
11. Sot	Sun ( <i>Asis</i> )	Soti
	Worm ( <i>mochan /mokyo</i> )	
12. Sokom	Hawk ( <i>chesirere</i> )	Sokome
13. Toiyoi	Thunder/Lightning ( <i>ilat</i> )	Toiyoi
	Rain/Water ( <i>ropta</i> )	

<sup>340</sup> See Marakwet Elders, Interview by Author, *Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment*, 2.6.1.

### 3.4.3.2. The Nandi<sup>341</sup>

The Nandi community is also a sub-tribe of the Kalenjin tribe. Most of the Nandi used to live traditionally in the Nandi County. Now, their population has spread up to the Uasin Gishu and other parts of Kenya. One theory assumes that the Nandi sub-tribe had been formed by the separation from the Kipsigis sub-tribe, at Rongai near Nakuru. The Kipsigis moved southwards to the Kericho while the Nandi went westwards and settled in the Aldai.<sup>342</sup> Another theory about Nandi origin says that they came from various directions to their present main homeland in the Nandi country. One group came directly from the Elgon, other groups came from the Kipsigis, from Keiyo, and some came from the Maasai. Altogether, the Nandi sub-tribe consists of seventeen clans, and each clan is represented by one or more totems. Totems were considered to be sacred for each group of people. In 1909, Hollis wrote that, “in former times the killing of his sacred animal, or totem by clan man was strictly forbidden, and any breach of this law was severely dealt with, the offender being either put to death or driven out of his clan and his cattle confiscated.”<sup>343</sup> This severe punishment has been changed, but the respect for the totem remained until today.<sup>344</sup> As attested in an interview with Elder Arap Saina, totems remain important symbols of clan identity.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> See Arap Saina, Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment, 2.6.2

<sup>342</sup> See Chesaina, Oral Literature of the Kalenjin, 1.

<sup>343</sup> Hollis, *The Nandi*, 6.

<sup>344</sup> See Arap Saina, Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment, 2.6.2.

<sup>345</sup> See *ibid.*, 2.6.2.



Chart No.3 The Nandi Totems.<sup>346</sup>

CLAN and MAN NAME	TOTEM
1. Mooi	Bufallo ( <i>soet</i> )
	Crested Crane ( <i>kongonyot</i> )
2. Talai (Nandi/ Kutwo)	Lion ( <i>ngetuny</i> )
3. Kipaa	Snake ( <i>ndaret</i> )
	Colobus Monkey ( <i>tisiet</i> )
4. Kibooit or Kiramkel	Elephant ( <i>beliot</i> )
	Chamelion ( <i>nyiritiet</i> )
	Rabit ( <i>kiplengwet</i> )
5. Kipkenda	Bees ( <i>sekemik</i> )
	Frog ( <i>mororoch</i> )
6. Toiyoi-Moriso	Rain ( <i>ropta</i> )
	Safari Ants ( <i>birech</i> )
7. Kapyubi or Sogom	Eagle/Hawk ( <i>chepsireret</i> )
8. Kipasiso or Kapkoluu	Sun ( <i>Assista</i> )
	Mole ( <i>pung'ung'wet</i> )
9. Kipyiegen	Baboon ( <i>moset</i> )
	House Rat ( <i>muriat</i> )
10. Tungo	Hyena ( <i>kimagetiet</i> )
11. Kipsirgoi	Bush Pig/Warthog ( <i>toret</i> )
12. Kibois	Fox/Jackal ( <i>lelwot</i> )
	Cockroach ( <i>solopchot</i> )
13. Kamwaike	Guinea Fowl/Partridge ( <i>taiywet</i> )
14. Kipamwi	Duiker ( <i>cheptirkich</i> )
15. Kapchemurin	Wild Cat ( <i>kiptuswet</i> )
16. Kipkokos	Buzzard ( <i>chepkokosiot</i> )
	Black Ants ( <i>chesimbol</i> )
17. Kiptobkei	Baby Bush ( <i>Chereret</i> )

<sup>346</sup> See Arap Saina, Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment, 2.6.2.

### 3.4.3.3. Comparison of Keiyo-Marakwet-Nandi Totems<sup>347</sup>

The three sub-tribes of Kalenjin, Keiyo, Marakwet and Nandi, are neighbours and certain similarities but also differences are visible between them. There are totems common for all three sub-tribes: buffalo, crane, jackal/fox, elephant, bees, hyena, sun, monkey (baboon), rain/lightning, bush baby, frog, hawk (eagle), and house rat. Further, one can scrutinize that those sub-tribes who are neighbours, have more common totems. For example, Keiyo sub-tribe who are very close neighbours of Marakwet sub-tribe have six common totems: porcupine, crow, fire, leopard, lightning, and moon. A slightly more distant from each other are Keiyo and Nandi sub-tribes, thus they have only four common totems: snake, wild pig, guinea fowl and safari (soldier) ants.

Nandi and Marakwet sub-tribes, which are located far from each other, have only one common totem that the Keiyo do not have i.e. the duiker. The similarity of the types of totems among Keiyo, Marakwet and Nandi sub-tribes, is a sign that these three are part of the larger Kalenjin tribe, and related with each other. It is also an indication that all of them came from the same dispersion point -Mount Elgon (Tulwopkony). Further research is required to find out the similarities between other Kalenjin-tribes totems.

It is worth to mention that each sub-tribe have at least one special totem that does not appear in other sub-tribes. For example, the Keiyo have the totem rhinoceros that is found neither among Marakwet nor among Nandi. Marakwet sub-tribe has totems like dog, lizard and worm, which are not among Keiyo nor Nandi totems. And the Nandi have exclusively totems of rabbit, chameleon, mole, cockroach, wild cat and lion. These differences between these sub-tribes might have arisen because of the growth clans and the changes the sub-tribes underwent during their migration from the Tulwopkony. During that time, the sub-tribes mixed with each other, and therefore mixed their totems too. For example, the Talai clan from the Maasai tribe joined the Nandi sub-tribe with their totem lion (*negtuny*). Then, they were called Talai Kutwo clan and their member became the spiritual leader (*orkoiyot*) for the entire Nandi sub-tribe. Totems therefore form a broad web connecting the clans and the nature. The list of totems is more complex and sometimes confusing especially between neighbouring sub-tribes. There is a need for more research, but the results of this study found out that through the system of totems, the kinship among human beings was extended also to include kinship with nature.

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<sup>347</sup> See Chart no.4

Chart No.4 Comparison of Totems<sup>348</sup>

TOTEM	KEIYO	MARAKWET	NANDI
Bufallo	Mooi	Mooi	Mooi
Crane	Mooi	Shokwei	Mooi
Jackal (fox)	Tula	Tul	Kiboois
Elephant	Teriki	Teriki	Kibooit
Frog	Talaa	Kaboon	Kipkenda
Bees	Shokwei	Saniak	Kipkenda
Sun	Soti	Sot	Kipasiso (Kapkoluu)
Hyena	Tingo	Tungo	Tungo
Hawk (Eagle)	Sokom	Sokom	Kapyubi or Sokom
Monkey	Kaboon	Kaboon	Kipyegen
House Rat	kaboon	Kaboon	Kipyiegen
Rain	Toiyoi	Toiyoi	Toiyoi
Bush Baby	Saniak	Saniak	Kiptobkei
Porcupine	Kobil	Kobil	-
Crow	Kobil	Talai	-
Fire	Kongato	Mokich	-
Leopard	Talai	Talai	-
Lightning	Toiyoi	Toiyoi	-
Moon	Mokicho	Toiyoi	-
Snake	Ringoi	-	Kipaa
Wild Pig	Kobil	-	Kipsirgoi
Guinea Fowl	Targok	-	Kamwaike
Safari (Soldier-) Ants	Toiyoi	-	Toiyoi-moriso
Duiker	-	Shokwei	Kipamwi
Antelope	Mooi	-	-
Quail	Mooi	-	-
Black Monkey	Kongato	-	-
Rhinoceros	Targok	-	-
Chepngasiet? <sup>349</sup>	Shakwei	-	-
Dog	-	Kobil	-
Antbear	-	Kobil	-
Osit?	-	Mooi	-
Ground Bees	-	Mooi	-
Lizard	-	Talai	-
Worm	-	Sot	-
Lion	-	-	Talai
Chameleon	-	-	Kibooit
Rabit	-	-	Kibooit
Mole	-	-	Kipasiso-kapkoluu
Wild Cat	-	-	Kapchemurin
Cockroach	-	-	Kibois

<sup>348</sup> See Authors analysis, Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment, 2.7.1.

<sup>349</sup> ? These are birds that I never got an English translation

### 3.4.4. *The Present and the Future of Keiyo Totems*

#### 3.4.4.1. Totems in Keiyo Community Today

Just like any other culture the Keiyo culture “is dynamic and is subject to change with time, the type and nature of change are never the less, what should be born with great precaution taking into consideration its effect on the future. This should be conditioned and shaped by the circumstances of the present, as the prediction of the future is beyond our means and conception.”<sup>350</sup> How the dynamism of culture has affected the position of totems, is evident when one compares previous social, religious, environmental and economical aspects of the life of the Keiyo with the actual situation. The migration that the Keiyo people have experienced for the last 100 years, had a great impact on their social structure. The encounters with different cultures, with the diversity of totems or with clans without totems, have affected them in a big way. That is the reason why totems have been losing their central position in most spheres of the life of Keiyo. It is only during the marriage preparation when clan totem plays a visible role. But even here the attention of people has been reverted from the totem towards the economic interest for the dowry payment. This has been caused by putting more stress on economic matters than on the spiritual meaning of totems. The coming of Christianity has accelerated the religious change. The new religion stressed the belief in a monotheistic God whose revelation to human beings is written. The Keiyo people, on the other hand, believe in god Assis who reveals himself in the spiritual world that is interconnected with nature. The conversion to the new Christian religion has diminished their connection with the environment.<sup>351</sup>

The recent discovery of mineral resources, i.e. oil, has attracted more attention and accelerated their interest towards the material world. The overemphasis on the material value of nature has led to the exploitation of previously rich natural environment. The fauna and flora have been systematically abused and certain species of animals and plants have been disappearing from the environment. Some totem animals like leopards or rhinoceros are being killed for economic benefits. The Keiyos are losing fast their physical contact with the natural environment and consequently with their animal totems. The personal bond with the totem became feeble and the totem became an abstract object. The elders

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<sup>350</sup> Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*, xii.

<sup>351</sup> See Joseph Kwambai, interview by author, *Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment*, 2.4.5.

of the community are seriously concerned about the disappearance of the old culture and tradition, about the lack of respect for the natural world. Culture used to keep good environment. It was a taboo to cut trees along the rivers and even to cut trees anyhow or without a reason.<sup>352</sup> Kimooi Kopchebet further points out the importance of totems in the life of the Keiyo people. She stresses that no generation can be healthy and prosperous without totems. Totems are signs of identity and spiritual connection with the natural world.<sup>353</sup> Despite the gloomy situation of Keiyo totems today, their future is promising. There is a great hope that the youth will understand totems anew and promote the social and religious connection with their totems.

#### 3.4.4.2. Totems and the Young Generation<sup>354</sup>

The Keiyo population is a young population and almost 46 percent are under fifteen years of age. The interview with some of the youth showed a positive attitude towards their old traditional culture. The young people are eager to learn more about their customs and tradition. Although the school is not the best place to learn about it, they wish to learn more from their parents and grandparents. The hunger for old cultural practices is a good sign. But the elders in the community who possess this knowledge are diminishing with the time. With the death of every elder, dies also part of the cultural knowledge. Unfortunately, the cultural tradition was passed from generation to generation in a narrative form and never been documented. Clan totems are some of these elements of the traditional culture which has survived up to today. Therefore, there is a great need to teach the young generation about their traditional culture and to provide them with an appropriate interpretation skill adapted to the present times.

The young generation are learning is fast to perceive the world from the material and economical perspective. The natural names are being replaced by number names. Everything is explained in figures, there is no room for spiritual or mystical view. The classes in most schools are simply numbered: 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. and so on. Also, the groups of pupils have been deprived of the names that foster connection to nature and instead labelled with numbers. In the school we hear; Group one, Group two etc. Indeed, there

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<sup>352</sup> See Joseph Kwambai, Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment, 2.4.5 (II).

<sup>353</sup> See Kimooi Kopchebet, Interview by Author, *Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment*, 2.4.1 (VI).

<sup>354</sup> Interview by Author, Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment, 3.

are few schools that still use the names of the natural features as a method of classification.<sup>355</sup>

The connection with the natural world is fading and till now totems were the best connectors. The youth feels lost in the modern world and is starving for the knowledge of the old culture, seeking for its identity and for the connection with nature. The teachers are not experts in the old culture, but the elders of the community, and they should pass the cultural richness to the youth. The community should tell the youth about their tradition, explain that the entire nature, animals, and plants, are sacred. It is worth if the Keiyo culture and religious world view is consciously passed to the young generation. The youth should be aware of the meaning and the significance of the totem. For example, the elephant (*teriki*) is a clan totem and therefore it is a sacred animal, and at the same time a relative of the clan members. In view of this, to kill the elephant only for money means to commit a sacrilege because it is killing a member of the clan.

#### 3.4.4.3. Totems in the Future<sup>356</sup>

Actually, there is a new trend to rediscover the traditional wisdom. The Keiyo people have been losing contact with their spiritual view of nature, and now they feel disoriented. The approach of solving the problems by using foreign solutions turned out to be ineffective and has lost its attraction. Now, the local solutions are being encouraged and supported. Especially, when the society and the scholars realize that the local solutions are best suited to solve local problems. Totems are no more considered as a problem to be solved, as it was at the time of the first anthropologists, but as a solution to the problems of modern society.

The future of the Keiyo totems seems to be very promising. Totems still play important role in the social and cultural life, helping to connect people with nature. The renewed interest for the old culture will help people to revisit and to reinstate the good old moral values.

### 3.5. Resume

The Keiyo totemism constitutes part of the totemic systems of the world. Despite many cultural, educational, religious, and economic changes, most Keiyo clans still perceive kinship with their *tiŋg'ik* (totems). They believe that there is social and religious kinship

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<sup>355</sup> The author noticed this as he visited both primary and secondary schools during fieldwork.

<sup>356</sup> See Research and Fieldwork Report Attachment, 6.3.

between their totems and members of the clan. A lot of information have been changed or lost during the time, but what has remained should be studied more carefully and meticulously. This research on totemism in Keiyo sub-tribe and comparing it with other Kalenjin sub-tribes is an attempt to find out the cultural continuity as well as discontinuity of totemism today. Some old traditional cultures have survived up to the present. Some traditions have survived but changed its original form. Many cultural traditions have been fully forgotten, and some are disappearing slowly from daily life. It is true that culture is dynamic, as we have stated earlier, but this dynamic development should be monitored carefully to promote positive and helpful traditions, and to discourage the continuation of the harmful ones. The tradition of female initiation had been terminated by law. However, there are other cultural values that might be helpful for the Keiyo people. These cultural values should be updated and implemented in the present life.

Concluding, people should be well informed and aware of both good old cultural values as well as the harmful ones. Some of the old cultural values and worldviews are still relevant today. These values should be propagated and the Keiyo people should be encouraged to follow them. Of course, also the good old values should be adapted to the reality of the modern world. The Keiyo world has been extended beyond the clan's territory. Totemism is one of those cultures that crosses the clan, tribe and national boundaries. The research carried out by the renowned anthropologists and ethnologists indicated the similarities and differences between the indigenous societies in the world. And, despite apparent differences, there is a connecting worldview that brings all of them together; the view of the world in close relationship with nature. Such a worldview is needed in our world today, where there are breakdowns and crisis of relationships on all levels - economic, religious, environmental, personal, and even psychological level. Totemism when interpreted correctly will contribute to the building and to the restoring of the social and spiritual relations. The totemic culture has been of a great help to the Keiyo people in the past, and can be helpful in the present and in the future.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. TOTEMISM AS KINSHIP WITH GOD'S CREATION

#### 4.1. Preamble

Is there an association between theology and totemism? This chapter attempts to bring these two subjects together. The theme of totemism has appeared during the search for the natural origin of religion. Anthropologists viewed totemism as a suitable theory to explain the natural beginning of religion. It could be a theological theme under consideration of the perspective of human interaction and connectedness with God, and with nature. In totemism, the emphasis is laid on kinship between the human world and the non-human world. It is also a biblical theme which has been often overseen. Theology of creation tries to understand the relationship between God and the natural world. This theme is existent in the Bible and in the teaching of the church and theologians.

Saint Francis of Assisi and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin are exemplary for understanding the theology of creation. Both theologians express, through their lives and writings, their relational view of nature. Their theories brought up a new understanding of creation from a relational perspective, a perspective especially needed in our time of ecological crisis. Deborah Rose, an environmentalist and scholar of Australian indigenous studies, supports the innovative approach that, “totemism posits connectedness, mutual interdependence, and the non-negotiable significance of the lives of non-human species. It organizes responsibilities for species along tracks that intersect, thus builds a structure of regional systems of relationship and responsibility.”<sup>357</sup>

Theological innovativeness accompanied by research and a deep reflection on the word of God and the tradition of the church, is demanded in our time. Theologians from diverse cultures are invited to make contribution to theology from an ecologically friendly point of view. This would be in an accord with the modern call to make Christ and his Gospel of Salvation to be understood in every culture by translating and formulating the Christian message in the thought patterns of the local people. This process has different names but is commonly known as “inculturation.” According to Aylward Shorter, “inculturation implies that Christian message transforms culture. It is also the case that Christianity is

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<sup>357</sup> Deborah Rose, “Totemism, Regions, and Co-management in Aboriginal Australia; Draft paper for the Conference of International Association for the Study of Common Property,” 1998, 8 quoted by Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World*, London, 2005, 167.



transformed by the culture, not in a way that falsifies the message, but in the way in which the message is formulated and interpreted anew.”<sup>358</sup> It is, therefore, a complex process of making Christianity at home in every culture. The totemic phenomenon is one of the cultural aspects existing in many African communities. But could the new positive understanding of totemism be helpful to make a home for the gospel message in Africa? For a long time totemism has been an important theme in anthropology. Now it is the time to “inculturate” totemism into African Christian theology. This would make a rich indigenous culture contribute to a better understanding of Christianity.

This chapter expounds the possibility of a dialogue between the new understanding of totemism as kinship with creation and theology. The early courageous attempt of the Old Testament scholar William Robertson Smith to locate totemism in the early Semitic tribes will be treated first. He is important because he attempted to show how totemism (which at that time was classified as the primitive origin of religion) was related to the revealed religions. His work took a tragic turn when he was tried for a heresy. This was an unfortunate beginning for the theological understanding of totemism. Despite the circumstances, Smith opened a new way for understanding of totemism from a theological perspective. The second part of this chapter relates totemism to kinship with nature.

## **4.2. Bible and Totemism - William Robertson Smith (1846-1894)**

### *4.2.1. His Life and Work*

William Robertson Smith was born in November 1846, in Keig, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. He studied at Aberdeen University and then went to a four-year divinity course at Edinburgh Free Church College, where he also studied science and mathematics. It was also his wish to serve the Free Church as a minister. Later, he became assistant professor in department of natural philosophy at Edinburgh University under Professor Peter Guthrie Tait (1831-1901). In Edinburgh, Smith managed to juggle with the studies of theology, mathematics, and physics. Later, he became professor of Hebrew and the Old Testament at the Free Church College. He went to Bonn, Germany for a summer semester where he began to make effective contacts with such scholars like Carl Schaarschmidt, professor of Philosophy at the University of Bonn and Adolf Kamphausen, professor of Old Testament (1829-1909). From this time, the mind of William Smith was influenced by historical-critical exegesis of the Bible development in most German universities. The

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<sup>358</sup> Aylward Shorter, *Towards a Theology of Inculturation* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf&Stock, 2006), 14.

German biblical exegetical criticism particularly attracted Smith. He travelled to Germany several times, listen to and exchanged ideas with German philosophers and theologians like Albrecht Ritschl and Hermann Lotze. With this new biblical exegetical method of study of scripture, Smith wanted to bring the Free Church into the modern world of Bible exegesis that was already an acknowledged method among German theologians. Smith turned to his German thought and method enabling him to sustain his evangelical beliefs in the light of a new knowledge and to find an interpretative framework for infusing new knowledge and new developments in the society under the lordship of Christ.<sup>359</sup>

These German connections made him develop a critical exegetical mind that lead him to a radical position in his earnest search for new truths, hoping to discover a truer account of the history of grace.<sup>360</sup> Smith's approach created a new perspective to biblical studies for the Free Church of Scotland. His article on "Bible" published in December 1875 in the New Edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (ninth edition; Edinburgh: A. & C. Black) brought controversy with the orthodox members of the Free Church of Scotland. This led to heresy trial that started in 1878. As a professor of Oriental languages and exegesis of Old Testament at Aberdeen, he was indicted for publishing and promulgating the opinions being contradicted or opposed to the doctrine of inspiration, infallible truth and the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>361</sup> After three years proceedings, in 1881, the General Assembly with the majority of 378 votes made the verdict suspending Smith from his post at the Free Church College.<sup>362</sup> In 1881, "Smith was dismissed from his chair at Free Church College, not because that his views had been declared to be heretical, nor his methods had been forbidden, but because it was found no longer 'safe or advantageous' to employ his services in the training of young men for Free Church Ministry."<sup>363</sup> After being dismissed, he became a co-editor of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and later, the editor. He continued to teach in Edinburgh and in Glasgow, and found appreciation of great audiences. In 1883, he became professor of Arabic at the Cambridge. The study of Arabic

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<sup>359</sup> See J.W. Rogerson, *The Bible and Criticism in Victorian Britain: Profiles of F.D. Maurice and William Robertson Smith* (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 71.

<sup>360</sup> See Rogerson, *The Bible and Criticism in Victorian Britain*. 110.

<sup>361</sup> See *The Libel against Professor William Robertson Smith, Report on Proceedings, in the Free Church Presbytery of Aberdeen on February 14, to March 14, 1878*, Accessed 17.12.2016, <https://ia800202.us.archive.org/8/items/libelagainstprof00free/libelagainstprof00free.pdf>.

<sup>362</sup> See Rogerson, *The Bible and Criticism in Victorian Britain*. 56.

<sup>363</sup> William Johnson (ed.), *William Robertson Smith, Essay in Assessment* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 20.

language and culture was very helpful in his further research. William Johnson noted this crucial step that:

“Arabic now began to add an important dimension to his Old Testament work. On the assumption that it was the original homeland of the Semites, Arabia provided the Old Testament scholar with two vital sets of data; the study of custom and practice will throw light on the Semitic religion; the study of language would illuminate linguistic problems. Smith thus became a pioneer in comparative religion and social anthropology and an exponent of comparative Semitic philology.”<sup>364</sup>

From this perspective, Smith continued to lecture and wrote the book, *The Religion of the Semites* which was not only important for the study of totemism but also a great contribution to the comparative religion. Smith died on March 31, 1894 at age of 47. His ideas on comparative religion and early Semitic religion are expressed in the article on ‘Sacrifice’ in the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in his books *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (1885) and *Religion of the Semites* (1889).

#### 4.2.2. His Anthro-po-theological Attempt

Although William Robertson Smith, died young he made an important contribution to the religious study. He tried to connect theology with other fields of study, like the anthropology. Therefore, it is not easy to classify him either as theologian or sociologist or anthropologist.

In the Edinburgh Evening Club, Smith used to meet his friend John McLennan frequently, who had drawn his attention to the comparative religions.<sup>365</sup> Extensive travels and a good command of Arabic and Hebrew as well as the “Germany born” biblical exegetical approach to the Bible made Smith to participate actively in the academic issues of the time despite of disapproval and condemnation by his conservative church members. Smith followed the stages of religious progress of the early Semites<sup>366</sup> from which emerged three great world religions i.e. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. While writing the preface of his book *Religion of the Semites*, Smith made clear that:

“No words need to be wasted to prove that a right understanding of the religion of Old Testament is the only way to a right understanding of the Christian faith; but it is not so fully recognised, except in the circle of professed scholars, the doctrines and the ordinances

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<sup>364</sup> See Rogerson, *The Bible and Criticism in Victorian Britain*, 56.

<sup>364</sup> Johnson (ed.), *William Robertson Smith*, 21.

<sup>365</sup> See Bernard Maier, *William Robertson Smith: His Work and his Times*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 83.

<sup>366</sup> See W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on Religion of the Semites* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1894), 1. <https://archive.org/stream/lecturesonreli00smit#page/124/mode/2up> (accessed 02.05.2016)

Semites for Smith included the Arabs, the Hebrews and the Phoenicians, the Arameans, the Babylonians and Assyrians which in Ancient times occupied the great Arabian Peninsula, with the more fertile land of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Iraq, from Mediterranean coast to the mountains of Iran and Armenia

of the Old Testament cannot be thoroughly comprehended until they are put into comparison with the religions of the nation's akin to the Israelites"<sup>367</sup>

Robert A. Segal, while writing a new introduction to Smith's book *Religion of the Semites*, noticed that Smith differentiates the three Abrahamic religions from the religion of the Semites. Smith called the three religions, "positive religions" because they broke away from the ancient "heathenism" religion which grew up from the actions of the unconscious forces operating silently in every generation. He stressed that the positive religion arouses out of the teaching of great religious innovators, who spoke as organs of divine revelations and hence departed from the heathen past.<sup>368</sup> In his lectures, Smith "fleshed out" the more materialistic religious context which is preceding the authentic and irreducible self-revelation of God in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> BC prophets.<sup>369</sup>

Smith speculated that, just like all other primitive societies, the Semites had to pass the early totemic stage. A theory he learned from McLennan between 1869-1870 while in Aberdeen. Although Smith exchanged with McLennan ideas about totemism, he never published anything on totemism until his article on *Animal Worship and Animal Tribes among Arabs and in the Old Testament*. In this article, Smith maintained his opinion that there is survival of totemism in the Biblical record.<sup>370</sup> Although there are totemic survivals in the Bible, Smith pointed out that there is a specific difference between the religion of Israel and the religions of the ancient Near East. Smith wrote: "It does not appear that Israel was, by its own wisdom, more fit than any other nation to rise above the lowest level of heathenism."<sup>371</sup> He considered a divine revelation and action to be the cause of the Israelites big leap. After the death of McLennan in 1881, Smith continued to defend his theory on totemism.

His attitude became more evident when he wrote the book *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* and in his Burnet Lectures (1888-89) *on the Religion of the Semites*. Smith studied the ancient Arabic and Semitic cultures at their "primitive" stage of culture. He considered them to be just like all other primitive cultures that passed through the totemic stage. According to Smith, the complete proof of early totemism in any race involves three main characteristics. The first characteristic is the existence of stocks named after

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<sup>367</sup> W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), vi.

<sup>368</sup> See William Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Transaction Publishers, 2002), vii.

<sup>369</sup> See Jones, *The Secret of the Totem*, 76.

<sup>370</sup> See Maier, William Robertson Smith, 230.

<sup>371</sup> See Maier, *William Robertson Smith*, 230., He quotes Lectures and Essays of William Robertson Smith, edited by John Sutherland Black and George W. Chrystal, (London: A & C, 1912), 483.

plants and animals. The second one is the prevalence of the conception that the members of the stock are blood of the eponym animal, or are sprung from a plant of the species chosen as totem. The third characteristic is the ascription of a sacred character to the totem, which may result in regarding it as the god of the stock, but at any rate makes it to be regarded with veneration, so that even the totem animal cannot be eaten.<sup>372</sup> Smith saw these three characteristics symptomatic for the totemic survivals in early communities. According to him “if we find all these things together in the same tribe the proof of totemism is complete; but, even where this cannot be done, the proof may be morally complete if all the three marks of totemism are found well developed within the same race.”<sup>373</sup> He never saw the possibility of finding totemism in its primitive form and so he felt the great need for gathering and sifting of information to find out whether there is any survival or relic of totemism.

For Smith, the stock names that are totemic in their nature were very important. He noticed that in the early Arabia, the mark of any person belonging to the stock was that “he or she bears that name; so that by this test two persons know at once whether, if there is a law of exogamy, they are or are not forbidden to form sexual connections.”<sup>374</sup> Smith wrote that, “in enquiring whether the Arabs were once divided into totem-stocks, we cannot expect to meet with any evidence more direct than the occurrence of such relics of the system as are found in other races which have passed through but ultimately emerged from totem stage.”<sup>375</sup> However, Smith noticed also that the early Arabian tribe names were mostly collective or plural names. These names or nicknames could be the names of the common ancestors of male descent relatives belonging to this group. Smith extended this idea further to the point that early Arabian tribal names were mainly drawn from animal’s names. Furthermore, the existence of the tribal names originated from animal names was very important in the Arabic genealogy and thus conform to his theory of totems. Another proof of the existence of totemism in ancient Arabia is the belief of the old tribe’s men to be of the blood of the animal whose name they bore and acknowledge a physical kinship with it.<sup>376</sup> In Smith it is:

“When every primitive race call themselves dogs, panthers, snakes, sheep, lions cubs, or sons of the lion, the jerboa or the lizard, the burden of proof really lies on those who

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<sup>372</sup> See W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903), 219.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>376</sup> See *ibid.*, 236-237.

maintain that such designations do not mean what they mean in other parts of the world. That the names are mere accidents or mere metaphors is an assumption which can seem plausible only to those who do not know savage ways of thought.”<sup>377</sup>

One example was the lizard (*dabba*) which was also the name of a clan, was prohibited to be eaten, and it was an indication on totemic thinking among the Arabs.<sup>378</sup> With many other examples, Smith brought forward the theory that totemic clan names existed and the members of the clans believed to be of the blood of the animal whose name they bore and acknowledged physical kinship with them. For this reason they cannot eat animals because they were blood related with them. The tribal name, which was synonymous with the name of animal or of a natural object became one thing with the name of the god. Smith concluded that the gods were tribal as well as totemic in their nature. Smith commented on the bridging of divine tribal names and animal tribal names that; “where the divine being is at the same time one of those heavily beings which primitive peoples everywhere have looked upon as animals, the interval between divine tribal names and animal tribal names is very nearly bridged over, and one is compelled to ask whether both are not reducible to one ultimate principle such as the totem theory supplies.”<sup>379</sup> Through his profound linguistic research on early Arabic animal-stock names he attempted to discover the relics of totemic names.

The belief in the totem animal as sacred and worthy of veneration, was very significant for a Smithsonian theory of totemism. His studies of the early Semitic worldviews exposed the similarity with the savage tribes in other parts of the world. He comprehended that religion among the early Semites was rather a clan or stock religion than an individualistic religion. The religion was part of the stock social order and obligation, everyone was religious and everyone was a member of the stock. Smith noticed that early Semitic “religion did not exist for the saving of souls but for the preservation and welfare of the society, and in all that was necessary to this end, and every man had to take his prescribed part or break with the domestic and political community to which he belonged.”<sup>380</sup> The early Semitic religions had gods which were manifested through the language of human social relationship. Smith stressed that, “if a god was spoken of as father and his worshippers as his offspring, the meaning was that the worshippers were literary of his stock, that he and they made up one natural family with reciprocal family

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<sup>377</sup> See *ibid.*,237.

<sup>378</sup> See *ibid.*,230-231.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*,241.

<sup>380</sup> W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), 29.

duties to one another.”<sup>381</sup> He believed that nature gods were a late development of the idea of totemic gods, because, “the belief in local nature-gods that are also clan-gods may not be directly evolved out of an earlier totemism, but there can be no reasonable doubt that it is evolved out of ideas or usages which also find their expression in totemism, and therefore must go back to the most primitive stage of savage society.”<sup>382</sup>

Further, Smith continued showing the importance of totemic thinking in early ritual practice. He explains:

“And in ritual the sacred object was spoken of and treated as the god himself; it was not merely his symbol but his embodiment, the permanent centre of his activity in same sense in which the human body is the permanent centre of man’s activity. The god inhabits the tree or sacred stone not in the sense in which a man inhabits a house but in the sense in which his soul inhabits his body.”<sup>383</sup>

So, this early thinking brought a relational understanding of human being with god and nature. According to him, therefore, totemism fitted into a whole organic system of the ancient Semitic religion and culture, because:

“In the system of totemism men have relations not with individual powers of nature, i.e. with gods, but with certain classes of natural agents. The idea is that nature, like mankind, is divided into groups or societies of things, analogous to the groups or kindreds of human society. As life analogous to human life is imagined to permeate all parts of the universe, the application of this idea may readily be extended to inanimate as well as to animate things.”<sup>384</sup>

Further, Smith stressed the sacredness of nature in the ancient societies through kinship. He discussed the understanding of sacrifice from the perspective of the sacredness of nature and kinship with nature. For the ancient man, the life of a kinsman was sacred to him not because he was human but because he was kinsman. The animal was sacred not because it was the animal, but because it was man’s cousin.<sup>385</sup> The animal which was the emblem of totem was respected and could not be eaten, but when it was killed or eaten, it was a part of the sacred ritual. For Smith, “the fundamental idea of sacrifice is not that of sacred tribute, but of communion between the god and his worshippers by jointed participation in the living flesh and blood of the sacred victim.”<sup>386</sup> The ritual killing and the ritual communion celebrated by the ancient Semitic tribes could be better understood from the totemic perspective because sacrifice was about kinship. Smith presumed that in

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<sup>381</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>382</sup> Smith, *Lectures on Religion of the Semites*, 1894, 125.

<sup>383</sup> Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 1956, 87.

<sup>384</sup> Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1894, 126.

<sup>385</sup> See Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 1956, 285.

<sup>386</sup> Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1894, 345.

ancient societies, sacrificial animals were always treated as kin and hence protected by religious taboos. For him, sacrifice was related to the clan and neither to the family nor to an individual. Therefore, Smith emphasized the centrality of the social relations in ancient Semitic religions, because “the fundamental conception of ancient religion is the solidarity of the gods and their worshippers as part of organic society.”<sup>387</sup> This organic foundation of the society was the understanding of kinship. The animate and inanimate worlds of ancient Semites were interrelated and existed in the reciprocal communion.

The symbols and emblems played a very important role in the ancient religions. Smith highlighted the importance of tattooing as the mark and the emblem in totemism. He observed the function of tattooing among the Arab tribes where every stock had a tribe mark *wasm* that was branded on their cattle. This mark was related to *washm* which was an art of tattoo on hand, arms etc., for beautifying purposes. He saw that as an association with the totem tattoos in other primitive societies. Though sometimes through farfetched reasons and facts, Smith concluded that “Arabs passed through the totem stage, and that they entered it before they were differentiated from their brethren who in historical times lived outside the peninsula.”<sup>388</sup>

However, why was Smith so concerned to understand the ancient Semitic tribes? Because he was convinced that understanding the ancient worldview would help us to understand Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

According to Smith, the Old Testament and by extension the New Testament could be better understood with the help of analysis of primal Semitic religions of the world of the Old Testament. This understanding could be attained by critically examining the Bible through non-propositional views arguing that, “revelation consists not in the promulgation of divided authored truths but the performance of Gods self-revealing acts within human history [...]. The locus of revelation was thus not propositions but events, and what was revealed was not truth about God but God himself, through his actions toward human beings.”<sup>389</sup> Smith’s influence on the future totemic discussion lays more in the area of his scientific research of the ancient Semitic world. Whilst many anthropologists went to America and Australia to research for savage mentality, Smith studied the Arabic and Semitic world to find out which “relics” of savage mentality

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<sup>387</sup> Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1894, 32.

<sup>388</sup> Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, 1903, 256.

<sup>389</sup> Jones, *The Secret of the Totem*, 62.



remained in the writings of the Old Testament. He was of the opinion that the Old Testament contained savage elements from primal religions and worldview but that this did not affect the uniqueness of the biblical religion. The contrary, he considered it as helpful for a better understanding of the Old and the New Testament. He declared that, “no positive religion that has moved men has been able to start with *tabula rasa*, and express itself as if religion were beginning for the first time; in form if not in substance, the new system must be in contact all along the line with older ideas and practices which it finds in its possession.”<sup>390</sup> Thus to comprehend the system of positive religions thoroughly it is essential to know the primal religion that preceded it. If the ancient Semitic religions already contained the primal religious ideas and practices which are now common among the primitive communities in the world, then these communities might have a better understanding of the Bible.

#### 4.2.3. *William Robertson Smith's Opponents*

William Robertson Smith's book *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* was a very important work that “attracted attention of the Bible scholars and Semitic scholars and anthropologists in 1885 and laid a foundation for all subsequent research in this department of studies.”<sup>391</sup> Smith was criticized by scholars, for purporting that the Old Testament, which is considered to be an inspired Holy Book, contained ‘relics’ of the so called “heathenish” early Semitic cultures and even more, that the early Semitic cultures passed through the primitive totemic stage like all other primitive tribes. Professor Vincent Zapletal (1867-1938), professor of the Old Testament Exegesis at Freiburg University, challenged the truthfulness of the theory of Smith on the existence of totemism in the religion of Israel. Zapletal's book, *Der Totemismus und die Religion Israels: Ein Beitrag zur Religionswissenschaft und zu Erklärung des Alten Testaments*, contained the criticism of Smith's theory of the totemic elements in the religion of Israel. For Zapletal, the names of animals associated with human beings, however common among the Semites and Arabs, were not the indication of totemic clan names. Zapletal noted the presence of several animal names, and reasoned that these were not the clan

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<sup>390</sup> Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1894, 2.

<sup>391</sup> Stanley A. Cook, Editors Preface in; W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, 1903 (1979), v.

names as understood in the totemic community but simply the names of an individual.<sup>392</sup> The adopting of animal names for humans did not automatically mean that these were totem names. Such names could be used because the physical appearances of some humans resemble those of certain animals. Zapletal found out that in the Bible and among the early Arabic tribes, the names of the people always corresponded with the names of the animals, but for him it was not a proof for the existence of totemism. He concealed the fact that the structure of the Arabic language could not remain intact and had undergone changes within time. One should not look for the original Semitic language among the Arabic languages. Zapletal stressed that “even if the animal names of the Arabs show the presence of totemism, similar names among the Israelites do not necessarily show the presence of totemism.”<sup>393</sup> Zapletal admitted that nature worship (*Gestirndienst*) played an important role among the Israelites and other Semitic religions.<sup>394</sup> However, he refused to admit that this was the sign of the existence of totemism. For him, nature worship did not necessarily mean that a community was a totemic community. Even the evidence of many nature cults in Israel, e.g., the well cult (*Quellenkultus*), the tree cult (*Baumkultus*) or animal cult (*Tierkultus*), were not the sign of the existence of totemism in the Israel religion. Zapletal interpreted that most of the cults were borrowed from other tribes. According to him, the well cult was borrowed from the Canaanites and the tree cult was an old tradition of pre-Israelite origin. Therefore, the totemic meaning was absent in the Israelite cults. Also the cult of unclean animals (*Unreinen Tiere*) that Smith considered to be of totemic nature, was disputed by Zapletal. For him, not all taboos in every religion were indication of totemism. Certain taboos were outside of the totemic classification. In the Israelitic culture there were different reasons for not eating certain animals. Some animals were not edible because their meat was poisonous or containing contagious diseases. The Israelites believed that certain kinds of meat were harmful to the soul whilst others were prohibited by their nature.<sup>395</sup> Zapletal commented on the absence of unclean plants in the food laws of Israel and its effects on the totemic

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<sup>392</sup>See Vincent Zapletal, *Der Totemismus und die Religion Israels: Ein Beitrag zur Religionswissenschaft und zur Erklärung des Alten Testaments* (Freiburg: Kommissionsverlag der Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1901), 27.

<sup>393</sup> Zapletal, *Der Totemismus und die Religion Israels*, 25. A personal translation from, „wenn auch die Tiernamen der Araber auf Totemismus berühren sollten, ähnliche Namen bei Israeliten noch nicht notwendig den Totemismus voraussetzen.“

<sup>394</sup>*Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>395</sup> See Stanley A. Cook, “Israel and Totemism,” in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 14, no. 3 (Apr. 1902), 422.

interpretation of Smith. He wrote that; “against the totemic explanation for the Israelite food law, speaks the complete absence of unclean plants, which play a significant role in totemism and thus should appear in the food law. Even the presence of unclean animals in the Israelite law is nothing but the most rotten state of totemism.”<sup>396</sup>

Zapletal claimed that Smith’s explanation for the unclean food practise was implausible. He criticized Smith’s approach of relating the Israelite sacrifice practice to the totemic origin of communion. Zapletal saw Smith’s sacrifice theory as a theory that was arbitrary, and did not apply strictly to the Semitic people. Sacrifice and offering in ancient cultures were intended not only for communion with gods but also for receiving the grace through “atoning offering” (*Sühnopfer*) and “thanks offering” (*Dankopfer*). Moreover, he opposed to Smith’s claim that among Semites only kinship played an important role. Zapletal observed that other sacrifices and offering did not reflected kinship meaning, for example, the sacrifice of humans who were prisoners of war.<sup>397</sup> He also criticised the opinion of Smith that all sacrifices were associated with the clan. Instead, he presumed that many sacrifices were performed as sacrifice for an individual or for family purpose. According to Zapletal, Semitic sacrifices were very closely related to the offerings expressing the thankfulness to God, i.e. the harvest offering. This view is quite opposite to the totemistic sacrifice theory of Smith. Zapletal concluded that “W.R. Smith forgot the main thing in sacrifice, namely that it was presented as a sign of recognizing God as the supreme ruler to whom human beings owe the gift of life.”<sup>398</sup> Nevertheless, he agreed with Smith’s regarding the importance of the community (*Gemeinschaft*) in understanding the theory of sacrifice. The Sacrifice was aimed to bring community between God and the person offering, but that could be explained also without totemic interpretation.

In Smith’s theory of totemism, tattoos, flags, and group marks were seen as central elements of totemic culture. Arabic clans used to brand their cattle or other property. Zapletal interpreted it differently. For him, the marks which were mainly used by early Arabic clans existed also in modern times. Some of those marks were used during burial

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<sup>396</sup> Zapletal, *Der Totemismus und die Religion Israels*, 91. A personal translation from:

„Gegen die totemistische Erklärung der israelitischen Speisegebote zeugt endlich ganz entschieden das vollständige Fehlen von unreinen Pflanzen, die weil sie im Totemismus eine keineswegs unbedeutende Rolle spielen, auch in die Speisegebote vorkommen sollten. Mithinkönnen wir in dem Vorkommen von unreinen Tieren bei den Israeliten keine andere als eine höchst morsche des Totemismus erkennen,“

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid., 105. A personal translation from: „W. R. Smith hat auf die Hauptsache beim Opfer vergessen, dass man es nämlich darbrachte zum Zeichen der Anerkennung Gottes als des höchsten Herrschers, dem man ein Leben schuldig ist.“

rituals. Zapletal distinguished between bodily marks and tattoos. Bodily marks and cuts were intended to cause pain to the person as part of burial rites or to attract the gods' attention by bleeding. The tattoos, though, had a religious meaning showing the belonging to gods, and were not simply done for aesthetical purposes. The war flags of Israelites were handed over from one family to the next one along with the appointment of new commanders. Concluding, Zapletal never saw the existence of totemic meaning in the bodily cuts, marks and tattoos among the early Arabs and Semites. He therefore, fully disapproved Smith's theory. He accused him of propagating false interpretations of facts about the presence of totemism among early Arabic and Semitic tribes. He declared Smith's theory to be a mirage (*Luftspiegellung*).

The renowned anthropologist Edward Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973) also criticized Smith for blindly following McLennan and taking the latter's paradigm of unilinear stages as evidence of social development, as well as trying to make the evidence of ancient Arabia conform to it.<sup>399</sup> The ancient Bedouin tribes, according to Evans-Pritchard, were not totemic tribe as thought by Smith. He notes that, "Smith made out no case for the ancient Bedouin being totemic, unless almost any interest in nature is to be labelled totemism [...]. We may go far to as to say that the evidence he cites were inconclusive, furthermore that they are far from proving his case with regard to both matriliney and totemism, and that they are sometimes far-fetched interpretations of the facts."<sup>400</sup> Evans-Pritchard was very critical about the evidence purported by Smith for the existence of totemism among the early Arabs. He commented on Smith's approach that he had "faulty theoretical assumptions, which not only lead to highly doubtful conclusions but also block a correct understanding of phenomena under investigation."<sup>401</sup> He saw Smith's data as insufficient and lacking logical conclusions. Evans-Pritchard predicted that future researchers would detect the faulty conclusions in Smith's books. He saw Smith's argument as:

"Tortuous and based on tenuous evidence. The worst excess of the comparative method is avoided by keeping Semitic field, but even here the evidence is not in his favour [...]. The Arabian material is also very inconclusive, and it may be doubted, whether there is properly speaking, sacrifice at all in orthodox Islam. The theory is also vitiated by the evolutionary bias of his time, all early religions being played down as superstitious and materialistic (concrete) to enhance the spirituality of late times (he had very much a Victorian Protestant's view of the antithesis between social and personal religion)."<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> See Edward Evans-Pritchard, *A History of Anthropological Thought* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), 70.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80.

Despite the sharp criticism, Evans-Pritchard consented to Smith's ideas as important for the study of historical and sociological traditions.

Although Smith was criticized for his approach to the religion in the Old Testament, his ideas found support by other Old Testament scholars. Among them were Ross G. Murison, Stanley A. Cook, and more recently Gillian M. Bediako.

#### 4.2.4. *William Robertson Smith's Supporters*

Ross G. Murison, a lecturer of oriental languages at the Toronto University, in his article *Totemism in the Old Testament* written in 1901, followed the line of thinking of Smith. His writing supported the possibility of the existence of totemism among the Hebrews in the past.

“It is not to be expected that any full system of totemism, even in its most attenuated form, will be found among the Hebrews in historical times. Totemism can maintain itself in any completeness only among savages like the people in Australia and North America, among whom the best examples have been found; but when the story of Israel opens, that nation is already long past that stage of its development. Yet because the primal character of totemism, many of its customs, practices, and beliefs will long maintain themselves, in spite of generational progress, while the system as a whole may disappear.”<sup>403</sup>

The article focused on the change and the development the Hebrews underwent with time, and how that justified the little remnants or the total loss of totemism features. The article touched on the remaining relics of totemism in the proper names of the Arab tribes. The tribe's names like dog, lion, wolf, locust, dove, bull, and lizard, as quoted by Smith, seemed to be totemic names. Murison commented the obviousness of existence of totemism among Arabs and Hebrew that, “totemism was thus no new or strange thing in the East, and it would be surprising if no traces of it are to be found among the Hebrews and immediate neighbors.”<sup>404</sup> Something has disappeared but the family and clan names in the Old Testament indicate the totemic traces, especially the names quoted by Smith.<sup>405</sup> According to Murison, the relics of totemism managed to survive the tremendous changes that Hebrew society underwent. This happened because “it was of the inner life of the people. When its outward rites were finally suppressed, many of them, doubtless, grafted themselves to legitimate practices, and certainly, many of its superstitions still live among the Jewish, as they do among the Gentiles.”<sup>406</sup> Murison therefore agreed with Smith that

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<sup>403</sup> Ross G. Murison in, *Biblical World*, vol.18, no.3 (sep.,1901),177-178, accessed 26-12-2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3136684>.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>405</sup> See *ibid.*, 179.

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

the relics of totemism could be found among the Jews as superstitions, and might be traced in the Old Testament. Murison restricted the totemic relics only to the Old Testament and categorically refuted its existence in the New Testament.

Stanley A. Cook (1873-1949) was a Regius professor of Hebrew at the Cambridge University. He was the supporter of Smith's totemic perspective and an opponent of Zapletal. In 1902, he wrote about Israel and totemism, and disapproved Zapletal's criticism towards Smith. He commented that:

“Smith's victory is apparently so easy, and his refutations are superficially so overwhelming, that, although it may be admitted that he has done a good service in pointing out some of the weak spots in Robertson Smith's armour, it is to be feared unwary readers will hastily conclude that the theory of Semitic totemism is to be cast upon one side for the future, and that evidence of animism among Israeli's are almost wholly wanting.”<sup>407</sup>

Cook praised Zapletal's great skill and persistence in arguing against Smith's theory of totemism. He noticed that if Smith pushed the evidence for the theory of totemism too far, so Zapletal endeavoured nothing but to discredit him.<sup>408</sup> According to Cook, the existence of totemism survivals among the Semites could not be simply discarded. Of course, it was unrealistic to expect to find the original totemism among the Semites, after the tremendous changes over ages. Yet, the early Semites still were part of the heathenistic communities in earlier times with their cults, beliefs, and superstition. Cook concluded that “it is unanimously agreed that (Smith) proved beyond doubt that the Semites passed through phases no less degraded than those of other savage nations.”<sup>409</sup> Smith, as a biblical scholar of his time, uncovered the existence of primitive indigenous Semitic traditions that some of which could be found in the Old Testament. This discovery of Smith and exegetical scholars though radical at their time, did not make the Old Testament unholy, but made it more understandable. The scholarly attempt of Smith to discover the historical base of the Old Testament, found also interest among scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century who were trying to find relations between the primal religions and biblical religions. This is the result of new unbiased interest and study of indigenous religions.

Gillian M. Bediako, professor at Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission, and Culture in Ghana, in her book, *The Primal Religion, and the Bible: William Robertson Smith and his Heritage*, discusses the relationship between the primal religions and

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<sup>407</sup> Cook, “Israel and Totemism”, 415.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., 416.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid., 448.

biblical religions in the works of William Robertson Smith.<sup>410</sup> She appreciates the relationship between the Old and New Testament and primal religions. According to her, the New Testament can be rightfully understood from the perspective of the Old Testament and the Old Testament also cannot be rightfully understood without understanding the primal religions. She stresses that, “there is a growing perception of affinity between the religion of the Old Testament and those of ‘primitive’ societies around the world, generally esteemed as savaged and barbarous.”<sup>411</sup> This affinity cannot be ignored at all. However, might the affinity between the Old Testament and the primal religions be an advantage to the understanding of Christianity today? According to Bediako, primal religions are not dead, the relic exist exists still among the indigenous people, especially in Africa. Totemism and traditional sacrifices still are present among indigenous communities. Through the missionary work and under consideration of the radical newness of the biblical religion, Bediako opened the way for a dialogue between biblical religions and indigenous religions. When we understand primal or indigenous religion outside evolutionary thinking and prejudicial perception, we can come out with a new view of indigenous religion as traditional knowledge. Bediako comments that, “Smith examined the world-view of primal Semitic religion with its characteristic of human kinship with nature and relationship with supernatural powers set in sacramental universe, from the perspective that it was the product of a flawed intellect, contrasted unfavourably with the modern Christian intellect, which was to be taken as the standard of measurement.”<sup>412</sup> The appreciation of the primal religion in the age of expanding Christianity among the indigenous people in Africa and other parts of the world, will be beneficial to the Christian faith. The indigenous people have not totally lost the primal attitudes. The human kinship with nature is visible through totemism.

### **4.3. Theology of Kinship with Creation**

#### *4.3.1. Gods Kinship with Creation*

In the Bible, the kinship with creation is an important theme. For the community, the kinship means the interrelatedness in the sense of sharing the common nature, origin, spirit, and implies the specific ties and obligations between relatives. The kinship has

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<sup>410</sup> See Gillian Bediako, *The Primal Religion and the Bible; William Robertson Smith and His Heritage*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 7.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

been subject of many anthropological studies, focusing on the cultural and biological relevance. According to Robin Fox: “Kinship and marriage are about the basic facts of life. They are about ‘birth, and copulation, and death,’ the eternal round that seemed to depress the poet but which excites amongst other anthropologists.”<sup>413</sup> Despite the anthropological explanation, many scholars of this field have found that most cultures have elaborate complex system of kinship-relations. To understand kinship better, one should go beyond anthropological explanation and look at it from the perspective of indigenous people, the perspective that many researchers have failed to understand. For the indigenous people, kinship encompasses a broad perspective of the cultural, biological, natural and spiritual world. Relatedness is a complex phenomenon not only in the human world, but in non-human world. The worldview of indigenous people might enrich the understanding of the Bible.

The Bible is the word of God about the kinship between the Trinitarian God and his creations. It is the kinship between God and his creation through the creation, covenant, and love.

The fundamental and central Jewish and Christian belief is that “In the beginning, when God created the heavens and earth [...]” (Genesis, 1.1) This is the very first verse in the Jewish and in the Christian Bible, and of a great importance. Yet, Terrence Freitheim observed that urgent interest in the theme of creation is surprisingly coming from new ecological consciousness rather than from theologians. This new ecological consciousness arises from the actual ecological problems experienced today that comes either from a sentimental view of creation or even from a pagan perspective of creation. The theological contribution is needed to be a balance between the two extremes, the gnostic contempt and the pagan adoration of nature.<sup>414</sup>

It is foundational doctrine in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, that God reveals himself as the creator of all that exists, seen and unseen.<sup>415</sup> This basic catechetical statement expresses the relationship between God and his creation, a relationship that began, lasts, and never ends. The relatedness between God and his creatures is the foundational kinship and the centre of the salvation history that climaxed in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>413</sup> See Robin Fox, *Kinship and Marriage*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 30.

<sup>414</sup> See Terrence E. Freitheim, *God and World in the Old Testament, A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nahville: Abingdon Press, 2005), ix.

<sup>415</sup> See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 279, accessed 04-01-2017, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/pls2c1p4.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/pls2c1p4.html)



Of course, there is an abundance of scientific studies on the origin of the world, and all contribute to the understanding of God as the creator of all beings. Heinrich Fries emphasizes this relationship in creation. “As the creator, God is distinct from creatures, but the creation is related to and dependent on God. The creation is thus not nature come from itself or externally existing nature [...] but a creature, a creator, who stands over against the world in freedom.”<sup>416</sup> Although God is distinct from creatures, by the act of creation, he is in a permanent kinship with his creation. The invisible God is visible through the works of his creation. God is transcendent and immanent in his creation through his spirit. Jürgen Moltmann underscores that “God is not merely a creator of the world. He is also the spirit of the universe. Through the powers and potentialities of the spirit, the creator indwells the creatures he has made, animates them, holds them in life, and leads them to future of his kingdom.”<sup>417</sup> Hence the divine transcendence and divine immanence of God express profoundly the kinship of God with his creation.

God created the world and never left it alone. God is continuously creating through his presence in creation, because, “creation is an intentional multi-stage process, not only initiated in the past but also experienced in the present.”<sup>418</sup> The creation stories in the book of Genesis reveals the transcendent and immanent God in his creation. Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson show how these two characteristics of God have been interpreted in theological discourses. “Because the Bible presents God as both beyond the world and present to the world, theologians in every era are confronted with the challenge of articulating the Christian understanding of the nature of God in a manner that balances, affirms and holds in creative tension the twin truths of divine transcendence and divine immanence.”<sup>419</sup> These two divine truths should not be seen from a dualistic perspective but rather from the perspective of an intrinsic divine kinship. The anthropomorphic expression defines God as a father or as mother, referring to the model of a family. God is the father because he created the world out of his love and is continuing to create and to care for his creation. The “kinship” understanding of God is today more relevant than the hierarchical “kingship” model in the past that was overemphasized, hence reducing a

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<sup>416</sup> Heinrich Fries, *Fundamental Theology*, (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 202.

<sup>417</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 14.

<sup>418</sup> Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, John P. Calvin (eds.), *Systematic Theology, Roman Catholic Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 207.

<sup>419</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology, God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 11.

genuine relationship between God and his creation. The fatherhood of God is not about the hierarchy but is an anthropomorphic expression. The transcendence of God is therefore not diminished by His immanence but is enhanced by love and the kinship.

The Sabbath symbolizes the day of the completion of creation, “Thus the heavens and the earth and all array were completed. Since on the seventh day God was finished with the work he had been doing, he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken. So, God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.” (Genesis, 2.1-3) The Sabbath is a sacred time not only for the celebration of the completion of work but is the time to cherish the kinship between God and his creation and also a kinship between Gods creation. Jürgen Moltmann insists that the Sabbath belongs to the “fundamental structure of creation itself.”<sup>420</sup> The Sabbath is the divine feast when God rests in his creation. The creator and the created celebrate together. During this special sacred time, we celebrate Gods immanence in his creation. When we celebrate the Sabbath day consciously and rightly, we strenghten the kinship ties between God and his creation. On the Sabbath day, we celebrate the goodness, the beauty, and the harmony in God’s creation. However, sometimes the harmony and goodness are distorted by human gradual descent in the sin.<sup>421</sup> The sin of man and woman wrecked the kinship between God and his creation. The hiding of the naked man as described in Genesis, 3.11 is a visible symbol of distorted ties with God. These break up was reinstated through a covenant.

The covenants are important motifs in the Bible and the reason for the division of the Christian Bible in two parts, the Old and the New Covenant. The covenant is the central Bible theme because, “a covenant signifies relationship based on the commitment which includes both promise and obligations, and which has the quality of reliability and durability.”<sup>422</sup> In the Old Testament there are three major covenants between God and his creation: the Noahic (Genesis, 9.9-11), the Abrahamic (Genesis, 17) and the Mosaic (Deuteronomy, 11) covenants. In this study, the Noahic covenant is very important. As we read in the Bible “See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you.” (Genesis, 9.9-

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<sup>420</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 284.

<sup>421</sup> See Richard Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology, Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco Texas: Baylor University Press,2010), 23.

<sup>422</sup> Bernard W. Anderson, “Covenant” in Bruce M. Metzger, Michael D. Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford Companion of the Bible* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press,1993), 138.

10). The covenant between Noah and God is also known as ‘covenant with creation’ that repaired the broken ties between God and his creation. “God does not have to replace the original creation, but can make a fresh start that is still continuous with the original creation.”<sup>423</sup> Noahic covenant shows the network and the interconnectedness of the kinship ties. It involves not only human beings but all creatures, the present generation but also the future generation. “In a larger sense, the relationship between all creatures and their creator is expressed in the universal covenant with Noah, who assures Gods faithful pledge to humanity, to non-human creatures, and to earth itself.”<sup>424</sup> The covenants that followed strengthened the kinship ties with God and with his creations. The climax of this covenant was the coming of Jesus Christ, who made a new covenant with God and all creations through his life, death, and resurrection. Jesus Christ is the sponsor and mediator of this new covenant which was ratified by his blood.<sup>425</sup>

The letter to the Hebrews links the death of Jesus and the new covenant saying, “he is the mediator of a new covenant: since a death has taken place for deliverance from transgression under the first covenant, those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.” (Hebrews, 9.15) Jesus Christ seals the new covenant with his blood, hence completes Gods kinship with his creation. As the letter to the Galatians expresses, “for through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Galatians, 3.26). According to the letter to the Galatians, baptism is a new symbol of kinship between God and his creation. This does not only apply to the human beings; it encompasses the whole creation. The letter to the Colossians see Jesus as the summit of all creation,

“Is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him [...]. For in him, all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross (through him), whether those on earth or those in heaven” (Colossians.1.1-1-17 and 19-20).

The Christ event includes cosmic kinship and this is visible by the presence of God acting in the world through the creator spirit by mutual indwelling. Therefore, the spirit of God is, the principle of life and kinship in creation. The spirit of God enhanced fellowship and solidarity not only between human beings but also with God’s creation. The psalmist

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<sup>423</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 24.

<sup>424</sup> Anderson, “Covenant” in *The Oxford Companion of the Bible*, 139.

<sup>425</sup> See Joseph E. Steinmueller and Kathryn Sullivan (eds.), *Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia New Testament* (New York City: Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., Publishers,1950),158.

poetically describes the omnipresent Spirit of God; “where can I hide from your spirit? From your presence, where can I flee? If I ascend to the heavens, you are there; if I lie down I Sheol, you are there too. If I fly with the wings of down and alight beyond the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right-hand holds me first.” (Psalms, 139.7-10)

The transcendent God is immanent in his creation. The Spirit, therefore, brings the understanding of the interconnectedness of creation. The creation continues through the Spirit. In the Old Testament semantic the Spirit is *ruach* (breath). The *ruach Elohim* is the creative and rejuvenating breath of God in the creation. In his book *The Spirit of Life*, Moltmann writes that “the creative power of God is the transcendent side of *ruach*.”<sup>426</sup>

The Trinitarian God did not only create the beginning and left the universe to the fate of human beings, but he is continuously re-creating the universe through the creator spirit. The kinship through creation continues not only through the bond of all creation with God but also within the bond of all creation.

#### 4.3.2. Kinship between God’s Creation

##### 4.3.2.1. Kinship between Human Beings

The Bible is a holy book about the kinship between God and his creation and also the kinship within God’s creation. God is the source of these kinship ties, through his creation, the covenants, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The creation stories reveal that we are all God’s creations, a one family, and we are obliged to care for and respect each other. The kinship model of creations is visible in the biblical creation stories. However, the kinship among the humans as well as the humans with nature has been always problematic just like the relationship between God and his creatures. The cause of the problem is that breaking of one bond leads to the breaking of another. The ecological problems we are experiencing, are the consequence of the kinship crisis. The human being interpreted the kinship as a man’s absolute kingship over creation. The human creature decided to dominate over creation instead of being a bond keeper of the kinship. Human beings understand their kins are in the family, clan or tribe. But the kinship should not end there, it should grow and embrace all human beings in the world. The basic understanding is that God created human beings out of his image and likeness, and it was the beginning of human kinship or human family. The International Bill of Human Rights,

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<sup>426</sup>Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 42.

especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, uses the term ‘human family’ in order to indicate the kinship that is inherent in all human beings. The preamble says that, “all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”<sup>427</sup> Because of the kinship that exists among human beings, they are called to act in freedom, justice, and peace. The Universal Human Rights and World Ethic are viable when the basic kinship ties that bond all of humanity are acknowledged and practised. On this basis of kinship with all humanity, one can proclaim the world laws that are beneficial to the believers and to the non-believers in the same manner.

In the Old Testament, these ties were visible among the Israelite community through blood or the marriage relations. However, creation, covenant and the law brought a different kind of relatedness, the kinship between human beings as brothers and sisters because God is the father of all. In the Old Testament these motifs are expressed by terms like children of God, people of God, chosen people of God. The fatherhood of God is the main theme in the Old Testament. The people of Israel believed and felt themselves to be sons and daughters of the same Father, who is God. They considered themselves as the chosen people of God. This belief became a worldview that affected all spheres of their actions. This belief cemented their togetherness and the relationship to each other. Moses was sent by God to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. He declared to the Pharaoh that the Israelites are God’s children or rather the first born son. “So you shall say to Pharaoh: Thus says the Lord: Israel is my son, my first born. Hence I tell you: let my son go, that he may serve me.” (Exodus, 4.22-24) This brotherhood and sisterhood motif among the Israelites called upon the responsibility and obligation to each other; these were strengthened and improved through the covenant and the law. The anointing of Saul as the first king of Israel changed this set. (1 Samuel 9:1-11:13) On one hand, it was a blessing because now the Israelites had a structured leadership as other nations of the Middle East. On the other hand, it was a curse because Israel transformed from the theocratic to the aristocratic nation. Now the Israel people became subjects of the earthly king. The kinship with each other was replaced by the kingship over other. This theme is continued in the New Testament.

It has to be noted that though the people of Israel understood themselves as sons and daughters they fought with each other. However, this fact did not dissolve the covenant

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<sup>427</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, accessed 07.01.2017, [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR\\_Translations/eng.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf)

that they were brothers and sisters. The kinship bond was always renewed through the leadership of judges, priests, kings, and prophets. At that phase the kinship with God was exclusively for the Israelites. However, Abraham's covenant with God promised to open and to extend the kinship covenant to other nations, so that Abraham's descendants in all nations of the earth shall find blessing (Genesis, 21.18). The covenant with Israel was the beginning but not the end of the kinship with God. The New Testament is seen as the concretization of this kinship mission to the whole world. Jesus' movement broke this religious closet and opened it up to all people of the world. The life, death, and the resurrection of Jesus brought a new value of the kinship between human beings and with God. This kinship that is symbolised by baptism goes beyond blood relations. Christians, therefore, are introduced to the new kinship of love between one another. Through baptism, they become brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul explains this symbolism of the body of Christ in letter to the Romans 12.5, writing that we are all related in Christ and therefore obliged to reciprocal responsibility. This responsibility, is based on the kinship with one another and brings the unity and love in Christ. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians, 3.28).

#### 4.3.2.2. Human Beings in Kinship with Nature

Many pages of the Bible refer to the kinship of God with human beings, and extend the subject to the natural world. This theme has not been sufficiently studied by the theologians. Humanity should understand and accept to be a part of nature created by God, and to comprehend that there is an intrinsic kinship between humanity and other entities of God's creation. The community of creation allows a better understanding of the interconnectedness between human beings and nature. R. Bauckham observes that:

"All God's creatures as first and foremost creatures, ourselves included. All earthly creatures share the same Earth; and all participate in an interrelated and interdependent community, oriented above all to God our common creator. It is a community of hugely diverse members whose mutual relationships are therefore enormously rich and diverse"<sup>428</sup>

The uniting aspects of creation are important factors but there is the unity of different beings within a big matrix of creation. This interconnectedness has found the support also from the scientific research of our time. "Modern ecological science is constantly revealing more and more of the complex balance and flux of interrelationships within the

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<sup>428</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 64.

biosphere of the Earth and its component ecosystems, but a great deal remains to be known, probably much more than we already know.”<sup>429</sup> The human family is part of this matrix, not as a passive spectator but as an active actor. The human being is neither the king nor the ruler nor even the guardian of creation but kin of creation. He is, therefore, called to communicate with nature as a relative that possess an intrinsic value. The human being is not the giver of this intrinsic value to nature but the discoverer this Godly value inherent in nature. Nisbert Taisekwa Taringa, an African religions and ecology researcher at the University of Zimbabwe, emphasizes the Gods divine care and notices the human limitations regarding the use of nature because “God places value on elements of nature independent of human use and human centred values.”<sup>430</sup>

Theology for a long time has underlined the relationship between God and human beings and paid less attention to the relationship with nature. However, modern theologians with an eye of concern, can decipher kinship between human beings and nature. The creation stories are not only about God the creator creating and relating with human beings but also with nature. The “creatureliness” means that the human beings are limited, incomplete, and mortal just like any other creatures. Although in most cases human beings are presented as good and responsible creatures.<sup>431</sup> Human beings are requested to be responsible. As such, human beings are called to respect the intrinsic value of each of God’s creation. Everything that God created is “good” and even the sin cannot remove this goodness that is inherent in every creature. The command of “dominion” (Genesis 1.28) implies that God’s creation is intended for the purpose of human life and wellbeing. Human beings should partake in the dynamic process of developing, because the “good” means neither perfect nor static.<sup>432</sup> Moltmann sees the actual ecological problems as a result of crisis in the modern ‘domination’.

Science and technology are being used as a tool for dominating others to such extent that the human being “is no longer one member of the community of creation; he confronts creation as its lord and owner. Consequently, he can no longer identify himself in terms of body and nature.”<sup>433</sup> Actually, the dominion itself does not set as humanity apart from the rest of creation. This biblical command has been taken as “the ideological justification

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<sup>429</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>430</sup> Nisbert Taisekwa Taringa, *Towards an African-Christian Environmental Ethic* (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2014),75.

<sup>431</sup> See Bruce c. Birch, *Theological Introduction to Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press,1999), 23.

<sup>432</sup> See Ibid., 46.

<sup>433</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 27.

of human domination and exploitation of nature. It has been associated with the dangerous modern human aspiration to godlike and creative power over the world. Under the banner of the human dominion, we have thought ourselves liberated from any given place within the order of God's creation."<sup>434</sup> But the dominion when rightly understood, is a noble role that has to be exercised within the community. The members of the community of creation must dispel the illusion of human omnipotence and instead utilize their power for taking the responsibility and care for other creatures; that is the right understanding of 'dominion' over other creatures.<sup>435</sup>

Theodore Hiebert, a scholar in the Hebrew Bible at McCormick Theological Seminary sees the 'dominion' from an interesting perspective, he sees it as a vocation of humanity to be a priest of creation.<sup>436</sup> Human beings are part of the extensive network of relationships that exist in the creation. Nature should not be comprehended as a danger to humanity but as part of human kin in the natural world. The task of the human beings is to create better ways for interrelation and to find a better relationship with the natural world. When this is done, human beings will always know that they are always participating in God's creative process and should not to destroy what God has created. It should be known that; "God is not in heaven alone, but he is engaged in a relationship of mutuality and chose to share the creative process with others."<sup>437</sup> So, the humanity is not alone in the creative process but is joining the creative process of God. In that context, the 'dominion' means to play an active role in the creative process of the world with God. Although the human beings are participating in the creative process, they are also part of this process. Therefore, they should praise God together with the entire created nature. To praise God is a noble duty of all created beings. Bauckham observes that: "All creatures worship God, and God values them all for their own sake as well as for the roles they play within the complex interrelationship of creation."<sup>438</sup> When all creatures worship God, they maintain their individuality and character, but this neither hinder the harmony nor the unity between them. Psalm 148 calls all creation to join the praise, and affirms that nature is not a dead but a living creature that also praises God. In his article, *A Sentient*

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<sup>434</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 37.

<sup>435</sup> See Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 90.

<sup>436</sup> See Theodore Hiebert, "The Human Vocation: Origins and Transformations in Christian Tradition" in Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether eds., *Christianity and Ecology* (Cambridge-Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 136-137.

<sup>437</sup> Birch, *Theological Introduction to Old Testament*, 49.

<sup>438</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 90.



*Universe*, Everett Gendler calls it the sound of “a Nature’s Symphony.” For him, “the fact that earth and living beings are bound by covenant to God implies that Judaism takes universal sentience for granted. All creation must be alive with feeling.”<sup>439</sup> Rebecca Watson finds Psalm 148 to be a late hymn from the post-exilic period. For her, although there are extra-Biblical elements as in case of Egyptian nature wisdom, there is also a universal praise of Yahweh by all creatures, song of universal praise who are made and sustained by him.<sup>440</sup> The symphony of the whole creation praising God is a common liturgical picture among Jews. Psalm 148 remains important for both Jewish and Christian liturgy. It shows that the whole creation owes its existence to God, therefore, in its own natural way and various manners gives, praise to the Creator. It is not only the personification of creation but the affirmation that all creation is “alive” and can praise God. This symphony of praise has begun to sound disharmonic because of unethical human conduct towards the natural world. Bauckham explains that “if creation is a community of creatures living in complex interrelationships, then the activities of some must have consequences for others. Human life is not a self-contained affair, but takes place in relationships both to the creator and to the rest of creation.”<sup>441</sup> St Augustine in his exposé on Psalm 148 sees this psalm as an invitation to all creatures to praise the lord in their own way.

“Animals do not have rational intelligence, but they have their own spirit that animates their bodies, and obviously they have a life. The trees do not have even this kind of life, but they all praise God nonetheless. Why can we say they praise God? Because when we see these things and ponder on the creator who made them, it means that all of them praise God.”<sup>442</sup>

This psalm therefore expresses interconnectedness between human beings and nature in praising God.

The book of Job brings also an interesting point in interconnectedness in nature. According to David J. A. Clines, the book is “nothing but an extended discussion of one theological issue, the question of suffering.”<sup>443</sup> The book narrates the suffering of good man Job but it has more than only suffering. The last chapter of this book contains the

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<sup>439</sup> Everett Gendler, “A Sentient Universe,” in Ellen Bernstein, *Ecology and Jewish Spirit: Where Nature and Sacred Meet* (Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998) 61.

<sup>440</sup> See Rebecca A. Watson, *A Reassessment of the Theme of “chaos” in the Hebrew Bible* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter), 210.

<sup>441</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 92.

<sup>442</sup> Boniface Ramsey, ed., Maria Boulding, trans., *The Works of Saint Augustine, A Translation for 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Exposition of Psalms 121-150, 111/20* (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2004), 479.

<sup>443</sup> David J. A. Clines, “Job, the book of” in *The Oxford Companion of the Bible*, 368.

dialogue between Job and Yahweh and this is important for our study. Chapter 38 and 39 have been singled out by several theologians <sup>444</sup> as astounding passages of Yahweh's speech about the relationship between human beings and creation. God answers to Job, is a hymn of praise on creation and rule of God over nature. The Book of Job shows that God is always transcendent and always immanent in nature. In his suffering, God sends him the vision of the universe and Job senses to be part of it. Shamu Fenyvesi, a co-founder of Shomrei Adamah, <sup>445</sup> summarizes the vision of Job that, "Before Jobs' eyes, the skies opened. Planets and stars danced like raindrops on dry rock. Galaxies burst open like acacia blossoms tempted by the first drops of storm [...]. Job was awed and humbled. God had answered his angry appeal for justice with a tour of the universe, a vivid re-creation of the world."<sup>446</sup> In his vision, Job learned a lot about life.

"Job saw that his life, that indeed the entire drama of human society was no longer center stage. He celebrated his shared origin with all creation; he too, was of dust. Instead of clinging to the ideal of pastoral peace, he learned to accept predation suffering, and death, the world he could not comprehend but must love. Job found solace in a joyful embrace of the wilderness of the world."<sup>447</sup>

Job felt that he shared his origin with nature and the kinship with the whole nature made him to treat all respectfully. He was humbled as he realized that a wild jackal is his brother, and he is a friend of a desert Owl (Job, 30-29). Job's vision of wilderness has been long time ignored, but now, thanks to the search for ecologically friendly motifs in the Bible, scholars are rediscovering the book of Job. Though this book has a mythological colouring of the Canaanite religion, <sup>448</sup> one can learn several ecological lessons. John E. Hartley, a scholar of the Old Testament, sees that God gives structure and order to the world that is dynamic and challenging with risks from technology, but humans ought to meet this dynamic world not as dominators, but as custodians. Human beings should preserve their freedom and not allow to be subdued to the powerful forces of technology, forces that are a cause of radical changes in the society and threatens

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<sup>444</sup> See Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 37-63; Shamu Fenyvesi, "Befriending the Desert Owl", in Ellen Bernstein, *Ecology and Jewish Spirit*, 27-32.

<sup>445</sup> *Shomrei Adamah* is a Hebrew word meaning Guardians of Earth. *Shomrei Adamah* is a Jewish non-profit making organization that promotes a belief that Judaism hold people to be responsible for protecting earth because the Jewish Traditions in extension Hebrew Bible promotes care and respect of earth. See <http://fore.yale.edu/religion/judaism/projects/shomrei/>

<sup>446</sup> Shamu Fenyvesi, "Befriending the Desert Owl," in Ellen Bernstein, *Ecology and Jewish Spirit*, 27-28.

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>448</sup> See Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, a quotation from Norman Habel, "Is the Wild Ox Willing to Serve You?": 'Challenging the Mandate to Dominate', in Habel and Wurst eds., *The Earth Story in Wisdom*, 179-189.

human freedom.<sup>449</sup> The human beings are special by being created in the image and to the likeness of God. This relationship between human beings and the natural world is a central theme in the New Testament.

The foundation of New Testament is the Old Testament, and there is continuation and development of certain themes. Moltmann singles out creation and redemption, “Israelite understanding of the world as creation was moulded by the revelation of God’s redemption in the Exodus, the Covenant and the promise of the land; in the same way, the Christian understanding of the world as God’s creation is shaped by the revelation of his redemption in the history of Jesus Christ.”<sup>450</sup> Through redemption we all are related in Christ. This relationship is not only between human beings but also extends to all creation. Over a long time, the Christian theology might have overemphasized the human part of redemption relationship, but now is time to bring the holistic relationship with all God’s creation to the theological focus. Jesus Christ redeemed not only human beings alone, but the whole creation. All God’s creatures were redeemed through Christ (Acts, 3.21, Ephesians, 1.10). The human redemption is part of the cosmic redemption through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are interrelated not only through creation but also through redemption by Jesus Christ.

Through his life, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ inaugurated a new redeemed creation. The symbol of the cross is a sign of this new kinship, and all nature are ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters.’

The Holy Spirit bonds what God created and redeemed in Jesus Christ. This bond exists not only between human beings as it has been stressed in theology, but also between the living and non-living redeemed creatures of God. The Spirit permeates every part of creation and bonds them together. Therefore, the whole of creation is alive with God’s Spirit. According to Moltmann, “God is not merely the Creator of the world. He is also the Spirit of the Universe. Through the powers and potentialities of the Spirit, the creator indwells the creatures he has made, animates them, holds them in life, and leads them to the future of his Kingdom. In this sense, the history of creation is the history of the efficacy of the divine Spirit.”<sup>451</sup> The Spirit, therefore, bonds all creatures so closely that

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<sup>449</sup> See John E. Hartley, “Yahweh Instructs Job on the Character of Creation (Job, 38.1-39.30).” in *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia* (vol,6,2013), 47. Accessed 14.01.2017, <http://apcz.pl/czasopisma/index.php/BPTh/article/viewFile/BPTh.2013.003/2849>

<sup>450</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 94.

<sup>451</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 14.

the boundaries between the sacred and the profane seem to be non-existent. The Spirit's bonding never destroys the uniqueness of an individual creature of God but unites all the unique creatures. The fellowship with one another and the spiritual bond creates the community of creation. Moltmann expresses it wonderfully that, "To experience, the fellowship of the Spirit inevitably carries Christianity beyond itself into the creator fellowship of all God's creatures. For the community of creation, in which all created things exist with one another, for another and in one another, it is also the fellowship of the Holy Spirit."<sup>452</sup> This kinship and interconnectedness of all creation in the Spirit should arouse humanity's love, respect, and care for creation. The Spirit of God is a uniting and not differentiating force between the spirit and the body, between human beings and nature. The spiritual unity with nature is animating the human beings to make a shift from the selfish love to the altruistic love for the wellbeing of all God's creatures. Yves Congar, nicknamed the "theologian of the Holy Spirit," advises that we are supposed to live in the spirit who leads us towards a divine goal and unites everything.<sup>453</sup> The Spirit is not only the uniting force in the church but also within all creation. Congar insists that "the spirit is (by appropriation), the principle of generosity through which God extends his family to his creatures."<sup>454</sup>

#### 4.3.3. *Christian Theologians and Kinship with Creation*

##### 4.3.3.1. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226)

St. Francis of Assisi was one of the early personalities of the middle ages who understood the kinship between God, human beings and of all creation. Francis of Assisi was not an acknowledged theologian like St. Augustine or St. Thomas Aquinas, but well known for his simple life he spent in relationship with God, fellow brothers and his creation. The Order of Franciscans became an oasis of human kinship with God's creation during early middle ages in Europe was the time of alienation from nature. Santmire describes the middle ages as, " 'age of anxiety' that afflicted both body and soul. The political instability and violence were ever-present threat, and life sustaining natural resources,

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<sup>452</sup> Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 10.

<sup>453</sup> See Elisabeth Teresa Groppe, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 15.

<sup>454</sup> Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3 vols., trans. David Smith (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), 3.149 quoted by Elisabeth Teresa Groppe, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 54.

particularly through the long winters, were generally scarce.”<sup>455</sup> In the time of anxiety, there was no place for thinking about nature and care of God’s creation but instead of it was time to tame and to use creation for the benefit of humanity. It was at this time that Francis of Assisi portrayed a different approach to creation. “In Francis’s life as it is portrayed in most reliable sources available to us, we will discover an embodiment of the ecological promise of classical Christian thought about nature, notwithstanding the ascendancy of the ambiguity in his own theological milieu.”<sup>456</sup> Through his life and preaching Francis showed a great interconnectedness with the human and natural world. He is not famous because of his theological works he left behind, indeed he never wrote any real theological book, but thanks to the collection of biographies by Thomas of Celano who was the first biographer of Francis.<sup>457</sup> Also St. Bonaventure shows Francis as a God loving person, and this deep love made him to celebrate and to praise God with all creation. William French stresses that the late fame of Francis was that:

“At first his writing never had an impact on the development of main stream Catholic theology or ethics, for he had no great *Summa Theologiae* to impress later generations of learned, but his great text was his life, which has continued to inspire many across the ages. He lacked the education to invoke Aristotelian or neo-platonic metaphysical understanding of natural cosmos, but he did have a literalist power in his direct appropriations of Hebrew scriptures, especially Psalm 148, and Gospels concerning specific birds, animals, fish, stars, and planets.”<sup>458</sup>

Francis relationship with God, with human beings and with nature is being revisited again with the hope to find the answers for our modern age that is experiencing crisis of relationships. Although Francis has to be understood from the medieval perspective, one cannot miss to learn from him without distorting his original thinking. Roger Sorrell in his book *Francis of Assisi and Nature* tries to understand him as medieval figure of hope within the western historical traditional attitude towards nature which might inspire us today. He writes; “at the centre of this hope is the humble gentle man of Assisi. Francis looked beyond other of his time to envision a world in which humankind shared concern for the whole community of creatures, and he expressed this concern and love in such original moving ways that they may still give us inspiration today.”<sup>459</sup> His relevance today

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<sup>455</sup> Santmire, *The Travail of Nature*, 77.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>457</sup> See Hans-Joachim Werner, *Eins mit der Nature: Mensch und Natur bei Franz von Assisi, Jakob Böhme, Albert Schweitzer und Teilhard de Chardin* (München: C.H. Beck, 1986), 15.

<sup>458</sup> William French, “Francis of Assisi,” in the Bron Tylor ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, 2005, 671.

<sup>459</sup> Roger D. Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature*, 144-145.

gave him a lot of names like patron saint of ecology,<sup>460</sup> pantheist or even a revolutionary animist. In the context of the middle ages Francis was one of the medieval Catholic personalities who were devout Catholic but considered themselves as defender of equality of all creation, including humanity. Francis of Assisi became more relevant to ecological discussion when Pope Francis wrote the encyclical *Laudato Si'*. The Pope wrote that; "I believe that Saint Francis is the example per excellence of the care for vulnerable and integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically."<sup>461</sup> Francis' "theology" and "philosophy" of creation is synthesised in his live; it is a rather practical than a rationally analytical approach to the creation. Saint Francis felt himself as part of God's creation and not above God's creation. Every creature was for Francis of the same importance and deserved the same respect as a God's creature of inherent value, regardless of its usefulness for human beings. This formed his worldview and his spiritual relationship with God. "Indeed, Francis became an advocate for creatures, as one might imagine a prophet becoming an advocate of the poor and the oppressed within the human community."<sup>462</sup> He felt kinship with every creature from the brother sun to the sister moon, from the brother wind to the sister water, from the brother fire to the mother earth and to the sister bodily death.

Although Francis wrote a lot of canticles, there is one which has touched the hearts of theologians, philosophers, musicians, ecologists etc. through the centuries, the *Canticle of the Sun*. This canticle he wrote and sung before his death in 1226. The canticle was first written in Italian Umbrian dialect and then had been translated to many languages. The first part of the canticle says: "Oh Most high, almighty, good Lord God, to thee belong praise, glory, honour, and all blessing!"<sup>463</sup> This part shows the belief of Francis in a transcendent good Lord, who is the source of everything and the human response to the transcendent God is praise, glory, honour, and worship. This is the basic faith of Francis and from this faith in God, arise his worldview. The belief in God made him to feel that kinship with all creatures of God. He feels to be the part of God's creation. According to him all creation is interrelated and this calls for the concern for the mutual welfare. In the

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<sup>460</sup> See John Paul II proclaimed Francis in 1979 to be the patron saint of ecology, accessed 21.01.2017 [http://francis35.org/pdf/papal\\_declaration.en.pdf](http://francis35.org/pdf/papal_declaration.en.pdf)

<sup>461</sup> *Laudato Si'*, 10.

<sup>462</sup> Santmire, *The Travail of Nature*, 109.

<sup>463</sup> Paul Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi* (New York: Charles Scribers Sons,1916), 305 accessed 28.10.2017, <https://archive.org/details/lifeofstfranciso027009mbp>

second part of the canticle, Francis invites all with whom he is related through Gods creative act, to praise God together:

“Praised be my Lord God with all creatures, and especially our brother the sun, who brings us the day and who brings us the light. Fair is he and shines with very great splendor: O lord, he signifies to us thee! Praised be my Lord for our sister moon, and for the stars [...] Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud [...] Praised be my Lord for our sister water [...] Praised be my Lord for our brother fire, praised be my Lord for our mother the earth [...]. Praised be my Lord for our sister the death [...].”<sup>464</sup>

The expressions like brother sun, sister moon, brother wind, sister water, brother fire, mother earth and sister death, a figurative language, but it brings a deep meaning that we are related to nature. The human being is important as the “priest of creation” but other creatures of God are equally worthy, not only for God but also for human beings. But it should not be misunderstood because; “the titles ‘brother’, ‘sister’, or ‘mother’, do not imply any pantheistic or pan-psychic view of creatures since Francis’ conception of them was rooted soundly in Christian doctrine. They are rather showing in poetical and emotional way Francis’ affection for affinity with nature.”<sup>465</sup>

In the *Canticle of the Sun*, Francis invites all to express a deep appreciation for God’s creation and its inherent beauty and worth. The human family must join the relationship with nature. The ascetic life of Francis should not scare the admirers of Francis away. Instead it calls everyone to change his attitude towards exploitation of natural resources being aware of the interconnectedness in the bond of kinship. It calls for a responsible loving and caring for all creatures of God. Francis, unlike the theologians, never used God’s creatures to know or understand God, but instead, he saw himself as part of them and cultivated a loving kinship with them. His whole life and especially his famous sermons for the birds, show this close kinship between him and God creatures. For example, at one time, he preached to the birds saying:

“My little sisters, the birds, many are the bonds that unite us to God. Moreover, your duty is to praise Him everywhere and always [...]. Praise him likewise for the food. He provides you without your working for it, for the songs he has taught you [...] How the creator must love you to grant you search favors! So, my sister birds, do not be ungrateful, but continually praise Him who showers blessing upon you.”<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> Ibid., 305.

<sup>465</sup> Roger D. Sorrel, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature*, 128.

<sup>466</sup> Celano Vita Prima 58f., Cited by Engelbert, *St. Francis of Assisi*, 188f.cited by Santmire, *The Travail of Nature*, 110.

This “sermon to the sister birds” indicates a mystical connection between Francis and God’s creatures. Francis and his brothers of the Franciscan Order are a good example that shows radical kinship with all of God’s creation.

#### 4.3.3.2. Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955)

Teilhard de Chardin was a French Jesuit, theologian, philosopher, natural scientist and mystic who studied theology and actively took part in paleontological research that made him to travel to various parts of the world. Just like Francis of Assisi, Teilhard became famous after his death. Grummet who studied Teilhard as a philosophical theologian, comments that, “the posthumous fame which Teilhard acquired was unfortunately gained at the expense of any proper appraisal of him as a French theologian of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His identity, whether as a theologian, scientist, mystic, or philosopher, has been passionately contested, often on the basis of questionable assumptions and broad generalizations about his oeuvre.”<sup>467</sup> Teilhard’s work has been interpreted from various perspectives because he was a man who tried to unite different disciplines into one without confusing them. His fellow, Jesuit Pierre Leroy expresses in his book *The Divine Milieu* an understanding for the thinking of Teilhard as of the man who is relevant to ecological consciousness of our time that, considering that Teilhard was a scientist and priest, really astonishing was his closeness to the earth and his deep feeling for the value of matter.<sup>468</sup>

He wrote several books “that contain challenging reflections on God and the world, science and religion, ecological responsibilities, interfaith encounter, the greater unification of humanity, the place of the feminine and of love in creating greater unity, the central importance of spirituality, and mysticism.”<sup>469</sup> Some of his articles that have been translated into English include; *The Phenomenon of Man* (1959), *The Divine Milieu* (1960), *The Future of Man* (1964), *Hymn of the Universe* (1965), *Human Energy* (1969) and *The Heart of Matter* (1979), and many others. But many more books have been written and still are being written about him by scholars of all disciplines. Teilhard is famous for his approach towards the evolution, the main theme of Darwin studies but sneered by the church. What is very relevant to this study is Teilhard’s scientific, philosophical and theological worldview regarding the existence of the cosmic unity. His main concern was

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<sup>467</sup> David Grummet, Teilhard de Chardin: Theology, Humanity and Cosmos (Leuven, Peeters, 2005), 1.

<sup>468</sup> See Pierre Leroy trans., in Teilhard de Chardin, *Divine Milieu* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 13.

<sup>469</sup> Peter B. Clark ed., *Encyclopaedia of New Religions* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 558.



the development of humanity within the universal evolution process of the cosmos. Teilhard stresses that in the evolution of the entire cosmos, humanity consists an important but not exclusive part of this process. Teilhard explains that it begun “from subatomic units to atoms, from atoms to inorganic and later to organic molecules, and then to cells to multicellular individuals, to cephalised metazoa with brains to primitive man, and now to civilized societies.”<sup>470</sup> Teilhard understands the evolution not as a linear development of simple beings to complex beings, but as a process with its failures and successes. Nevertheless, as the process is becoming more complex, there is a pervading tendency of a “convergent intergration” which leads to intensification of mental subjective activity.<sup>471</sup>

According to Teilhard, the cosmos is alive and not a static object, it moves towards a final Omega point of a bigger and deeper unity. In this movement, all living and non-living beings in the universe are united. There is a universal cosmological unity among all creatures. The complexity of creatures does not hinder the unity. The level of complexity requires a higher form of unity. This physical unity of the cosmos is a unique solution for the existence of all creatures having a common beginning and a common end. Nevertheless, “the earth is after all something more than a sort of a huge breathing body. Admittedly it rises and falls, but more important is the fact that it must have begun at certain moment; that it is passing through a consecutive series of moving equilibria; and that in all probability it is tending towards some final state.”<sup>472</sup> This organic unity of the world calls for a human world view that is in relation with the universe. Because “man is unable to see himself entirely unrelated to mankind, neither is he able to see mankind unrelated to life nor life unrelated to the universe.”<sup>473</sup> The kinship of all God’s creatures, from the simplest being to the most complex one, creates a dynamic unity of cosmos.

In this cosmic unity exists symbiotic relationships between all creatures. The symbiosis exists also between the beings that are thought to be opposite, like symbiosis between matter and spirit. That is possible by the existence of the energy in the universe.

Teilhard believes in the existence of a unifying power in the universe. It is this energy within matter that moves, unites, and creates the networks between beings in the universe. He comprehends this energy as “the measure of that which passes from one atom to

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<sup>470</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomena of Man* (London: Collins, 1955), 15.

<sup>471</sup> See *ibid.*, 15.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

another, in the course of their transformations. A unifying power, then, but also, because the atom appears to become enriched or exhausted in the course of the exchange, the expression of structure.”<sup>474</sup> According to him, all phenomena have this energy and the whole universe is an ocean of energy that unifies analogous phenomena like human consciousness of mind. Teilhard’s opinion that human beings are the best example for the energy emanated through the consciousness, was commented by Mary Evelyn Tucker that:

“Teilhard sees consciousness as intrinsic to the process of evolution, not as an extrinsic addition to matter. For him, all reality consists of simultaneously a within and a without. Matter and Spirit are thus joined in this vast evolutionary unfolding toward a final Omega point. The universe in this context is a *Divine Milieu*, a center that has the possibility of uniting and drawing all things to itself. For Teilhard, the evolution is characterized by increasing complexity and consciousness, and the divine is seen as part of the process, not simply transcendent to it.”<sup>475</sup>

Teilhard’s positive view of matter and spirit in unity is an important aspect for this thesis. He offers a holistic thinking that sees material and spirit in symbiosis. The universe is not made of contradistinguishing but relational elements. In his book *Divine Milieu*, he describes the spiritual power of matter with these words:

“If the material totality of the world includes energies which cannot be made use of, and if, more unfortunately, it contains perverted energies and elements which are slowly separated from it, it is still more certain that it contains a certain quantity of spiritual power of which the progressive sublimation, in Christo Jesu, is, for the Creator, the fundamental operation taking place. At the present time this power is still defused almost everywhere: nothing, however insignificant or crude it may appear, is without some trace of it.”<sup>476</sup>

For him matter is associated with burden, pain, and sin but also matter is a physical exuberance that brings contact, nourishes and uplifts. Matter, therefore, should not be seen negatively but positively because Christ came into the world of matter. Teilhard sees the sacredness of matter through Christ incarnation. This is visible in his moving hymn on matter:

“ I bless you, matter, and you I acclaim: not as the pontiffs of science or the moralising preachers depict you, debased, disfigured- a mass of brute forces and base appetites- but as you reveal yourself to me today, in your totality and your true nature. You I acclaim as the inexhaustible potentiality for existence and transformation wherein the predestined substance germinates and grows. I acclaim you as the universal power which brings together and unites through which the multitudinous monads are bound together and in

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<sup>474</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>475</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker, “Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre (1881-1955)” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Nature*, vol.2, K-Z, 1628.

<sup>476</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu* (Harper & Row, 1965), 109. (The Italics that are in the original text are not here.)

which they all converge on the way of the spirit. [...]. I acclaim you as the divine milieu, charged with creative power.”<sup>477</sup>

Matter and Spirit therefore should not be considered separately but in the synthesis with one another. The human being is the highest developed being because of his developed consciousness. Despite that, according to Teilhard, human beings are part of the universe and hence part of the universal cosmological evolution. As Tucker writes, “Teilhard presented his vision of the emergence of the human as the unifying dimension of the evolutionary process. For Teilhard the awakening of humans to the idea of evolution since Darwin is unique in history and he likens this to the moment when a child becomes aware of perspective.”<sup>478</sup> Human beings play a big role in the evolution process because:

“Humans are selfconscious mode of the universe in whom complexity and consciousness has come to its fullest expression. One of Teilhard’s greatest hopes was that this large perspective of a purposeful universe would help to inspire human action for building the human community. In contrast to a resigned or fatalistic perspective, he spoke of the need to reignite in the human community a joy for action and zest for life. Human suffering, he saw not as due to original sin but as a form of potential energy which if transformed could change the face of the Earth in positive ways.”<sup>479</sup>

The human self-conscious mode is to be aware what is happening around them and to realize the existence of unifying power which is the spiritual component in the universe which build relation between humans and between other creatures. According to Teilhard “all matter has a psychic/spiritual component and it is this interiority of matter that helps to move evolution toward greater complexity and consciousness.”<sup>480</sup>

Although Teilhard’s view of the world was of anthropocentric nature, he saw it also from a Christocentric perspective. He saw the Christ at the apex of evolution, the Omega point, the pivot of convergence of evolution. “Teilhard states that the whole universal process of *cosmogenesis*, *biogenesis*, and *noogenesis* is ultimately a process of *Christogenesis*, the growth of the living, fulfilled Christ. The exalted, resurrected Christ, and the body of believers united to him, is the Omega point of the universe.”<sup>481</sup> The idea of the cosmological kinship between all creatures of nature has made Teilhard the theologian who is relevant today. His “ideas continue to inspire appreciation and critique in the

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<sup>477</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe*, trans. Gerald Vann (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 66-67. (The italics that are in the original text are not shown in this quotation.)

<sup>478</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker, “Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre (1881-1955)” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Nature*, vol.2, K-Z, 1628.

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, 1628.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*, 1628.

<sup>481</sup> Santmire, *The Travail of Nature*, 163.

search for sustaining human-Earth relation.”<sup>482</sup> This search is central to this study of human-nature kinship which is also quest of theologians and the church in Africa.

#### 4.3.3.3. Pope Francis and Kinship with Nature

##### 4.3.3.3.1. *Laudato Si'*

*Laudato Si'* is the second encyclical of Pope Francis. It was promulgated on 25 May 2015. With this encyclical, the Pope continues the social teaching of the Church, especially in the time of ecological crisis. John Fleming, with a mind of critique comments:

“*Laudato Si* is an encyclical which is, in part, doctrinal, containing as it does Catholic social teaching, but provides no new dogmatic teaching, those teachings which must be considered to be part of the deposit of faith. The largest part of the document (about 80% of it) is an attempt to apply Catholic social teaching to the way the Pope sees the modern world and its environmental problems.”<sup>483</sup>

Despite not adding any doctrine on the social teaching of the Church, the Pope writes on integral ecology an important theme of our time. Through the encyclical, the Pope, reiterates and develops church social teaching where the environment is concerned. And [...] applies that teaching to situation in which the Pope believes we now find ourselves.”<sup>484</sup> In the encyclical, the Pope analyses what is happening in our common home, the earth and accepts, like majority of scholars in this field, that we have an ecological or environmental crisis.

The Pope takes part in giving solutions to this crisis and, more than this he calls for the involvement of the whole human family in looking for solutions for the future of our planet. Nobody and no science should be left out of this search but instead all should lead an honest dialogue and to debate together with the aim of developing a comprehensive solution.<sup>485</sup>

Through the encyclical the Church offers her contribution in this debate in solving the ecological crisis. The Pope gets inspiration from the Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology. The Pope praises St. Francis, who “was a mystic and pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself.”<sup>486</sup> So, from St. Francis’s teaching and spirituality, we can learn an integral

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<sup>482</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker, “Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre (1881-1955)” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Nature*, vol.2, K-Z,1628.

<sup>483</sup> John I Fleming, *Laudato Si'*: A Critique (Ballarat, VIC: Modotti Press,2016), 19.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>485</sup> See *Laudato Si*, 3,16,135,138,188.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

ecology where every creature is considered as a sister or a brother united with the bond of affection. It is this affection that should energize every human being to care for nature. The Pope accepts that ecological crisis is a complex theme of our time. He “hears” the cry inflicted on the Sister or Mother Earth, which is the source of everything good for humans and non-humans:

“This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also respected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.”<sup>487</sup>

Although the issue is complex and from multiple sources, Pope Francis indicates that the human being is the root cause of ecological crisis. According to Jacob B. Cobb Jr., the Pope calls for “a new worldview, one that stresses the interconnection of all things. He forcibly rejects the limitation of this connectedness to human beings only. He really means ‘all things’.”<sup>488</sup> The ecological problem is more a crisis in relationships between all creations.

#### 4.3.3.3.2. Crisis in Relationship and Ecological Crisis

By using the word “common home” when referring to our planet Earth, the Pope brings at the centre the importance of understanding that all creatures on earth are brothers and sisters living in one home of Mother Earth. Through this kinship term, Pope Francis shows the relationship that is presumed to exist between nature and human community. The ecological problem is apparently a crisis in relationship. What we are experiencing today is of human origin and, therefore, it is the task of humanity to search for lasting solutions to protect our common home. Human beings should look for the root of causes and offer solutions to the ecological problems. The problem of relationship between God, human beings and nature is the main theme of the Pope’s encyclical. The words of Pope Francis articulate clearly the complexity of ecological issues. “If the present ecological crisis is one small sign of the ethical, cultural and spiritual crisis of modernity, we cannot presume to heal our relationship with nature and environment without healing all fundamental human relationship.”<sup>489</sup> It is all about a holistic healing of the whole relationships in the universe because every aspect in the universe is interconnected.

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<sup>487</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>488</sup> Jacob B. Cobb, Jr., “Preface” in Ignacio Castuera, John B. Cobby, Jr., eds., *For Our Common Home: Process- Relational Responses to Laudato Si’* (Anoka, MN: Process Century Press,2015), v.

<sup>489</sup> Laudato Si, 119.

Commenting on *Laudato Si'*, Vandana Shiva underlines the theme of interconnectedness in her article *A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Manifesto for Earth Democracy*; “*Laudato Si'* is based on integral ecology - the interconnectedness of ecology, society and economy.”<sup>490</sup>

The human relationship with God is an important aspect in ecology. In chapter three, on the *Gospel of Creation*, Pope Francis introduces the complex ecological discussion from the Old and the New Testament wisdom. A good relationship with God is also relevant to ecological discussion. The attempt of human beings to be the ‘God of the universe’ has brought disharmony in the universe. Commenting on the creation account in the book of Genesis, Pope Francis states that:

“Human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with earth itself. According to the Bible these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin. The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our human limitations.”<sup>491</sup>

The Pope therefore reminds all humanity that “we are not God.”<sup>492</sup> Humanity, therefore, must stop “acting” as God and must accept that humans are a part of God’s creatures. The Pope concedes that the Judeo-Christian concept of “dominion over the earth” in Genesis 1.28 has been wrongly interpreted and used for propaganda of the unbridled exploitation of nature.<sup>493</sup> The Pope presents an ecologically friendly interpretation of Bible’s words by bringing in the concept of “till and keep” from Genesis 2.15. When correctly understood, “it means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature.”<sup>494</sup> Human beings, therefore, by their unique dignity and the gift of intelligence, have a responsibility to care for other human beings and for nature. It does not make them gods on earth, but instead, it gives them responsibility to care and respect God’s creation and its inherent laws.<sup>495</sup> The earth and all creatures, therefore, do not belong to human beings, they belong to God. Pope Francis emphasises that; “a spirituality which forgets God as all-powerful and Creator is not acceptable. That is how we end up worshiping earthly powers or ourselves, usurping the place of God, even to the point of claiming an unlimited right to

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<sup>490</sup> Vandana Shiva, “A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Manifesto for Earth Democracy” in: *For Our Common Home: Process-Relational Responses to Laudato Si'*, 15.

<sup>491</sup> *Laudato Si'*, 66.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>493</sup> See *ibid.*, 67.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>495</sup> See *ibid.*, 69.

trample His creation underfoot.”<sup>496</sup> The Judeo-Christian deeper understanding of nature as God’s creation means it as “a gift from God the father of all and as a reality of illuminated by love which calls us together into universal communion.”<sup>497</sup>

The ecological crisis is also a sign of bad relationship between human beings. The Pope names it a human and social degradation.<sup>498</sup> This is because the ecological crisis is very much connected with global equality. According to Pope Francis, “the human environment and natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to the causes related to human and social degradation.”<sup>499</sup> The Pope is against a patchwork solution to environmental crisis. For him, an environmental crisis brings more poverty to the world and more suffering to the poor in the world. Thus, to solve the crisis it would be insufficient to take care of the natural environment and to overlook the human environment. These two are interconnected with one another and they need to be solved together. The deep inequality between human beings is a sign of the deteriorated human environment. The Pope cautions the world that:

“We should be particularly indignant at the enormous inequalities in our midst, whereby we continue to tolerate some considering themselves more worthy than others. We fail to see that some are mired in a desperate and degrading poverty, with no way out, while others have not the faintest idea of what to do with their possession, vainly showing off their supposed superiority and leaving behind them so much waste which, if it were the case everywhere, would destroy the planet.”<sup>500</sup>

Ecological degradation is, therefore, related with the degradation of human beings’ relationship with our common home - Mother Earth. It is, therefore, noteworthy to consider the human environment seriously as a platform where important solutions to ecological crisis might be found. It would be a counterproductive effort to stress only upon environmental care and to forget the needs of the poor in our society who are our fellow human beings. The Pope makes it clear that “concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to solving problems of society.”<sup>501</sup>

The relationship of humans with their environment is also a big concern of the Pope. We need to relate with our fellow human beings as well as we need to relate with our

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<sup>496</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>498</sup> See *ibid.*, 48.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid., 91.

environment. The human being has brought disorder in nature through technology, globalization, and anthropocentrism. In the encyclical, the Pope is not against technology as such, because well directed techno-science can provide important means for improving the quality of human life and the life of other creatures on the planet.<sup>502</sup> The Pope is against bad technology that is not designed for a common good for all members of the common home. The growth and the expanding of bad technology increases and accelerates global ecological crisis. The Pope connects the effects of bad technology with bad financial strategy that only aims at maximum profits. “The economy accepts every advance in technology with a view of profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings. Finance overwhelms the real economy. The lessons of the global financial crisis have been assimilated, and we are learning too slowly the lessons of environmental deterioration.”<sup>503</sup> Despite the environmental deterioration, humanity has failed to notice the deep roots of the failures, because they have refused to see the general picture of interconnectedness between members of the common home. The problems affecting the complex kinship web in the universe cannot be solved through the fragmentation of knowledge but through a holistic approach. This is visible through modern anthropocentrism. The Pope stresses that:

“Modernity has been marked by an excessive anthropocentrism which today, under guise, continues to stand in the way of shared understanding and of any effort to strengthen social bonds [...] An inadequate presentation of Christian anthropology gave rise to a wrong understanding of the relationship between human beings and the world.”<sup>504</sup>

The inadequate Christian anthropology stressed human “dominion” with the detriment of human stewardship and good human relationship with other parts of nature. Pope Francis makes it clear that this brand of anthropomorphism has led to a misguided life style that is destructive.<sup>505</sup> Despite the breakdown of relationship, the Pope gives a message of hope. “The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes concern to bring the whole human family together to seek sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us.”<sup>506</sup> Pope Francis conceives that good relationship of humans with God, between fellow humans, and with nature, is a central issue in solving

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<sup>502</sup> See *ibid.*, 103.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>504</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>505</sup> See *ibid.*, 121.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.



actual ecological problems. This kinship affection is a central component in cultural ecology.

#### 4.3.3.3.3. Cultural Ecology and Kinship with Nature

Through his encyclical, Pope Francis participates in creating an ecological civilization, which is the culture of caring for the environment. He criticises the throw-away-culture of the modern world as not ecologically friendly and instead encourages a culture of recycling, caring and of relationship.<sup>507</sup> The ecological crisis, that we are experiencing, is a sign of bad kinship between one another and with nature. Pope supports the relational way of understanding reality, a worldview that is cherished by indigenous communities because it permeates their beliefs and their practices. All creation is thought of in kinship terms because we are truly related.<sup>508</sup>

The Pope extends the meaning of nature to include traditional cultures. The concern for the disappearance of biodiversity and types of living species should also include the concern of the disappearance of traditional or local cultures. This is because “the disappearance of a culture can be just as serious, or even more serious, than the disappearance of species of plant or animal. The imposition of a dominant life style linked to a simple form of production can be just as harmful as altering ecosystem.”<sup>509</sup> The Pope emphasizes that “a culture is more than what we have inherited from the past; it is also, and above all, a living, dynamic and participatory present reality, which cannot be excluded as we rethink the relationship between human beings and environment.”<sup>510</sup> Integral ecology, therefore, should include the care and encouragement of local culture. There is interdependence between biological and cultural diversity.<sup>511</sup> The biocultural diversity in our universe should be viewed as blessing rather than a curse. The Pope stresses that “it is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely a one minority among others but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are

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<sup>507</sup>See *ibid.*, 22.

<sup>508</sup> See Chris Daniels, “Indigenous Wisdom and Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter.” in *For Our Common Home: Process- Relational Responses to Laudato Si’*, 329.

<sup>509</sup> *Laudato Si*, 145.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>511</sup> See Luisa Maffi, “On the Interdependence of Biological and Cultural Diversity”, in Luisa Maffi ed., *On Biocultural Diversity*, 2001, 1.

proposed.”<sup>512</sup> Therefore, the local communities should not be considered only as victims of ecological crisis but as serious partners in searching for ecologically friendly solutions. The indigenous communities, due to their ecologically friendly cultures, have a principal role in the present dialogue on ecological issues. Pope Francis cites the special cultural understanding of land as ecologically friendly. “For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values. When they remain on their land, they themselves care for it best.”<sup>513</sup> Pope Francis highlights an important theme of land as a sacred space. For the traditional community’s land is more encompassing because it is a home of all creatures in kinship. This sacred relationship with land makes it more of a subject and not an object. It is a subject because it is the scene of relationships between all members of the community. Pope Francis includes the ancestors as members of the community and owners of the land and therefore ascribes land a value that is beyond any economic price. The traditional communities value land as a place of kinship with the spiritual world, with one another and with nature. This sacred relationship with land is seen by Pope Francis as ecologically friendly and ought to be respected as a sign of a healthy ecologically friendly worldview that is for the common good of all members. It is part of the indigenous wisdom of the people. A theme that Chris Daniels stresses in his article *Indigenous Wisdom and Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter* that the Pope words:

“Illustrate the (his) understanding of indigenous peoples’ deep connection and relationship to land, as well as how that connection, and the sacred ceremonies that accompany and maintain it, are vital to their identity creation, both personally and communally. They certainly have proven, over tens of thousands of years, that when left to their own devices they care for the land best, and we have much to learn from their wisdom.”<sup>514</sup>

Pope Francis brought to our attention the importance of indigenous wisdom, a wisdom that has been suppressed for a long time ago by profit oriented companies and even by the church. Daniels concludes that; “this is the wisdom our indigenous peoples have been telling us for hundreds of years, and that our own indigenous ancestors knew and lived

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<sup>512</sup> Laudato Si, 146

<sup>513</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>514</sup> Chris Daniels, “Indigenous Wisdom and Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter.” in *For Our Common Home: Process-Relational Responses to Laudato Si’*, 326-327. The bracketed words are the additions of the author of this thesis and not the author of the book.

by. We just haven't been listening carefully enough or taking it seriously. Hopefully, now, with someone like the Pope Francis bringing it to our attention, we may begin to.”<sup>515</sup>

#### 4.3.4. *African Christian Theology and Kinship with Creation.*

##### 4.3.4.1. Meaning of Theological Inculturation

The International Theological Commission defines the process of inculturation “as the Church’s effort to make the message of Christ penetrate a given sociocultural milieu, calling on the latter to grow according to all its particular values, as long as these are compatible with the Gospel.”<sup>516</sup> There was a need for inculturation because the Christian faith, in the process of its development, has been confronted with different cultures and there arose the need to incarnate the Gospel of Christ within native cultures. The term ‘inculturation’, that originated in missionary work, was used for the first time in 1959 in the theological discussion during the 29<sup>th</sup> Missiology Week in Leuven.<sup>517</sup> But since then, the term has been a theological phrase used to describe different approaches in expressing the complex encounters between the Christian faith and the local cultures. In the African context inculturation means the process of a dialogue and an encounter between African religious ideas and the Christian faith. Inculturation is, therefore, a process that never ends because faith and culture are always dynamic. Thus, the project is not yet finished, so that every generation is called to look for new ways of incarnating the Christian faith into a particular culture. The definitions given by Joseph Gevaert in his book *Catechesis e Cultura Contemporanea*, show the dynamism of the process of inculturation. One of the definitions of Yves Congar is that; “inculturation is planting the seed of faith in a culture and causing it to develop and express itself according to the resources and the genius of that culture.”<sup>518</sup> The symbolism of a seed shows the dynamism of inculturation. The result of every inculturation process should make the Gospel or faith to be at home and well rooted in the specific culture. The Christian faith will not be a foreign culture again,

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid., 332.

<sup>516</sup> International Theological Commission, *Faith and Inculturation*,1988. accessed 24.12.2017, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_1988\\_fede-inculturazione\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1988_fede-inculturazione_en.html)

<sup>517</sup> See the history of the word Inculturation by Hans Gerald Hödl,“ Inkulturation: Ein Begriff im Spannungsfeld von Theologie, Religions- und Kulturwissenschaft“ in Rupert Klieber and Martin Stowasser Hrgs., *Inkulturation: Historische Beispiele und theologische Reflexionen zur Flexibilität und Widerständigkeit des Christlichen* (Wien: Lit Verlag,2006), 27.

<sup>518</sup>Joseph Gevaert, *Catechesis e cultura contemporanea*. (Torino : Editrice Elle di Ci,1993), 35. Quoted in Vicente Carlos Kiaziku, *Culture and Inculturation : A Bantu View Point* (Nairobi : Pauline’s Publication,2009),79.

because the Christian culture and the African culture would meet and influence and benefit one another reciprocally. Hans Gerald Hödl emphasizes inculturation as a beneficial encounter between the culture of origin and the culture of destination, that; “the theological concept of inculturation lays great value on the moment of encounter and the mutual influence of cultures by establishing a symmetrical relationship between the culture of origin and the culture of destination:”<sup>519</sup> Christianity has “inculturated” in European cultures and can also be “inculturated” in African traditional culture. When that is done, Christianity will always have a positive impact on the “receiving community” and also on the “giving community”. This is because inculturation “involves the transformation of the life of the community of believers from within, where the Good News becomes the principle that animates their attitudes, their vision of the world, their system of values and their activities.”<sup>520</sup> Therefore, from the dialogue between a particular culture and the Christian faith, a “new creation” is born. The new creation, as an outcome, was pointed out by Father Arrupe in his definition about inculturation (he meant also as incarnation):

“The incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular local cultural context, in such a way that the experience not only finds expression through the elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation), but becomes principle that animates, directs, and unifies a culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about a new generation.”<sup>521</sup>

The inculturation of faith, therefore, enables a new way of thinking, a new way of understanding Christianity and a new way of perceiving the world. The presence of Christian faith in a particular culture enriches this culture and, in turn, this culture enriches the Christian faith. The Christian message ceases to be a foreign message and becomes part of people’s life. It will grow with the people within their cultural environment and will express itself anew. Pope Francis’ clarifies:

“Once the Gospel has been inculturated in a people, in their process of transmitting their culture, they also transmit the faith in ever new forms; hence the importance of understanding evangelisation as inculturation. Each portion of the people of God, by

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<sup>519</sup> Hans Gerald Hödl, “Inkulturation: Ein Begriff im Spannungsfeld von Theologie, Religions- und Kulturwissenschaft“ *Inkulturation: Historische Beispiele und theologische Reflexionen zur Flexibilität und Widerständigkeit des Christlichen*, 26. A personal translation from: „Der theologische Begriff der inculturation legt nun gerade auf das darin festzustellen Moment der Begegnung, der wechselseitigen Beeinflussung Wert und sucht ein symmetrisches Verhältnis zwischen Herkunfts- und Zielkultur zu etablieren.“

<sup>520</sup> Joseph Gevaert, *Catechesis e cultura contemporanea*. (Torino: Editrice Elle di Ci, 1993), 37. Quoted in Vicente Carlos Kiaziku, *Culture and Inculturation: A Bantu View Point*, 79.

<sup>521</sup> Lettera del P. Arrupe sull’inculturazione,” 14 May 1978, in Jesus Gay Lopez, *Inculturazione: concetti-problemi-orientamenti* (Roma: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1990), 145. Quoted in Vicente Carlos Kiaziku, *Culture and Inculturation: A Bantu View Point*, 79

translating the gift of God into its own life and in accordance with its own genius, bears witness to the faith it has received and enriches it with new and eloquent expressions”<sup>522</sup>

#### 4.3.4.2. The Need of Inculturation

There have been different approaches to evangelisation of Christianity in African cultures. One approach, used by most missionaries was evangelisation through social work. Evangelisation was carried directly through education and charitable activities.<sup>523</sup> The emphasis was put on a human development of the whole person. In that time, the Gospel was a foreign religion dressed in foreign culture, represented by those who did the missionary work. The Christian faith and indigenous cultural values remained parallel and never crossed each other.<sup>524</sup> Most missionaries, due to the lack of the necessary understanding and knowledge, feared to delve into cultural life of indigenous people. At that time, a foreign religion and a foreign government worked together, and therefore they have been confusedly considered by the local people as a one entity. The political movements in 1950s culminated in the independence of African states. This caused a big crisis in missionary work. The colonial occupation came to an end, in some countries even by force, and in the mind of indigenous people remained the question: What about the foreign Church? Even before independence, some African Christians had already formed their own African Christian independent churches. These churches were started in a response to a deep religious need to have a really indigenous African church. The social changes in Africa and in the other parts of the world inspire the church to see the need of an “inculturated” Gospel and an “inculturated” Church in Africa. This is the earnest request by many theologians, like A. Shorter, who says that:

“There is no Christian value which is not first of all a human value expressed in a specific cultural form. Christianity cannot exist except as incarnate in a culture. In the missionary situation, Christianity is preached first of all in terms of a culture foreign to the people who receive the message. Some missionaries have been content with this situation, in which the newly converted Africans obey the Church’s regulations and attend Mass and the sacraments without really understanding what is going on. In fact, many African Christians interpret what they do not understand in their own way, and the result is a juxtaposition of two cultures and two religions.”<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>522</sup>Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 122

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html#The\\_evangelizing\\_power\\_of\\_popular\\_piety](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html#The_evangelizing_power_of_popular_piety)

<sup>523</sup> See Catholic and Protestant Pastors. Interviewed by author, *Research Fieldwork attachment Aug.-Sep.2014*, 2.8.1; 2.8.2.

<sup>524</sup> See Catholic and Protestant Pastors. Interviewed by author, *Research Fieldwork attachment Aug.-Sep.2014*, 2.8.1; 2.8.2.

<sup>525</sup> Shorter, *African Culture and the Christian Church*, 66.

The lack of merging between Christian faith and the traditional cultures on different levels of life of African Christians was also expressed by Chibueze C. Udeani in his book *Inculturation as Dialogue: Igbo Culture and the message of Christ*. He remorsefully states that:

“Though Africa today, with her large number of Christians, is often seen as the future hope of the Church, a closer examination of Christianity shows that the Christian faith has not taken root in Africa. Many Africans today declare themselves Christians, but as before, they remain followers of the African religions in matters concerning inner dimensions of their life. It is evident that in strictly personal matters relating to such issues as passage and crises of life, most Africans turn to the African traditional religions.”<sup>526</sup>

Inculturation, therefore, has resulted from the demand of the Church for the best method of evangelisation. A plausible future for the evangelisation can be assured only through the process of inculturation. This was expressed and given theological and magisterial basis by the Second Vatican Council 1963-1965 and the African Synod document – *Ecclesia in Africa*. The Second Vatican Council initiated a dialogue between different cultures and the Gospel of Christ, with the aim of making Christ at home in every culture of the world. The Council of Fathers proclaims that:

“Whatever truth or goodness, and justice is to be found in the past or present human institutions is held in high esteem by the council. In addition, the Council declares that the church is anxious to help and to foster these institutions insofar as it depends on it and is compatible with its mission. The church desires nothing more ardently than to develop itself untrammelled in the service of all men under any regime which recognizes the basic rights of the person and the family, and the needs of the common good.”<sup>527</sup>

The African Synod also understood the urgency of inculturation in the African Church and underscored that: “The Synod considers inculturation an urgent priority in the life of particular churches, for a firm rooting of Gospel in Africa. It is a requirement for evangelization, a path towards full evangelization and one of the greatest challenges for the church of the continent on the eve of the Third Millennium”<sup>528</sup>

Inculturation is a dynamic process just like cultures are, therefore, both will never achieve the point of a final end.

“No culture is static. Because the, culture is embodied in human beings, it is in a constant process of interaction with the surrounding world, either adapting to the environment or assimilating the environment to itself. This involves a steady stream of choices, conscious

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<sup>526</sup> Chibueze C. Udeani, *Inculturation as Dialogue: Igbo Culture and the Message of Christ* (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2007), v

<sup>527</sup> Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, No. 42.

<sup>528</sup> African Synod, *The Church in Africa, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa* of the Holy Father John Paul II (Nairobi. Paulines Publication, 2015), 59.

or unconscious, choices which are affected by the decisions made by other people, and which will affect them in turn.”<sup>529</sup>

Inculturation, therefore, remains always a continuous process. That is why the theologians are continuously involved in promoting the inculturation process in every culture and in various theologian fields such as biblical studies, sacramental, dogmatic, pastoral and liturgical theology. This is energizing for every generation along the dynamic process of inculturation.

The advent of modern ecological concerns has made the Church and all traditional cultures to revisit their traditions that are ecologically friendly. From an African point of view, the actual ecological crisis is the crisis of values in our society. Inculturation would enrich Christian values with other traditional ecologically friendly values. African cultures are very rich in beliefs that are connecting a holistic concept of the human person with its natural environment. Some of these traditional values include totemism, a concept that has been outlined in this thesis stresses the kinship of human beings with nature and with one another. This is based on the African spirituality viewing the world as a sacred space.

#### 4.3.4.3. The Challenge of Inculturation

Inculturation as a theological enterprise is very challenging. Africa is the home of many diverse cultures. This cultural richness makes processes of inculturation in Africa a very complex adventure. This has been noticed by Udeani:

“Talking of Africa in terms of inculturation, one must acknowledge the well-known diversity of cultures among the various African people. This diversity of cultures raises the question as to whether there can be a uniform pattern of inculturation in Africa.”<sup>530</sup>

Therefore, the process of inculturation cannot be shaped by one simple approach, but has to take into consideration a variety of approaches, adapted at the culture in question. Every community, culture and generation is called to find out its own inculturation model, which in turn will bring diversity to the process of inculturation and these leads to culturally specific forms of the latter. This theme seems not to be in line with the Christian message of an objective eternal truth of the God of Christian doctrine. Therefore, theologians engaged in the project of inculturation will have to discuss the relationship between the

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<sup>529</sup> Maria De La Cruz Aymes et al., *Effective Inculturation and Ethnic Identity* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1987), 3-4.

<sup>530</sup> Udeani, *Inculturation as Dialogue*, 182.

alleged eternal truth (objectivity) of Christian revelation and the various cultural values in which it can be expressed (subjectively). Udeani expresses this view further that:

“For theology (inculturation) cannot be approached with cold objectivity; peoples and cultures must be fully involved in the enterprise for inculturation as dialogue. As this implies involvement in the message of Christ and in the African predicament, such as a theology of inculturation should be done by those who are involved in both African culture and Christian theology.”<sup>531</sup>

The Christian message should find a home in every culture of the world; it should avoid making all cultures uniform but aim to enhance the beauty of every individual culture. Nevertheless, this does not hinder the fact that certain elements in some cultures are similar. Inculturation means to create a dialogue between the differences which make certain culture unique and the similarities between cultures that bring the feeling of international fraternity. Thus, inculturation is not a process of rendering communities into their cultural cocoons but rather a merging the beauty of identity with the universality among cultures. “Unity is not uniformity.”<sup>532</sup> Shorter also stresses the need for the balance:

“The tribal church and the tribal liturgy must be avoided. On the other hand, the church must find its place in the living cultural traditions. In her adaptation, the church should encourage the exchange and mutual understanding by different ethnic groups of each other’s heritage. Her assemblies should be open to other cultures, not rigidly closed to them. Areas of relative cultural homogeneity within which common solutions could be tried and defined. These areas should be flexible enough to cross diocesan and even national frontiers where necessary.”<sup>533</sup>

This is one of the biggest challenge for the project of inculturation; to balance the universality and the individuality. Inculturation should not destroy the individuality of cultures as well as common characteristics of cultures but instead, it should appreciate both the individuality and the unity within cultures. Therefore, the mere encouraging of “tribal” inculturation can be criticised for stressing the difference between Christianised cultures and at the same time, overlooking the Christian “unity in difference” between various Christian cultures. Inculturation therefore, should grow up to intercultural and interreligious levels; it should not be for the benefit of one cultural group but for many, even for the whole human family.<sup>534</sup> This goal can be achieved through a scientific approach to inculturation research. “Expatriate and African priests and educators need to have a systematic knowledge of the local culture in order to form a correct judgement

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<sup>531</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>532</sup> Kiaziku, *Culture and Inculturation*, 89.

<sup>533</sup> Shorter, *African Culture and the Christian Church*, 74.

<sup>534</sup> See Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 53.



about the African beliefs and practices and determine their value for Christian worship and catechesis.”<sup>535</sup> This study is a contribution to a better understanding of the cultural phenomenon of totemism. The rediscovery of totemism will enable an easier inculturation process, that is more dynamic and based upon proper understanding of cultural values. Sadly, inculturation projects in most African countries are in state of stagnation due to lack of academic boost to the process. This study aims to be such an academic boost to the theological interpretation of totemic phenomena in the context of inculturation.

#### 4.3.4.4. Totemism and Inculturation

##### 4.3.4.4.1. Totemism as a Worldview

The understanding of totemism as a worldview of some ethnic communities affects our understanding of totemism today. This worldview comprehends nature and human beings as sacred and related. Totems are relatives of human beings and they inspire us to cultivate the respect for one another. The clan or a group of people adopt an animal or a natural object as kin and with this act follow laws, taboos, and rituals. This cultural worldview thrilled the first anthropologists and ethnologists and it excites interests even today, especially as we experience the crisis in relationships. Christian anthropology stresses the relationship between man and God. This attitude is incomplete without including nature. This relationship should consist of a religious component as a binding force. Leonardo Boff expresses this clearly, when stating that:

“The spiritual orientation of relations with reality as a whole, especially when faced with ecological crisis, is becoming an imperative. The new cosmology proposes a vision of a unified but not hierarchical world, one that is organic, holistic, feminine/masculine, and spiritual. Living beings (and this is especially convincing from the view point of quantum physics and the later version of the theory of relativity) are not juxtaposed or disunited. Everything is profoundly interrelated. Everything that exist is a complex bundle of energy in perpetual interrelativity. Matter itself presents one of the possible manifestations of energy.”<sup>536</sup>

The worldview that is found in totemism is predestined for our time; it brings in the concept of interrelatedness in nature. The totemic worldview is still present among the Keiyo ethnic group and many other groups practicing totemism. It can contribute to the holistic understanding of relational nature. The totemic worldview, therefore, can be the contribution of traditional culture to the Christian anthropological worldview by making

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<sup>535</sup> Shorter, *African Culture and the Christian Church*, 74.

<sup>536</sup> Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, 63-64.

it more holistic. The totemic religious and social worldview of kinship with nature can be a foundational cultural aspect for inculturation. This cultural worldview is essential for enabling the change in the approach to theology and to other disciplines.

#### 4.3.4.4.2. Kinship Theology

The understanding of God as the father and creator of the universe is a basic Christian theological tenet. To understand totemism as kinship with the natural world would add to a better understanding of God as the creator. This will remove the theologically questionable perception of God as a God who dominates. The God of dominion and the human beings, who dominate God's creation in the name of God, have degraded nature and have made them to objects to be exploited and devastated. Totemism is the attitude of relationship with nature. Every member of creation is someone's kin, especially of a particular totem. It is not a common relationship with nature but a particular relationship with a particular species animal or a natural object. The close relationship with nature unites communities with nature. Human beings are part of kinship within a community of God's creatures. Denis Edwards sees it as an important concept in the bible: "The model of human beings as kin to other creatures within a community of creation is based on the biblical notion that there is one God who continually creates all the diverse things that exist, delighting in their goodness (Gen. 1:3) and embracing them in the covenant love (Gen 9:12-16)."<sup>537</sup> So, the more human beings promote healthy relationship with every member of the community of God's creatures, the more they are healthy themselves. Among the indigenous communities this worldview lies still deep in their thinking and feelings. Kinship model of understanding God and his creation can be a powerful symbol in theology. Edwards goes further to stress that:

"Theologically, I would propose that this kinship brings into play what I have identified as the image of God in the human, the personal. It involves human as persons, personally connecting with other creatures, respecting, and loving them in all their differences from ourselves. It does not make other creatures into human persons, but engages with them as they are [...] I believe that this kinship model is the essential foundation of a truly ecological theology of human beings in relation to other creatures. It challenges the model of domination and exploitation. Adopting the kinship model demands a form of *conversion*. It involves a new way of seeing and acting. It involves extending the love neighbor to embrace creatures of other species. It involves extending the love of enemy to involve creatures that confront us as other and inspire fear in us. It involves loving and valuing others as God loves and values them. Ultimately, it is a God-centered (theo-centric) view of interconnected community of creatures that have their own intrinsic value."<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>537</sup> Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 22.

<sup>538</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-25.

The inculturation of African theology considers all parts of the universe as related to one another. The African theology stresses the idea that we all, humans and nature, are a one family. To focus only on the human family means a limited understanding, an approach that African Synod has followed mistakenly. In traditional African worldview, family relationship is not only restricted to living human beings, but nature, the ancestors and the spiritual world are also included. A kinship theology that encompasses all as members of one family is a relevant element of theological inculturation. This approach will promote the concept of the family of God in a wider sense; it will include even the non-human entities like totems of the clan. When the Church will be a family, it will reduce its hierarchical nature that has dominated for too long. This will bring a better understanding of the Church as the family of God. This will encompass the religious and social relationship of both human and non-human members of the family and will represent a holistic understanding of the Church in the local community and in the world.

#### 4.3.4.4.3. African Synods and Family Kinship

In the last century, the change in understanding of the kinship made a dramatic impact on social structure in Africa. The kinship with God as a father, a mother, and creator, with humans as brothers and sister, and with nature as our relative, has been significantly affected. The traditional model of kinship in a form of extended family which embraces all creations is being challenged by the new model of kinship, limited to a nuclear family alone. Eric Ayisi presents different types of family model in Africa but he comprehends that the extended family is common in most African societies, and it forms basis of all social relations and responsibilities. This model grants social security for members of the group.<sup>539</sup> The members of the family are united in religious, economic, social, and psychological way with each other, with the spiritual world and with nature. All of them form the extended family. The kinship ties mean a lot for most African societies and, therefore, this value was a main theme of the African Synod of Bishops that took place April-May 1994. The outcome of the Synod was an Apostolic Exhortation-Ecclesia, published in September 1995 focused on the centrality and importance of family in African culture. The model of the Church as the family of God is particularly important in Africa. The Synod of Bishops wrote that; “not only did the Synod speak of inculturation, but also made use of it, taking the church as Gods family as its guiding idea

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<sup>539</sup> See Ayisi, *An Introduction to the Study of African Culture*,16.

for evangelisation of Africa.”<sup>540</sup> The plenitude of meaning Africans associate to the family, makes it worthy of inculturation with the Christian faith, that will add to the importance of extended family. The model of African church as the family of God complies well with the African worldview of interconnectedness between all creatures. Therefore, to understand the church as the extended family of God, one must well understand the relationship between God and people, people and people, people and nature.

The inculturation is to be considered under two aspects. As the Synod formulates, “the synthesis between culture and faith is not only a demand of culture but also of faith, because a faith that does not become culture is not fully accepted, not entirely thought out, not faithfully lived.”<sup>541</sup> Inculturation is therefore an urgent task for the church in Africa; because the church and the theology being enriched with indigenous cultures, would be easily understood by the local people due to the similarity of the model of thinking. Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, SJ, pursuing the post-synodal thinking, stresses the need to create a church that is a family. He stresses that “One of the central planks of this model is the African experience of hospitality and welcome. In the church called family all are welcomed. There is a home and place for belonging for everyone in the extended family of God, from which nobody is excluded.”<sup>542</sup> This family model includes the living dead, the ancestors, the unborn, and also the natural world. All are included and so the African church as it theologizes, has to include all but exclude nobody. Despite the large number of members in the family, the diversity between members should be respected. Because, “within the family there is diversity and complementarity of roles and charisms of all members, the community will be transformed into communion in diversity. This means the community that values and promotes the gifts and talents of all.”<sup>543</sup> Now we are experiencing in the world wars, ecological destruction, hunger, poverty, injustice, are all connected with the malfunctional family system.

The African Synod decided to embark on new evangelization. “The new evangelization will thus aim at building up the church as family, avoiding all ethnocentrism and excessive particularism, trying instead to encourage reconciliation and true communion

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<sup>540</sup> The Church in Africa, 62.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>542</sup> Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, SJ, *Theology Brewed in African Pot* (Nairobi, Pauline Publication, 2008), 87.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid., 87.

between different ethnic groups, favouring solidarity and sharing of personel and resources among particular churches, without ethnic consideration.”<sup>544</sup> The Synod encouraged theologians to “work out the theology of the church as family with all the riches contained in this concept, showing its complementarity with other images of the church.”<sup>545</sup> Thus, the theologians have an open field to work on understanding the church from the African perspective. They should search deeply for the hidden values not only in the tradition but also in the African religion.

For a long time the African religion has been treated with contempt by early evangelisers of Christianity as intrinsic evil but the Synod has called for a “serene and prudent dialogue”. One of postive values of the African Religion harmonizing with the Christian faith, is the existence of the Supreme Being who is Eternal, Creator, Provident, and a Just Judge.<sup>546</sup> In the model of a family of God there is a room for all God’s creation, the family is an open society transcending all individuals and oriented toward the society<sup>547</sup> that is supreme to human beings. If the church constitutes a true extended family of God, then it should include not only human beings, as that has been the case, but it should include the all creation. This might be achieved through the understanding of the African family, its life and culture, which considers nature as part of the extended family.

The second Special Assembly of Bishops for Africa took place in 2009, and edicted the *The Church in Africa in Service to Reconcillation, Justice and Peace*<sup>548</sup> with the topic of the importance of the of family as the African model of the church. The Special Assembly stressed on the reconcilation, peace and justice under the umbrella of an idea of the extended family. Such family model is as typical part of African culture, might strengthen the African church for, “the Gospel is grounded in human terrein of culture. African societies show how powerless they are in the breakdown of cultures. If the church is to form authentic Christian, she must give serious attention to grounding the Gospel message in culture.”<sup>549</sup> The wars in Africa not only against humans but also against nature, are a sign of degradation of family values. Because the justice, reconcillation with God, with ech other, with nature,the idea of the family as the extended family of God is central that

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<sup>544</sup> The Church in Africa, 63.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>546</sup> See *ibid.*, 67.

<sup>547</sup> See *ibid.*, 8.

<sup>548</sup> See Synod of Bishops, II Special Assembly for Africa: *The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace*, Vatican City: 2009, accessed 05.05.2017,

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20090319\\_instrlabor-africa\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20090319_instrlabor-africa_en.html)

<sup>549</sup> *Ibid.*,75.

opens up to even greater family of nations. The family bonds have been severed and damaged by injustice done to individuals and to all God's creatures. The church, therefore, has a big role to mend the relationship in the family through a holistic reconciliation. The church should incorporate certain elements of traditional African knowledge that appreciates the value of every member of the family. This would enhance the future relationship between African culture and Christian religion in Africa. An advice of African social and pastoral anthropologist, Aylward Shorter, is still relevant today:

“The future of culture and religion in Africa lies with the people of Africa themselves. Africa is at cross-roads, perhaps that is truism, since mankind is always at a cross-roads, having in its hands the power to create or to destroy. However it is important to know at a given moment what the choices are. Only a serious study of contemporary man in Africa can help us to glimpse the ways in which Christianity may serve and develop the human values and cultural riches of Africa.”<sup>550</sup>

The serious study, as advocated by Shorter, will be of a great value to the African church and to many scholars in Africa, who can deepen their study of African cultures and values. In this way they will contribute to the development of a great family of God's creatures.

4.3.4.4.4. The African Theologians and the Kinship with Nature African theological enterprise, however young, has come of age<sup>551</sup> and continues to grow in the process of making theology truly African, with its roots in African thinking patterns and ways of life. Of a significant importance for theologians is the profound study of the root of African thinking and worldviews that can be the foundation of theology that is relevant to the time. Many theologians have done this and this include famous African theologians like John Mbiti, E. A. Adeolu Adegbola, E. Bolaji Idowu, Charles Nyamiti, Aylward Shorter, Bénézet Bujo, Juvénal Ilunga Muya, Laurenti Magesa, just to name a few.

An enormous challenge for African theologians is to have an African worldview and at the same time be a Christian. Since the beginning of the African Christian theology, the greatest fear of all African theologians is the fear of syncretism. This was a dread already of the first African Synod which was considered to be the Synod of resurrection and Synod of hope. The Synod wrote, "Considering the rapid changes in the cultural, social, economic and political domains, our local Churches must be involved in the process of

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<sup>550</sup> Shorter, African Culture and Christian Church, 215.

<sup>551</sup> See Laurenti Magesa ed., African Theology comes of Age. Revisiting Twenty Years of the Theological Ecumenical Symposium of Eastern African Theologians (ESEAT) (Nairobi: Pauline's Publications, 2010), 11.

inculturation in an ongoing manner, respecting the two following criteria: compatibility with the Christian message and communion with the universal Church [...]. In all cases, care must be taken to avoid syncretism.”<sup>552</sup> This phobia of syncretism has curtailed the true inculturation. This challenge is visible in the history of African theologians as they adopted African religions in their theological projects. The African theologians approach to the African religions has been varied in the history of African theology. Okot p’Bitek interestingly classifies the approach to the studies in African religions in three related categories. To the first category belong the Christian apologists mounting a counter attack to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century non-believers. To the second category belong African nationalists fighting a defensive battle against the vicious onslaught on African cultures by western scholarships. In the last category are the missionaries scheming what they call a “dialogue with animism.”<sup>553</sup> The first and the second category i.e. the Christian apologists and African nationalist tried to defend Christian religions and cultures. For example, theologians like Mbiti, defended African religion by portraying African religion as monotheistic like Christianity, and not like the totemic or fetish religions as suggested by western scholars. Okot p’Bitek makes clear that, “their works are mainly addressed to unbelieving Europeans, and they attempt to show that African peoples were civilized as the Western peoples. They dress up African deities with Hellenistic robes and parade them before Western world.”<sup>554</sup> This approach to African religions from Christian theological perspective becomes very apologetic and the African religious culture is not generally well explained. Other theologians like Placide Tempels, had their Africans audience, an as p’Bitek explains it, “they attempted to assure the Africans that the earlier generations of anthropologists erred graciously when they reported that African peoples were mere “pagan savages” and assert that Africans are, as they have always been, highly religious and moral peoples.”<sup>555</sup> However this enticing approach provokes more questions. What is the yardstick of this civilized morality? Is it African or Western? What does civilization entail? Is the meaning of religion the same for African people and Western people? African theologians are therefore always challenged to consider African theology differently. The dialogical approach between African religions and Christianity

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<sup>552</sup> *The Church in Africa*, 62. Quoting Propositio 31

<sup>553</sup> See p’Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship*, 40.

<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

is a good step, but how can a theologian begin a “dialogue with animism”, when animism or totemism has been seen as a sign of primitive stupidity?<sup>556</sup>

The contemporary African Christian theologians should revisit and understand these terms a new from the African perspective, and bring these in dialogue with other cultures. The contemporary African Christian theology needs an inter-disciplinary approach from the part of anthropology, African religions, theology, science, psychology, and many other relevant disciplines. African religion is rich in concepts and ways of thinking that can be very helpful in inculturation. The meeting of African theologians in Ibadan, in 1996 declared that; “We believe that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, creator of heaven and earth, Lord of history, has been dealing with mankind all times and in all parts of the world. It is with this conviction that we study the rich heritage of our African peoples, and we have evidence that they know of him and worship him.”<sup>557</sup>

Totemism has been wrongly interpreted by the earlier scholars as an early stage of religion, therefore its absence in the African theological discourse is understandable. However, the wider worldview of seeing the world from the perspective of kinship with nature has been always in the thinking and writings of many African theologians. Some of those who contributed to this understanding were François-Marie Lufuluabo Mizeka and Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator.

Francois-Marie Lufuluabo Mizeka was born in 1926 in Democratic Republic of Congo, later he studied philosophy and theology in Congo-Kinshasha. After completing the studies, he joined the Franciscan order of Friars Minor and went to Belgium, Austria and Italy for his formation, and to continue study of philosophy, theology and of classical music. Mizeka is considered to be the pioneer of African theology.<sup>558</sup> He found similarities between the Franciscan spirituality and the African way of thinking. For him to be an African theologian is also to be a Franciscan. The Franciscan relationship with nature, simplicity and a poetic mystic temperament go hand in hand with the African Christian virtues. Juvénal Ilunga Muya revisits the theology of this forgotten dynamic thinker who tried in the early stages of Christian faith to incarnate the Gospel message in the African thought patterns. “He bitterly criticised every dogmatic assertion that

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<sup>556</sup> See Graham Harvey, *Animism, Respecting the Living World*, 9.

<sup>557</sup> Kwesi A. Dickson and Paul Ellingworth eds., *Bilical Revelation and African Beliefs* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1972), 16.

<sup>558</sup> Juvénal Ilunga Muya, “François-Marie Lufuluabo Mizeka, A Theologian of Trinitarian Mystery.” In Bénézet Bujo, Juvénal Ilunga Muya eds., *African Theology, The Contribution of Pioneers vol.2* (Nairobi: Paulines, 2008), 47.



condemns African traditions without deep knowledge of them, he conceives the work of African pioneer as one that “clears the undergrowth and paves the way,”<sup>559</sup> For Lufuluabo, life is very important to the African conception of himself and the world. He stressed the relationship between the Bantu worldview and Tempels understanding of vital-force. For Lufuluabo, Being is mystical-vital dynamism, and that “each being is endowed with its own force.”<sup>560</sup> He further stresses on the dynamism of the vital-force that “this dynamism has a double characteristic: tangible on one hand, and mystical on the other.”<sup>561</sup> It is this dynamic force that bring dynamism in every creature in nature, and one lives in continuous dynamic relationship with nature. To understand African-Bantu life one has to understand this dynamic vital forces that opens the human spirit to religion. This type of religion encompasses all nature as co-related.<sup>562</sup> It is within this co-relations with nature that the idea of maternity and paternity as fundamental theological locus takes place. In the African understanding, Father and Mother are connecting all to one vital force.”That is why the idea of God as a father is rooted in the african mentality [...]. The whole institutional life of the clan is imbued with patternity: the chief of the clan is its father, whether natural or juridical.”<sup>563</sup> God is therefore seen as father and source of the vital force, metaphysical and mysterious at the same time. This force which Lufuluabo identifies as love, is at the centre of relationship with God, among humans and with nature. The idea of love and life is also very central to the Christian beliefs; therefore, Christianity is not at all opposed to African traditions and is willing to adopt and to raise these.<sup>564</sup>

Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orobator is a Jesuit priest, born in Nigeria and lecturer of Theology and Religious Studies at Hekima College Jesuit School of Theology. In his book *Theology Brewed in African Pot*, he touches important African ideas on creation. For Orobator, Africans have many stories about creation. These are not elaborated systematically in theology but rich of concepts in the understanding of creation. For him, the understanding of creation can be expressed through one genetic term “life” because “human beings, animals, plants, and objects of nature are imbued with life. The belief is at the origin of the much-talked-about African respect of nature. Life as it is present in creation is sacred.

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<sup>559</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid., 67.

Beside the respect accorded to human life on account of its sacredness, African expressions advocate reverence for nature.”<sup>565</sup> The theology of creation that is based on the sacredness of life is central to African theologians. Although being distant to his theology, Orobator writes that, “Based on the awareness of their affinity with the rest of creation or nature, one of the primary concerns of Africans is harmony with nature, a balanced relationship with the entire universe.”<sup>566</sup> Just like in any kinship, the harmony is brought by vital for a healthy life. And every member of the human community has a responsibility to create harmony with God, one another and with nature.

#### 4.4. Resume

Theology of totemism could be the best headline for this chapter, but from a historical understanding of totemism this would be contradictory. The historical discussions about totemism might be considered as an endeavour of pagans and atheists against the Christianity and the revealed religions. The search of the anthropologists for natural historical origin of religion in totemism, among the primitives and savages, was an attempt to disqualify the divine origin of religion and revelation. The main argument of anthropologists was that in totemism is an origin of religion as a part of the general human evolution process. Well, this way of thinking is a challenge for a new understanding of totemism in this century, a new approach to see totem as a relative and understand it within the interconnectedness with nature. A modern understanding of totemism is to comprehend it as kinship with nature that creates a positive bond between all creatures of nature on a religious and social level. This attitude is found among the most indigenous communities in the world. Totemism is a collective word that connotes diverse types of totemism. An attempt of William Robertson Smith, to locate totemism among early Semitic tribes and in the Bible, was a courageous act but in a wrong time. Bediako confirms as true that “there is an affinity between religion of the Old Testament and those of primitive societies around the world, generally esteemed as savage and barbarous.”<sup>567</sup> But Smiths research of primal religions of the Semites uncovered the primal elements that have been transferred to the Old Testament Bible. Especially the kinship with God, with one another and with nature, this worldview of the Old Testament is relevant to the Christian theology. The contemporary understanding of creation in the Old and New

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<sup>565</sup> Orobator, SJ, *Theology Brewed in African Pot*, 51-52.

<sup>566</sup> Orobator, SJ, *Theology Brewed in African Pot*, 52.

<sup>567</sup> Bediako, *Primal Religion and the Bible*, 13.

Testament focus on this kinship. The Bible contains many verses about kinship with nature and invites scholars who wish to find them.

God in the Old Testament and in the New Testament reveals himself as God of Kinship. God is creator of all creatures and of all relationship. He created man in his image and likeness so that he becomes the promoter and steward of this relationship between human beings and God and human beings and Gods creation. The human being has to be aware of the importance of his role in creating and promoting relationship in all fields and at all levels in the world. Obviously, humans' performance was not quite well comparing to what is happening in the world. The wars against humans and wars against nature are sign of serious breakdown in relationships. In the history, there were prophets of holistic relationship, who spoke to humans but were neither heard nor understood. In this time of crisis in relationships, we are called to revisit their teaching and see if we can learn from them. Also, Francis of Assisi was such prophet. How he related with God, with fellow brothers and sisters and how he related with nature should be learnt by the contemporary world. Echoing the great theologian Elisabeth A. Johnson hat, "humans share with all other living creatures on our planet the same common ancestry. Bacteria, pine, trees, sparrows, horses, the great gray whales, we are all genetic kin in the great community of life."<sup>568</sup> The great community begins as micro-community and extends to a macro-community. Totemism, therefore, has a particular role as kinship on the micro-community level, and creates an important indigenous building block for the macro-community. It is still important because, it is a culture of being related with one another and with nature in the micro-community. Concluding, it is of a significant importance to revisit and rediscover it among the totemic practising communities and to learn from them the importance of relatedness in nature. This trend is slowly emerging in the modern societies. The right understanding of totemism in theological and social spheres can be achieved from the perspective of relatedness or kingship with nature. God is the God of kinships with humanity and with nature.

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<sup>568</sup> Elisabeth A. Johnson, "Losing and Finding Creation in the Christian Tradition" in Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether eds., *Christianity and Ecology*, 2000, 14.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. TOTEMISM RE-EXAMINED

#### 5.1. Preamble

There is an emerging interest in totemism today, the interest that is spreading across many fields like environmentalism, religion, paganism, psychology and anthropology. Totemism re-examined or revisited does not imply that a modern research statistic or a new idea would be introduced to this subject but that the facts which had been gathered in the past would be re-examined and re-interpreted in a new way. As stated in previous chapters, almost over hundred years totemism was a topic perennially discussed until it became scholarly indigestive for some time. Totemism was subject the of study in nearly all fields of science, just from the moment when the exotic name “totem” attracted the curiosity of researchers in various countries, and in different periods of time. The original meaning of totemism has been changing depending to these situations as explained during the totemic past discussions. From the perspective of the totemic historical discussion, one might conclude that totemism was a creation of the Victorian anthropologists and should “rest in peace in an academic museum”. However, this could not happen because totemism is still practiced today among the Keiyo people in Kenya as well as in other parts of the world. Therefore, it should be explained and understood anew. There are new ways of understanding totemism not as a problem to be solved but as a value to be cherished and natured. The old totemic discussion was more of a research and academic explanation of the meaning of totemism and its origin in the evolution of humanity. The new understanding of totemism begun with the study of A.P. Elkin, in 1938. He viewed totemism positively as a traditional or indigenous view of nature and life, universe and man which [...] unites them with nature's activities and species in the bond of mutual life-giving.<sup>569</sup> Elkin’s study impressed James Frazer but neither the anthropological nor ethnological scholars. Totemism was already a buried theme at the academic level. A reconsideration of totemism from a human relationship with nature and life, gives a new meaning to totemism which might promote a better understanding of totemism for the Keiyo people and other people who still practice totemism today. The better and proper

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<sup>569</sup> See Deborah Rose, Diana James, Christine Watson, *Indigenous Kinship with the Natural World in New South Wales* (Hurst Ville, N.S.W.: NSW National Parks and Wild Life Service, 2003), 2.

understanding of totemism can be helpful in solving social, economic, ecological and religious challenges of our time.

Totemism today, therefore, oscillates between the old Victorian totemism and the new totemism. It brings together the valuable analytic research of Victorian scholars and the interdisciplinary approach of today's scholars. One of these modern scholars, Deborah Rose,<sup>570</sup> proposes the right understanding of totemism today. For her, totemism:

“Concerns human interactions and connectedness with, and responsibilities toward, the non-human world. Totemism posits connectedness, mutual interdependence, and the non-negotiable significance of the lives of non-human species. It organizes responsibilities for species along tracks that intersect, and thus build a structure of regional systems of relationships and responsibility.”<sup>571</sup>

Rose's view of totemism is a continuation of the scholarly historical study but also an introduction of a new aspect of interactions, connectedness and mutual interdependence between species in the universe. Therefore, to understand totemism today, one has to consider it not just from a mere perspective of relationship but from the perspective of totemic relationships which “constitute a major system for linking living bodies into structured relationships.”<sup>572</sup> This bond is not generally a common relationship but a particularly structured relationship between certain groups of human and animal species. It is this particularity of relationship that brings attachment and particular mystical union in the totemic relationship. Commenting on Deborah Rose, Graham Harvey states that, she acknowledges that she is presenting a ‘harmonious’ version of relationship that provides many opportunities for tension and conflict, and frequent need for ‘politicking’ and argument as people work things out in daily life. In her conclusion, she points out that ‘totemic relationships connect people to their ecosystem in non-random relations of mutual care’, reiterating the understanding that clan related persons share responsibility for the well-being of all co-inhabitants of land (which is also alive).<sup>573</sup> In our time, in an ecologically sensitive world, there is a renewed interest in the totemic relationship which should be re-examined.

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<sup>570</sup> Deborah Bird Rose is Professor of Environmental Humanities at University of New South Wales in Sydney. She works with Aborigine people, especially in their claim to land and in other decolonizing contexts. Her researches areas focus on multi-species communities that form around animals at edge of extinction. more from <http://deborahbirdrose.com/environmental-humanities/>

<sup>571</sup> Deborah Rose, “Totemism, Religions, and Co-management in Aboriginal Australia’, a draft paper for the Conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property, 1998, 8, as quoted by Graham Harvey, *Animism, Respecting the Living World* (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), 167.

<sup>572</sup> Deborah Rose, “Totemism, Religions, and Co-management in Aboriginal Australia’, a draft paper for the Conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property, 1998, 11, accessed on 22.02.2017 <https://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/bitstream/handle/10535/1187/rose.pdf>

<sup>573</sup> see Graham Harvey, *Animism, Respecting the Living World*, 167-168.

## 5.2. Totemism and Modern Approaches

### 5.2.1. Totemism and Holistic Ecology

In our time, the ecological issues are critical not only on international or national level but also on a community level. On this basic and important level, where the Keiyo people find themselves, is realization of a disharmonic relationship with the environment is very evident. People are aware that the environment is behaving differently as compared to sometimes back. The lakes are drying, the rains are irregular, and famine is spreading. The cultural roots of people are losing its importance, and the plant and animal species are disappearing. Among the Keiyo clans and communities, the animosities and conflicts are increasing. The natural forests had to fell down in order to give way for more of agriculture land, or to be sold for wood or burned for charcoal, all that to make fast money. At the international, national and local level there is an awareness not only that something is wrong in our current development but also that solutions are needed. These ecological solutions come from all sectors of engagement, but the weakest level is the local level, the community level.

The international and national conferences on the care of environment try to give science-based, solutions and accepted by the scientific world. One has to peruse some of the many climate change conference reports to see how complex these reports are. In view of this complexity, a global climate change summit which is the summit of the best scientists and politicians that are searching for environmental solutions, offer very relevant analysis of data and possible solutions to the environmental problems that we are facing on earth. Science is important in looking for environmental solutions that are technologically based. Holmes Rolston III stresses the importance of the relationship between science and religion in looking for global environmental solutions. He praises scientific research and approach and shows its limits and failures.

“Science has discovered the community of life on Earth in ways not known to classical cultures-through microscopes, explorations around the globe, fossil evidence, and labours of taxonomists with their phylogenetic insights. But the same science that, theoretically and descriptively, has revealed the extent of biological diversity has, practically and prescriptively, often pronounced nature to be valueless, except in so far as it can be used instrumentally as a human resource.”<sup>574</sup>

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<sup>574</sup> Holmes Rolston III, “Science Based versus Traditional Based Ethics” in: J. Ronald Engel and Joan Gibb Engel eds., *Ethics of Environment and Development* (Tucson, London: The University of Arizona Press, 1990), 70.

So though important, science cannot be the only way to search for environmental solutions. However, the science has been considered for a long time as the only way of solving environmental problems. Science solutions have its limits as well as also other approaches. Despite its enormous scientific contributions, which is the only approach of most of the western countries, the use of nature only for human development has reduced nature to a thing that is there to be used only by human beings.

The process of secularizing the world of nature involves what Max Weber called the disenchantment of the world (*Entzauberung der Welt*).<sup>575</sup> The world is analytically reduced to a rationalized mechanical object. This process of disenchantment of the world through a rationalized approach has caused the natural world to lose its magic. This approach has encouraged the misuse and abuse of nature. This problem is growing and becoming more complex in our present society. The disenchantment of nature does not only affect nature in itself, it affects also human beings because they are too part of nature.

Carl Jung cites this human loneliness that:

“Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos. He is no longer involved in nature and has lost his emotional participation in natural events, which hitherto had symbolic meaning for him. The thunder is no longer the voice of a god nor the lightning is his avenging missile. No river contains a spirit, no tree means a man’s life, no snake is the embodiment of wisdom, and no mountain harbours a great demon. Neither do things speak to him nor can he speak to things, like stones, springs, plants and animals.”<sup>576</sup>

So, science solutions cannot only solve all ecological problems that we are experiencing today.

But a holistic approach may help solving ecological problems and that can be achieved through interdisciplinary methods. Apart from the scientific solutions, the religions and indigenous worldviews can bring a great contribution to the solving of ecological issues in the modern world. Religions and religious worldviews allow us to see nature from another perspective, to see nature as spiritually alive. Moreover, this belief creates intimacy with the environment and furthermore, it creates an interactive and participative character rather than an exploitative relationship with the natural world. It is possible to learn this intimacy with the environment and with each other from indigenous

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<sup>575</sup> Disenchantment of nature is a theme that Friedrich Schiller and Max Weber under the German term *Entzauberung der Welt* a term that shows the positive and negative effect of the process rationalization and devaluation of the mystical world as a result of Enlightenment. See Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion* (Boston, Mass., Beacon Press,1964), 270

<sup>576</sup> Carl G. Jung, *Psychological Reflections: An Anthology of Jung’s Writings, 1905-1961*, ed. Jolande Jacobi (London: Routledge,1971), 264.Cited by James William Gibson, *A Reenchanted World, the Quest for a New Kinship with Nature* (New York: Metropolitan Books,2009), 10.

communities in the world. In these communities, “nature is an extension of human culture; even though humans and animals may no longer speak the same language, relationships between them are social and culturally imbued with spiritual significance.”<sup>577</sup> It is this spiritual and social significance of nature that is a central aspect of totemism. There is a unity among the clan members themselves, through kinship relationship. This kinship with one another is extended to a mystical relationship with a particular species of animal, plant or natural phenomenon.<sup>578</sup> Nature is, hence not seen only mechanically and materially but more in a relationship with human beings. This human-nature connection is disappearing in our modern world, along with the disappearance of indigenous cultures. Totemism is one of these cultures that are slowly disappearing in most of the communities but it is a culture mostly needed as part of contribution to a holistic ecological view and restoration of nature. Because as Stephen Sterling observed, “the key concepts of the ecological view apply no less to the relation of human individuals to themselves as to each other and the environment. There is an inevitable reciprocity between an integrated, fulfilled person and a healthy planetary ecology.”<sup>579</sup> For a holistic ecological worldview, the needs of human beings and the needs of the environment have to be taken into consideration. The modern overstressing of individual economic and political development that prioritizes maximum economic growth, maximum production, and maximum profits, are doomed to fail in the long run. To stress upon one and to leave out the other will never solve the ecological issues holistically. Instead, it just magnifies the problem. Moreover, that is why the view that focusses only on “green ecology” and forget the cultural and human ecology, is incomplete. The world cannot be green if the biggest percentage of the world population are languishing in poverty or at war with one another. Ecological care should hear the cry not only of the earth but also of the poor. The earth and the poor have been disenchanting and transformed into things to be used and thrown away. Kinship between human beings and with nature has to be rediscovered and restored.

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<sup>577</sup> James William Gibson, *A Reenchanted World, the Quest for a New Kinship with Nature* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009), 39.

<sup>578</sup> See S. E. Harland, “Totemism” In: J. Hastings, J.A. Selbie, & L. Gray, eds., *Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics*, vol. XII (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 1921), 405. Cited also by Gerard Lucas, *The Vicissitudes of Totemism*, 2.

<sup>579</sup> Stephen R. Sterling, “Towards an Ecological World View” in *Ethics of Environment and Development*, 84-85.



The old totemic relations stressed the importance of kinship between clan members, and every clan member is called to help other clan members, because “every society based on kinship, the members of the clan is entitled to mutual defense, protection, and resentment of injuries.”<sup>580</sup> The new totemism rediscovers the importance of this type of kinship and calls for this social concern from every member of the clan, and at the same time, it defends and protects every member of the clan against poverty and individualistic profit maximization of our time. The clan consists of human and non-human members, physical and spiritual members, because the understanding of kinship exceeds far beyond the human members. It involves the ancestors, the living, the unborn, and totems of the clan. This view of totemic relations is wider, inclusive, and open to more members. The concern for one another is a paramount in a totemic relation and creates an interdependent community. In this community, there is a clan network of relationships based on sharing one totem, and also a relationship with the clan based on marriage. Thus, it is a complex interconnected kinship. Every marriage contributes to the extension of totemic relations because through it, the families of two different totems are tied in a relationship. The totem of the father and the totem of the mother forms this totemic web. The children take the totem of the father, but they respect the totem of the mother because they are related to it. This relationship, therefore, brings a network of totemic relationship that forms an important religious and social network in the family and in the whole clan. The presence of a network of kinship connection in the community can be a great chance to strengthen a holistic ecological sensitive community. Totemic relationship, therefore, connects an individual to the clan, individual to fathers’, mothers’ and grandmothers’ totems and families. The proper functioning of his web of relationships is guided and guarded by laws and taboos of the clan.

Totemic laws and taboos play a central role in a totemic community. The totemic laws regulate the social relationship among clan members and cements communal relationship with their totems and the spiritual world. Totems are:

“Generally the subject of a religious or quasi-religious emotions, and each individual specimen of this object or animal is the subject of taboos or prohibitions: subject to certain limitation or ceremonies, it cannot be injured or killed, or (in the case where the specimen is edible) eaten [...] the members of the clan may not marry or have sexual intercourse within the clan.”<sup>581</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> S. E. Harland, “Totemism” In Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics, vol. XII, 405. Cited also by Gerard Lucas, *The Vicissitudes of Totemism*, 2.

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid.*,

Totemic laws and taboos form part of the Keiyo traditional laws and are a central aspect of the general old totemic definition. Laws and taboos are an important part of the definition of totemism that was crucial to the study of early anthropologists. For example, James Frazer, stressed in his definition of totemism the superstitious respect between the totem and the individual or the group. The superstitious respect comes from the understanding that the totem and the individual or group are related to one another. “The respect which a man owes to his totem as a kinsman and friend usually prevent him from killing and eating it, whenever the totem is edible animal or plant.”<sup>582</sup> So, the basis of the laws and taboos is the relationship and respect with the totem and with one another that has a religious implication. Further, the religious element is important because, in some communities, totems can be eaten or killed for a ritual purpose of identifying oneself with the totem completely.<sup>583</sup> So the laws and taboos on eating totems and sexual relations between the totem members were based on the thinking of social and religious kinship between totemic human members, the non-human members and the spiritual members. The highest authority of this law was considered to be the spiritual members i.e., the spiritual world. Studying the totemic laws and taboos, the first anthropologists have found an opportunity to answer the theme of the Victorian time: The theory of the nature and origin of law and morality. This theme was viewed from the psychoanalytic perspective by Sigmund Freud by concluding that Oedipus complex was the beginnings of religion, ethics, society and art.<sup>584</sup>

Although the origin of totemic laws play an important role also by re-examination of totemism in modern time, the main question today is: How can totemic laws and taboos be helpful in improving the social relationship between human beings and non-human members of the totemic clan? This question is relevant today when the international and national institutions proclaim laws and make economic and social plans, but it is sad that most of them are overlooking or even contradicting the indigenous laws of the local people. That is the reason that hinders the implementation of these laws so that they only remain in law books and not in the life of the people. The visible example of this approach is the global climatic legislation. In order to implement the law and legislation on the local level, it requires a religious aspect as authority. The Aboriginal and many indigenous

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<sup>582</sup> Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, 1910, 6.

<sup>583</sup> See *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>584</sup> See Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 2013, 110.

tribes, Keiyo included, consider land as totemic entity and hence, guided by religious regulations of the clan. Billy Kayipipi, a Pitjantjatjara elder, expresses the religiosity laws of lands as he says:

“The law came from our grandparents. It is strong law and we want to keep it strong. We want to keep the land, hold the land, that is our strongest desire. It is our land; it cannot be changed. We have been holding it forever. We wish to do so. It comes down through the generations to be passed on from one generation to the other. We cannot change the law every year; it is one law and it is there forever. We hold the law and our beliefs in our head, not on pieces of paper. How will we stay there in the future? We want to live happily on the land. We do not want to be sad. Our laws lie in the land, and the law is a part of the land. We want to get and keep the land. I ask the government for the rights to keep our land.”<sup>585</sup>

The local totemic laws and taboos can replace neither international nor national laws, but when they are taken into consideration, the other laws can be understood better. For example, when somebody comes to the local people and tells them that they should not kill elephants because it is against government environmental laws and if they do they will be jailed. This law will not be effective among the local communities, people do not understand these laws and even if they understand the police is always far away. However, when the government engages the local community using local taboos and laws by telling them elephants are totems and it is a taboo to kill the totem, it will be more effective than the powerful government environmental laws. Totemic laws and taboos touch the social and the spiritual life of the people. This is because:

“It appears in Africa the totem incorporated the idea that the particular people shared intrinsically in the totemic narrative in a spiritual way. When the apical ancestor appeared, it gave to all of the descendants the same protection and guidance. It was not a generational gift, but an eternal, everlasting linking of the people with that of particular animal species.”<sup>586</sup>

The spiritual and social aspect of totemic laws and taboos are crucial for totemism and especially important today when a holistic ecological approach is urgently needed. Indigenous communities can offer the ecological knowledge and thus help to cope with the environmental challenges of our time.

### 5.2.2. Totemism as Indigenous Environmental Knowledge

The study of human understanding has been a philosophical and scientific project for generations. For example, the renowned Jesuit philosopher and theologian Bernard

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<sup>585</sup> Quoted in Bill Edwards “Pitjantjatjara Land Rights,” in Peterson and Langton, *Aborigines, Land and Land Rights*, p.307 cited by T.C. McLuhan, *The Way of the Earth: Encounters with Nature in Ancient and Contemporary Thought*, 71-72.

<sup>586</sup> See Molefi Kete Asante, “Totemism” in *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, vol.2, 667.

Lonergan studied the human understanding philosophically and saw self-consciousness as the beginning of knowing and not the end in itself. And for one to understand, one has to know correctly.<sup>587</sup> Apart from mathematical and philosophical knowing, Lonergan comes to the object and subject of common sense:

“Never aspires to universally valid knowledge, and it never attempts exhaustive communication. Its concern is the concrete and particular. Its function is to master each situation as it arises. Its procedure is to reach an incomplete set of insights that is to be completed only by adding on each occasion the further insights that scrutiny of the occasion reveals.”<sup>588</sup>

Therefore, it would be wrong for common sense to formulate universal theories, definitions, and complete insights because every concrete situation has a particular element in it. But it is worthy to point out that common sense has deeper ground and deeper meaning that is relevant to the concrete and to the end in the realm of things that are immediate and practical.<sup>589</sup> Lonergan compares science and common sense that:

“For sciences have theoretical aspirations, and common sense none. The sciences would speak precisely and with universal validity, but common sense would speak only to persons and only about the concrete and particular. The science needs methods to reach their abstract and universal objects but scientists need common sense to apply methods properly in executing the concrete tasks of particular investigations, just as logicians need common sense if they are to grasp what is meant in each concrete act of human utterance”<sup>590</sup>

The relationship between science and common sense is very close within a rational choice. Because a “rational choice is not between science and common sense; it is a choice of both, of science to master the universal, and of common sense to deal with the particular.”<sup>591</sup>

The indigenous communities have been much concerned with the particular and what is practical to a particular environment. They have accumulated wisdom from the common-sense way of dealing with their particular environment, in a particular field, in a particular way.

But for a long time, the approach of the western science to philosophy, religion and natural science has been acknowledged as the only way of knowing. The common sense knowing has been overlooked. Through economic, religious, political and educational programmes, the scientific way of knowing, which is western in origin, has been mostly

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<sup>587</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Insight: Study of Human Understanding* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 22.

<sup>588</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>589</sup> See *ibid.*, 22.

<sup>589</sup> See *ibid.*, 202.

<sup>590</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>591</sup> See *ibid.*, 203.

forced to the people of other countries, without researching rightly on their accumulative common wisdom that has made them exist throughout generations in this particular environment. This was done due to a superiority complex of the scientific knowledge, pretending to possess the only right worldview by prevailing over traditional worldviews which were seen as primitive and irrelevant. So far, social anthropologists have done a great number of studies on primitive mind but under different aspects and using different methods.

The study of primitive mind was not intended to learn and to support its further development but to learn how to control the people and how to gain an easy way to command them. Okot p'Bitek posited in a hard way that:

“Social anthropology has been the study of non-Western societies by Western scholars to serve Western interests. Social anthropology had not only been the handmaiden of colonialism in that it analysed and provide important information about the social institutions of the colonized peoples to ensure efficient and effective control and exploitation, it has also furnished and elaborated the myth of the “primitive” which justified the colonial enterprise.”<sup>592</sup>

The method of study was wrong. They used science to study common wisdom of the people. Lonergan rightly sees it as superfluous because “Rockets and space platforms are superfluous in the performance of the tasks of common sense.”<sup>593</sup>

The “primitive mind” mentality has been continued up to today. Even Africans themselves call their own traditional wisdom as undeveloped and the science culture as modern and civilized. And because most of the Africans have overlooked the common wisdom of their people, they have overlooked the common-sense issues, and this has resulted in lack of a meaningful development in developing countries. The recent acceptance of the indigenous knowledge, as knowledge per se, is a step to solving some of the indigenous people’s problems. Indigenous knowledge is also called local knowledge, traditional knowledge or traditional wisdom:

“Is the knowledge that is unique to a culture or society [...] this knowledge is passed from generation to generation usually by word of mouth and cultural rituals, and has been the basis for agriculture, food preparations, health care, education, conservation and wide range of other activities that sustain societies in the many parts of the world.”<sup>594</sup>

It is this knowledge that has been discarded for a long time as a primitive and savage superstition. The Kenyan environmentalist and political activist Wangari Maathai (1940-

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<sup>592</sup> p'Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship*, 1-2.

<sup>593</sup> Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard*, 202.

<sup>594</sup> UNESCO, *Indigenous knowledge and Sustainability*, accessed 28.02.2017, [http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme\\_c/mod11.html](http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_c/mod11.html)

2011) analysed the impediments of development in the former colonized countries and observed the effect of discarding local people's knowledge and wisdom in religion and education. We should be not surprised that despite of much economic and educational help in former colonized countries, the results are very poor. Maathai notices this sad situation:

“Citizens of former colonial powers are often baffled as to why indigenous or colonized peoples seem to suffer disproportionately from alcoholism, homelessness, mental illness, disease, lethargy, fatalism, or dependency. They cannot fathom why many of these peoples seem unable to relate to the modern world, why many of their children cannot stay in school, or why many do not thrive in contemporary, industrialized world of big cities and corporate capitalism.”<sup>595</sup>

But that leaves these communities with many unanswered questions. Because they:

“Have been attempting to reconcile their traditional way of life with the foreign cultures that condemned their own and encouraged them to abandon it. What are people to do when everything they believe in and everything that makes them who they are has been called “satanic” or “primitive” or “witchcraft” or “sorcery”? What can be done to resist? And when, as is usually the case, this heritage is solely oral, how can they rediscover and reclaim its positive aspects?”<sup>596</sup>

These communities should rediscover their indigenous knowledge in all fields of their traditional life. Maathai stresses the relationship between environmental conservation and indigenous knowledge:

“This is why culture is intimately linked with environmental conservation. Because communities that haven't yet undergone industrialisation often retain close, reverential connection with nature, and their lifestyle and natural resources are not yet commercialized, the areas where they live are rich in biological diversity. But these habitats are most in danger from globalization, privatization, and the piracy of biological materials, precisely because of wealth of natural resources contained in the biodiversity.”<sup>597</sup>

The richness of traditional environmental knowledge in cultural elements is visible in the totemic thinking in most of the communities in Africa. Totemic relationships bring together important worldviews that are needed today in the society as a common wisdom of communities for generations. The aspect of web of relatedness with one another, with nature and with the spiritual world, is a basic principle in totemism. The spiritual aspect of totemism, that has been disregarded for a long time by anthropologists, is a central component of African totemism. In Africa, the spiritual world is the highest authority and unites social connections between clan members and non-human members. Both the spiritual, human and non-human members form a big family of related members. So that when the clan member does wrong against another one, there is no “physical police” but

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<sup>595</sup> Wangari Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa* (New York, Pantheon Book, 2010), 172.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid., 174.

a “spiritual police” who sees everything at all times and at all places. The belief in the nearness and activeness of the spiritual world (God, spirits and ancestors) in the life of people binds spiritually the communal relationship within the totemic group. The human members are not only bound physically through blood relationship but simultaneously they are bound through spiritual bonds. Such spiritual bond exists between every member of the clan and their totems and this forms part of their sacred universe. This sacredness of relationships is at the centre of all ethics of the clan and of the tribe. And that is why the community is the source of individual morality. As the cultural anthropologist Richard Peterson stated that:

“In Africa, the community is imbued with certain bondedness. Bondedness entails respect, which in turn entails taking responsibility for one’s fellow human being, not as an atomized individual but as a member of a common fabric of life. Since life’s fabric is of one piece, connections within the fabric have to be maintained. If there is social or personal disharmony, or illness, something has become disconnected and needs restoration. Therefore, for the good of the whole, the responsibility to restore this broken connection falls on everyone.”<sup>598</sup>

The members of the totemic clan are bonded in brotherhood and sisterhood and guided by taboos and prohibitions as laws to foster good relationships among members. Human kinship is important to every member of the clan and nobody can be excluded. Everybody belongs to the clan, and everybody has totem. The sense of belonging and identity make people to feel accepted and at home in their clan. The clan shared the much or the little food they had. At the end, nobody got hungry alone or nobody got rich alone. Although people had individual property, each member, by the fact to be the member of the clan, was called to share in time of need with others. Every member, therefore, tried to bring the harmony in the clan. Totemic relationship and concern for one another enhanced the human ecology of each member of the clan. This totemic relationship was not secluded to one clan but was open to the members of other totem families of other clans. It was further open to the family totem and other totems related with the particular clan. What Catherine Laudine wrote about Australian Aborigines is also applicable to the Keiyo and to most of the African societies that “there is always an emphasis on the connection between the life of nature and the social life. All things are primarily conceived of in terms of their unity and this association is understood to be very deep so that the person’s self-image incorporates a view of country as intimately linked with itself.”<sup>599</sup>

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<sup>598</sup> Richard B. Peterson, “Central African Voices on the Human Environment Relationship,” in Roger S. Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth; Religion, Nature, Environment*, 169.

<sup>599</sup> Catherine Laudine. *Aboriginal Environmental Knowledge* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 103.

To understand this relationship, one should approach it from the relational perspective. If it would be analysed from the science point of view, there is high possibility of not grasping its meaning, and might end up with a wrong conclusion. Totems, totemic law, totemic relationships, totemic clan, totemic land, forms the corpus of traditional environmental knowledge of the community. It is a common wisdom of a particular society that cannot be separated from the bearer and codified into a definition. That is why it was extremely difficult to find the universal definition of totemism and many other traditional knowledge terms. Marie Battiste and James Youngblood Henderson challenge the Eurocentric system of thought who try to understand Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage from their own perspective. For them:

“The Eurocentric strategy of universal definitions and absolute knowledge has made its scholarship unable to know and respect Indigenous Knowledge and heritage. To attempt to evaluate indigenous world views in absolute and universal terms is irrational. Using European centric analysis, one cannot make rational choices among conflicting worldviews, especially those held by others. No worldview describes an ecology more accurately than others do. All worldviews describe some parts of the ecology completely, though in their own way. No worldview has the power to describe the entire universe.”<sup>600</sup>

Therefore, it is easier to understand totemism from the perspective of the Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Although it is rational and scientific as stated earlier, it differs from the Western science:

“Traditional ecological knowledge is highly localized and it is social. Its focus is the web of relationships between humans, animals, plants, natural forces, spirits, and land forms in particular locality, as opposed to the discovery of universal ‘laws.’ It is the original knowledge of the indigenous people. Indigenous people have accumulated extraordinarily complex models of species interactions over centuries within very small geographical areas. And they are reluctant to generalize beyond their direct fields of experience.”<sup>601</sup>

Totemism has been a problem because of the attempt to define, to generalize, and to theorize it. This was one of the cause of misunderstanding and at the end, the issue was thrown away as unscientific because it never fitted to the natural science and the thought system. But to be better understood, totemism should be examined from the perspective of ethno-science or traditional knowledge. In the age of multiculturalism, many of scholars, like Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Joao Arriscado Nunes and Maria Paula Meneses, are realising the possibility of existence of other knowledge beyond Northern epistemologies. There is a great need of ecology of knowledge that democratizes and decolonises science:

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<sup>600</sup> Marie Battiste and James Youngblood Henderson, *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: A Global Challenge*, 38.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.



“The transition from the monoculture of scientific knowledge to the ecology of knowledges will be difficult since its success is concurrent with that of other transitions pointing towards post-capitalist horizons of radical democracy and the decolonization of power and knowledge. One way of describing this process is as the replacement of knowledge-as-regulation by knowledge-as-emancipation. Knowledge-as-regulation knows through a trajectory that goes from ignorance, regarded as disorder, to knowledge, described as order, while knowledge-as-emancipation knows through a trajectory that leads from ignorance, conceived of as colonialism, to knowledge conceived of as solidarity.”<sup>602</sup>

The scholars of indigenous community members should research and expose the rich cultural knowledge of each community and even try to compare it with other communities in the world. The indigenous knowledge has also elements of universality or similarity with other knowledge in the wider neighbourhood. As for totemism, it has its particularity in every environment and group of people, but when taken generally, there are also similarities with other totemic societies. Battiste and Henderson cite the famous American native scholar, Gregory Cajete who has been trying to reconcile the indigenous knowledge and natural science. For Battiste and Henderson, despite differences, Cajete sees the connectedness and similarities among indigenous through system in that:

“Mutual relationship exists among all forces and forms in the natural world: animals, plants, humans, celestial bodies, spirits, and natural forces. Indigenous peoples can manipulate natural phenomena through the application of appropriate practical and ritualistic knowledge. In turn, natural phenomena, forces, and other living things can affect humans. Everything affects everything else.”<sup>603</sup>

The lack of this basic, common sense wisdom of understanding the interconnectedness between everything within a healthy environment has affected psychological health of the people. For a healthy ecology, human beings and non-human world need to live in a harmonious relationship. Disharmony brings stress and sickness while harmony brings physical and mental health. But we have to know that:

“Harmony is dynamic and multidimensional balancing of interrelationships in their ecologies. Disturbing these interrelationships creates disharmony; balance is restored by applying appropriate actions and knowledge. Thus, knowing the complex natures of natural forces and their interrelationships is an important context of indigenous knowledge and heritage.”<sup>604</sup>

The new understanding of totemism is one of many traditional knowledges in the indigenous communities, that brings back healthy relationships with one another and with the natural world for a healthy humanity and a healthy environment.

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<sup>602</sup> Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Another Knowledge is Possible: Beyond Northern Epistemologies*, (London: Verso, 2008), li.

<sup>603</sup> Battiste and Henderson, *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage*: 43.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

### 5.2.3. *Totemism and Eco-therapy*

#### 5.2.3.1. Ecology and Mental Health

Since the time of industrialization, development meant mercilessly using nature for developing and furthering human endeavours. The overstressing of economic productivity in the world as the only economic indicator of development is having a great impact on the psychological health of the people. Researchers are now finding out that there is a close link between economic productivity, mental health, and the natural environment. A healthy mind and a healthy environment are the elements promoting a high productivity of an individual. The opposite is a bad natural environment bringing unhealthy individual and subsequently a low productivity. Human beings are by nature healthy when they live in interconnection with the natural environment. The stress on economic productivity in modern societies has created an unhealthy environment not only outside of ecosystem but also in the internal mental ecosystem. Leonardo Boff sees the bad internal mental ecosystem as the cause of all destructive habits of human beings that we are experiencing. For him “the present situation of the world (atmospheric pollution, soil contamination, the poverty of two-thirds of humans, and so forth) reveals the state of the human mind or, rather, psyche. We are sick within. Just as there is an external ecology (ecosystems in state of equilibrium or disequilibrium), so there is internal ecology.”<sup>605</sup> The economically aggressive human being that would wish to utilize nature maximally without replenishing it, is a sign of human irresponsibility. The modern society has stressed the limitless economic growth, the limitless profit maximization mission that has brought not only ecological imbalance but also mental imbalance. This mental imbalance is visible in the developing countries as they try to catch up with the so called developed countries. With this rush for fast economic development, the developing countries are moving fast away from their traditional roots of interconnectedness with nature. The totemic view of the universe is disappearing very fast in their minds and being replaced with a “capitalists mind” that see everything from a perspective of individual ownership and utility. “The instinct of ownership is exaggerated and wrongly emphasized so that the accumulation of material goods becomes a virtue, and work is presented only as production of wealth. In the technological age, our psyches are invaded by inanimate

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<sup>605</sup> Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, 32.

objects without any human reference. These objects create loneliness.”<sup>606</sup> This mental and physical loneliness is a problem in both developed and developing worlds. The movement away from the kinship with nature to only tarmac, only buildings, and objects of development and technology has shown that it has mental health repercussion on the individual. The aggressiveness and fundamentalism, we are experiencing in the present world, has in a big way its origin in the mental sickness of our times. The awareness of this state of affairs of our times has led to research that try to rediscover the mental healthiness of good relationship with nature:

“Mental ecology tries to recover the original state of maimed human intimacy, and to value and love nature. It tries to develop the human capacity for celebration and conviviality, and to stress the news that all human beings bear in their very presence, in their relations to the whole environment, with all the potentiality of emotions suffused with wonder at the universe contemplated in all its complexity, majesty, and grandeur.”<sup>607</sup>

The mind and the worldview of the present times has to be changed. There is a great need of a paradigm change of human worldview. There is a need for a positive psychic energy that counteracts and challenges the existence and the contradictions of our dualistic, macho, and consumerist culture and promotes the development of the magical, shamanistic, totemic dimensions of our minds.<sup>608</sup> This type of minds sees nature in an interconnected way and this is not only healthy for the mind but also for nature. We, therefore, need a change of the mind so that we can bring a positive change in the relationship between humankind and nature. The relationship that was obvious among the indigenous people but which is disappearing since the start of industrialisation and radical secularization process. The results are evident in the praxis of psychotherapists who are healing the stressed patients with the natural healing methods, i.e. teaching people how to live in harmony with nature.

#### 5.2.3.2. Totemism and Indigenous Ecotherapy

The rediscovery of totemism as kinship with nature, and with one another comes in the time that psychotherapists are rediscovering the healing powers of the natural world. Psychology has been an important theme for totemism since the book of Sigmund Freud *Totem and Taboo* that considered totemism from a psychological perspective. Totemism was understood by Freud as psychological condition of the primitives that stems from the

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<sup>606</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>608</sup> See *ibid.*,35.

primal parricide which he related to Oedipus complex. The modern understanding of totemism as kinship with nature brings back again the psychological perspective of totemism. Totemism is a psychological relationship with natural world, as an individual and as a group. So, at the beginning there was no primal murder as Freud suggests but more a primal relationship with nature. There has been a psychological kinship with the natural world. The relatedness and kinship between human beings and the natural world has brought an idea of original web of relations that formed central part of the psychological development of humans. Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931) described it poetically that:

“All things are in this creation exist with you and all things are in you. There is no border between you and the closest things and there is no distance between you and the furthest things. In all things from the lowest to the loftiest, from smallest to the greatest are within you as equal things. In one atom are found all elements of the earth, in one motion of the mind are found all motions of the laws of existence. In one drop of water are found the secrets of all endless oceans. In one aspect of you are found all aspects of existence.”<sup>609</sup>

It is this interconnectedness that psychotherapy is discovering through the ecotherapy with the basic belief that people are part of the big web of life and that our psyche is deeply connected to our environment. This interconnectedness had been taken for granted over a long period of time until recently when people became aware of losing contact with their environment. The totemic relationship with the environment has been a natural ecotherapy among the indigenous communities. Totemism is the old way of being related with the environment which ecotherapy now uses for healing and bringing harmony in the person. A new discovery of the modern times is that the harmony with nature is healthy. The research on the brain by Roger Wolcott Sperry (1913-1994) revealed the existence of two parts of brain: the right and the left side. Sperry wrote that he “saw human brain as comprising literally specialized and complementary realms of consciousness and cognition.”<sup>610</sup> The two realms that has been named the left and the right side of the mind. George Chryssides, in his study of religion observes that one part of the brain has been overstressed. For him:

“Western sciences proceed by means of empirical observation, logic, hypothesis testing and methods of reasoning which are often attributed to the ‘left side of the brain,’ New Age teachings suggest that over the centuries our scientifically dominated cultures have neglected the more intuitive aspects of the mind. Consequently, New Age ideas tend to utilize the ‘brains right hand side’ emphasising intuition, creativity, imagination,

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<sup>609</sup> K. Gibran, “Secrets of the Heart” in M.L Wolf (ed.), *A treasury of Kahlil Gibran* (New York: Citadel Press, 1947), 140.

<sup>610</sup> Colwyn Trevarthen, “Roger W. Sperry (1913-1994)” in *Trends in Neuroscience* 17, no.10 (1994): 403, accessed 15.03.2017, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247109890\\_Roger\\_W\\_Sperry\\_1913-1994](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247109890_Roger_W_Sperry_1913-1994)

compassion, healing and so forth. This change of emphasis is part driven from dissatisfaction with the traditional scientific ways of looking at the world.”<sup>611</sup>

For a long time, the traditional scientific worldview has seen religion as irrational endeavour improper to match one to one with the schema of scientific logic. However, the holistic nursing which includes all nursing practices related to the healing of the whole person as its goal focuses on the whole person.<sup>612</sup> The Western clinical medicine which has proven to be successful in treating diseases, has become aware that the healing process requires much more than conventional western medicine may give. The holistic nursing is bringing a new idea of considering the person as a complex with mind, body, spirit, emotions, all in a web with the environment. So, to be healthy and alive, as Jürgen Moltmann stresses, means:

“Existing in relationships with other people and things. Life is communication in communion. Moreover, conversely, isolation and lack of relationships mean death of all living things and dissolution even of elementary particles. So, if we want to understand what is real as real, and what is living as living, we have to know its own primal individual community, in its relationships, interconnection and surroundings.”<sup>613</sup>

Holistic nursing through ecotherapy is rediscovering the healing nature of positive interconnectedness with oneself, others, environment, and with God. Totemism, which is kinship with nature brought this positive interconnectedness with nature into practice and, therefore, become a deepest indigenous wisdom that has perplexed scientific researchers of most early communities. In the present times, many people are missing this kinship with the natural world because they moved to cities or they changed their way of thinking. The surrounding of cement building and paved roads have disconnected people with nature and has created unhealthy mental development. The request for green towns is a modern trend because it has been proven that green parks and areas create a healthy habitat for humans. Just as Frances E. Kuo remarks, the healthiness and un-healthiness of this connection and disconnection with nature that:

“The access to nature, either it is in the form of bona fide natural areas or in bits or views of nature, impacts psychologically, as well as social functioning. Greater access to green views and green environments yields better cognitive functioning; more proactive, more effective patterns of life functioning; more self-discipline and more impulse control; greater mental health overall; and greater resilience in response to stressful life events. Less access to nature is linked to exacerbated attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms, more sadness and higher rates of clinical depression. People with less access to nature are more prone to stress and anxiety, as reflected not only by self-report but also measures of pulse

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<sup>611</sup> George D. Chryssides, *Exploring New Religions* (London: Cassell, 1999), 318-319.

<sup>612</sup> See American holistic Association, “what is holistic nursing,” accessed on 05.04.2017, <http://ahna.enoah.com/About-Us/What-is-Holistic-Nursing>

<sup>613</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 3.

rate, blood pressure and stress-related patterns of nervous system and endocrine system anxiety, as well as physician diagnosed anxiety disorders.”<sup>614</sup>

This has encouraged green movements and “green” approach to all human engagement. The healthy relationship with environment supports healthy human beings. Totemism consists of a very complex relationship with the different parts of nature. This relationship has not only a social but also a spiritual aspect. This new field is being explored under aspect of new totemic revival in the present times.

#### 5.2.4. *Totemism in Modern Anthropology*

After a long period of silence, totemism is coming back on the scene as a modern anthropological topic. Although totemism is not yet a central theme of modern anthropology, some scholars are revisiting it to understand it a new. Fiona Bowie,<sup>615</sup> a social anthropologist specializing in anthropology of religion at the Kings College, London, is one of those scholars. In her book, the *Anthropology of Religion*, she situates totemism and dream time within the complex web of relation between religion, culture and environment. She sees “an intimate connection between beliefs, rituals, social organization, cultural artefacts, a sense of history, and connection with the land among the native Australian peoples.”<sup>616</sup> According to Bowie “one of the ways in which the relationship between religion, culture, and environment has been studied is via the concept of totemism.”<sup>617</sup> She revisits the historical study of totemism from its early form of religion, then its transition into a mode of thought, and eventually its disappearance from the anthropological discussion. For her, Claude Lévi-Strauss “turned study of totemism on its head with his insistence that totemism should not be viewed as a form of religion, but as another example of symbolic classification.”<sup>618</sup> But by the fact that Bowie includes totemism in her book is a big step in modern anthropology. In her book, she stresses that study of “totemism can therefore promote a broader and more inclusive view of humanity.”<sup>619</sup> This is an indication that totemism is not yet a ‘dead’ academic topic.

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<sup>614</sup> Frances E. (MING) Kuo. *Parks and Other Green Environments: Essential Components of a Healthy Human Habitat*, National Recreation and Park Association, Research Series, 2010, 4, accessed on 15.03.2017, [http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications\\_and\\_Research/Research/Papers/MingKuo-Summary.PDF](http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/MingKuo-Summary.PDF)

<sup>615</sup> See her academic Profile, accessed on 18.04.2017, <https://kcl.academia.edu/FionaBowie>

<sup>616</sup> Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 107.

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

Philippe Descola is also among the modern anthropologists who have revisited totemism not only from the historical point of view but as a topic predestined for the present time. Professor Descola is a former student of Claude Lévi- Strauss, and now holds the chair of anthropology and is the head of the *Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale* at the *College de France*. He is also the professor at *École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*, the university where Emile Durkheim and Claude Lévi- Strauss studied and taught. He has written several books on human relationship with nature. In his book *Beyond Nature and Culture*, he revisits old historical themes. Descola made his field research among the Achuar people of Amazon area of Peru and Ecuador. By using structural analysis and phenomenological approach, he noticed four basic ontological regimes that are widely distributed in all continents: animism, totemism, naturalism and analogism. In the forward of this book, Marshall Sahlins stresses that, “each of these major ontologies is associated with specific ways of forming social collectives and characteristic moralities, as well as distinctive modes of knowing what there is.”<sup>620</sup> In the book, Descola points out the unity and relationship between nature and culture. Further, he proposes that “the anthropology of culture must be accompanied by the anthropology of nature that is open to that part of themselves and the world that human beings actualize and by means of which they objectivize themselves.”<sup>621</sup> Descola notices that among the indigenous people, unlike the modern Western people, nature and culture are closely related and that “plants and animals, rivers and rocks, meteors and seasons do not exist all together in an ontological niche defined by the absence of human beings.”<sup>622</sup> He, therefore, understands totemism and other three ontologies from this relational perspective between culture and nature. The fact that he singles out totemism as one of the ontologies in this interpersonal relational perspective between human beings and nature, gives totemism a new lifespan. According to Descola, totemism should not end by understanding it like Lévi-Strauss as only a sheer classificatory method but should be viewed “as ontology, a mode of identification, a schema for integrating experience.”<sup>623</sup> When it is understood as ontology then the dualism of nature - culture disappears and appears a shared relationship between nature and culture, and with other ontologies like animism. With this insight Descola and

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<sup>620</sup> Philippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), xiii.

<sup>621</sup> *Ibid.*, xx.

<sup>622</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>623</sup> Lucas, *The Vicissitudes of Totemism*, 161.

Lévi-Strauss present a new broader meaning to totemism that can be inspiring for further research and study, especially from the perspective of religion.

#### 5.2.5. *Totemism and the Rediscovery of Eco-spirituality*

In the ecologically conscious world of our present times, there is a new rediscovery of living world of nature that affects thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. The deep need to relate with creation physically and spiritually is becoming a new urge in the modern times especially as we gaze the ecological crisis of our time. Eco-spirituality revisits the spirituality of interconnectedness with nature, a spirituality that existed among the indigenous communities. Annalet van Schalkwyk notes that eco-spirituality is the:

“Direct consciousness and experience of sacred in ecology which serve as a sustained source of communities’ and individuals’ practical struggle for healing of earth’s ecology and for humanity’s sustainable living from earth’s resources. It is the consciousness and experience of the physical-spiritual interconnectedness between us and ecology.”<sup>624</sup>

When nature is seen from a holistic sacred perspective and not from a materialist and dualist perspective, it brings a new positive way of relating with it. This is a change from a strict separation between human beings and nature, science and religion, and between matter and spirit. The science of research through strict separation of identities has been overstressed so that the uniting factors have been lost. Eco-spirituality is bringing back the spirituality that connects all threads within the entire universe. Sallie McFague formulates the unity and differentiation in the universe that:

“The distinctive aspects of the common creation story pertinent to formation of an organic model of reality is the particular way both unity and differentiation are understood. It is a form of unity based on a common beginning and history, but one that resulted in highly complex networks of interrelationships and interdependencies among all life-forms and supporting systems on this planet. It is a form of differentiation that boggles the imagination with its seeming excess of species (hundreds of kinds of mosses, thousands of varieties of mushrooms) as well as numbers of individuals within species. The fecundity, variety, and radical individuation of life-forms seem from an anthropocentric perspective to be exorbitant and unnecessary.”<sup>625</sup>

The personal as well as the community response to the complexity of interrelationships and interdependence in the universe is amazement and awe. The human being which is also part of this organic system cannot comprehend everything. This complexity in the universe evokes a spirituality that is grounded in interrelationship with all. This spirituality arises from the awareness of complexity of interdependence and independence

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<sup>624</sup> Annalet van Schalkwyk, “Sacredness and Sustainability: Searching for Practical Ecospirituality.” in *Journal of Religion and Theology* 18(2011): 83, Accessed 06.04.2017, [http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/docserver/15743012/18/1-2/15743012\\_018\\_01-02\\_S05\\_text.pdf](http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/docserver/15743012/18/1-2/15743012_018_01-02_S05_text.pdf)

<sup>625</sup> Sallie McFague, *The Body of God, an Ecological Theology* (London: SCM Press, London,1993), 46.



in the universe that reflects the new views and new visions of the world. This vision involves the paradox of “unity of each with all, and the distinction of each from all.”<sup>626</sup> The unity and distinction, individuality and community, are not contradictory but belong to a big complex network. In this vision, human beings and all parts of creation will still retain their individuality within the community of relationships. And in this spirituality human being will realise that he is not the centre of creation, he “therefore must learn to live appropriately within the scheme of things.”<sup>627</sup> Despite being not the centre of creation, human beings have a special vocation to be stewards of life continuity on the earth and partners with God in solidarity with the oppressed. <sup>628</sup> Eco-spirituality is therefore a state of sacred relationship with nature and a mission to care for nature. The sacred relationship and the vocation for caring of nature could be achieved by an individual or by a group. Individual eco-spirituality evokes personal wonder of God that is immanent but also transcendent in his nature.

#### 5.2.6. *Totemism in Modern Religiosity*

Eco-spirituality underlines mainly the understanding of religion today. The spiritual qualities of natural world are opening a new way of being religious at the present times. The New Religious Movements has opened a pluralistic way of being religious. One of this way is the rediscovery of religious worldviews of indigenous people and repackaging it in order to find out elements that fit to the modern world. The new interest and romantic view of nature are entering the modern religiosity. There is a growing awareness of the religiousness of natural objects. Animals, birds and natural phenomena, seem now becoming the source of energy and power, and human beings are called to use these powers for their personal spiritual growth. Graham Harvey updates the old totemism, which was more an anthropological problem, to the new totemism as a meaningful engagement between human and other-than-human.<sup>629</sup> For him, “totemic clans should be defined not as groups of humans who use animals to think about their relational ontology, but as groups of persons that cross species boundaries to embrace more inclusive communities and seek the flourishing of all.”<sup>630</sup> The relationship stresses mutuality and flourishing of life between all species because human beings were always aware that they

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<sup>626</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>627</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>628</sup> See *ibid.*, 201.

<sup>629</sup> See Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World*, 168.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

can flourish only through a symbiotic relationship with nature and a reciprocal exchange of energy. Annie Pazzogna discovers that this exchange of energy between nature and human beings is beneficiary for personal good by relating to a personal totem. The core belief of that is that animals and nature are alive, and are protectors of life, nature and even human beings.<sup>631</sup> The indigenous people, by the fact that they live symbiotically with nature, have discovered the life and the energy that exist in nature. They learned to communicate and have communion with it. With time, this relationship with nature took religious dimensions, a view that is being rediscovered today especially by New Age Movements.

Lupa, who is a neo-shaman, artist, environmentalist and eco-psychologist, approaches totemism from a modern pluralistic and individualistic meaning. According to Lupa, there are many types of totemism, and everybody should choose an appropriate totem. She started a neo-pagan totemism which is part of the non-indigenous totemism. For her “animal totemism is a special being that compasses all qualities of a given species of animal, as opposed to individual animal spirit.”<sup>632</sup> So, one might choose one’s totem, but the caution from Lupa is:

“Rather than trying to use totemism of another culture and make it fit your own, I encourage you to work with totems in a way that helps you to become more fully yourself, no matter where you’re coming from. This includes not only asking totems for help with self-improvement but also approaching them in a way that is most comfortable for you, respecting who you are and your life experience.”<sup>633</sup>

Therefore, there is a new trend in the understanding of totemism, the new totemism with the neo-pagan worldview. This approach creates a religious totemism that bonds an individual with part of nature for a holistic growth, a new field that is increasing with the growth of neo-paganism in the modern society. There are many books on kinship with nature that fits in to the modern totemism.<sup>634</sup> Tamarack Song<sup>635</sup> is among the group of

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<sup>631</sup> See Annie Pazzogna, Totem, Praxishandbuch der Indianischen Krafttiere und Schutzpflanzen (Engerda: Arun, 2002),13.

<sup>632</sup> Lupa, *New Paths to Animal Totems, Three Alternative Approaches to Creating your Own Totemism* (Woodbury Minn.: Llewellyn Worldwide,2012), 267. <https://www.amazon.com/New-Paths-Animal-Totems-Alternative/dp/0738733377>

<sup>633</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>634</sup> See accessed 17.04.2017,[https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/animal-totems\\_](https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/animal-totems_), It shows many books that touch on the relationship between human beings, plants and animals that is considered by modern writers as totemic relationship.

<sup>635</sup> Tamarack Song has written several books and novels on the interrelationship between human beings and nature. He derives is source of knowledge from the old Ojibwa thinking. Apart from *Becoming Nature*, some of his books include *Entering the Mind of the Tracker* 2013, *Song of the Heart* 2011, *Whispers of the Ancient* 2010, and the *Journey of the Ancient Self* 1994. For more on his biography see <http://tamaracksong.org>.

modern writers who reconnect with nature to find out many secrets hidden in the natural world. His book *Becoming Nature*, makes it clear that to know nature is to become part of nature, and fail to know nature is to remain an outsider and observer.<sup>636</sup> According to him, nature cannot be learned through intelligent study and research but through intrinsic connecting with the heart and using intuitive and imaginative senses. He sees that this knowing goes beyond reasoning as a primal inheritance that originates from our nature because we are part of nature. “The truth is that our nature is Nature: Every cell and organ in our bodies has been honed over millennia to function best in the Natural Realm. Genetic memories are imprinted in our DNA - we know how to move and see and speak like a Native in the same way that a Robin knows how to build a nest and a Wolf knows how to howl.”<sup>637</sup> For Song, through intuitive and imaginative knowing we become part of nature and this helps us in the transformation of our lives because by becoming nature we shall know our deep selves. This knowledge of deep self can be achieved by becoming part of nature and living in kinship with all nature.

The state of reconnection with nature will enable us to learn our true nature. Song makes a firm affirmation that:

“When we are brother and sister to Birds and Trees, we see how easy it is to treat them with kindness and respect, just as we do with our human family. As we take care of our human family’s home, we will want to take care of the forests kin’s home. We will naturally evolve a sustainable life style, consuming and polluting less as we relearn how to live in harmony with all of life.”<sup>638</sup>

For him, therefore, to know natural world means to know ourselves as a part of nature. The human being cannot be totally separated from nature, and if he does, nature will always remind him that he is part of the natural world because “every plant and animal is speaking all the time.”<sup>639</sup> Humanity should listen to them all the time. Now, in the time of ecological crisis humanity is forced to listen and be spiritually reconnected with nature. Modern religiosity lies within the process of learning to be spiritually connected with the natural world by seeing the divine presence in nature. The symbol of the world as a God’s body, as put forward by Sallie McFague, describes clearly this relationship between God and nature, pointing out that the world is not only God’s body but also a part of our human

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<sup>636</sup> See Tamarack Song, *Becoming Nature, Learning the Language of the Wild Animals and Plants* (Rochester, Vermont: Bear & Company Books, 2016), 1.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

nature.<sup>640</sup> We are part of nature. Susan Griffin express this human nature relationship poetically that, “we know ourselves to be made from this earth. We know this earth is made from our bodies. For we see ourselves. And we are nature. And we are nature seeing nature. We are nature with a concept of nature. Nature weeping. Nature speaking of nature to nature.”<sup>641</sup> Human beings are related to nature, and nature is composed of a variety of totems.

### 5.3. Challenges of Re-examination of Totemism

#### 5.3.1. *Totemism as a Topic with Extensive History*

Totemism has been a topic of discussion for generations. From what the traveller John Long wrote in his memoirs at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century up to the writing of Descola in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has passed a very long period of time. In that time, there have been different modes of taught and different approaches to understand totemism. As we have seen already in the historical discussion, totemism is a complex theme. And as the time progressed and many scholars have contributed their ideas the theme, totemism became even more complex. For example, the first group of ethnologists and anthropologists were evolutionists and so they understood totemism from an evolutionary perspective. At this time totemism was a stage in the human evolution of religion. And because totemism was found out among the primitive people, there was a presumption that totemism is the origin of religion. From this evolutionary perspective, the ethnologists tried to formulate a theory of totemism. A theory that was later discarded by non-evolutionist anthropologists like Boaz and Lévi-Strauss who brought a structural perspective on totemism. The modern examination of totemism from the perspective of ecology and environment is a new perspective that further complicates the totemic debate. After all, it is evident that every approach to understanding of totemism has been done from a particular perspective and within a particular context. Every generation has its problem to solve as well as its perspective guides for solving that problem. The first ethnologists and anthropologist made efforts to find out the origin and the nature of religion. “And they believed that contemporary primitive peoples represented to some degree surviving ancestral stages of human culture. From this perspective, it was also felt that the study of the most primitive

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<sup>640</sup> See McFague, *The Body of God, an Ecological Theology*, 159.

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

peoples would tend to reveal the origin of such parts of culture as religion, and that this would be tantamount to revealing its true, or basic, nature.”<sup>642</sup>

Apart from the change of perspective, also the change of academic discipline is challenging the understanding of totemism. This issue has been discussed by ethnologists, anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, ecologists, spiritualists, and many other academic and non-academic disciplines. Thus, the re-examination of totemism should take into consideration all these approaches which vary not only in form and content but also in the methodology. The researcher is confronted with a web of historical epochs, perspectives and methodologies. Despite this complexity, the re-examination of totemism could be done only through the prism of Keiyo ethnic community.

### 5.3.2. *Differences and Similarities in the Totemic Practice*

The research on totemism has been undertaken by the anthropologists in various communities of the world. One should just see the volumes of books and numbers of articles written about totemism in different communities in the world. A critical look at all these communities has resulted in a general conclusion that each of the groups had a different totemic understanding and practice. The difference between the totemic practices from one community to another has unsettled the scholars who tried to create a theory out of totemism. Between communities of America, Australia, Africa and Asia there are noticeable differences in the understanding and the practice of totemism. There are different types of totemism and this creates a very big challenge in the re-examination of totemism. When one tries to approach totemism from a global perspective and compares it cross-culturally, then one realises the tension between differences and similarities. Although the comparative method is an important anthropological approach and has several challenges, nevertheless, it is the only method which is enabling to generate a theory. The evolutionistic anthropologists of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century tried to generate a theory of totemism. They compared several totemic tribes and observed many similarities and, out of these similarities, they tried to form a theory. Later, the structural anthropologist, thanks to their fieldwork, have discovered that the differences overshadowed the similarities.

The challenge of revisiting totemism, therefore, is to find the modus how to balance the differences and similarities in the practice of totemism in different communities. When

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<sup>642</sup> Service, *A Century of Controversy*, 157.

differences or similarities of global totemism are unbalanced, then the results will be not objective. This is obvious that “the two aspects presuppose each other: if people were completely different, it would be impossible to register the differences; if people were entirely the same, there would be no point in comparing them.”<sup>643</sup> So there is a relation between similarity and difference because both are “generated by people who act on them and decide, using criteria of their own choosing to which class category or concept they conform.”<sup>644</sup> The global comparison of totemism is challenging but this challenge can be minimized when a researcher strikes a balance between difference and similarities. But despite being a challenge, it plays a central role in social sciences when comparing different cultures and societies. The conflict between the particularity and the globality of totemism has been historical and still brings modern tension. Generally, the Keiyo totemism is like other global totemic communities but it has also its own traits which have been not found in other communities.

### 5.3.3. *Totemism in a Changing Society*

Totemism is a cultural and dynamic process like any other cultural practice. It is not a static culture. Every culture is in a continuous process of change while confronting different challenges and different cultures. The practice and the understanding of totemism in all the researched cultures have undergone many changes in history and continues to change in the present. In every research on totemism, there is a challenge of historical change and dynamism in the practice of totemism. With the advent of globalisation, the speed of change has been increased and “the set that could be called ‘traditional knowledge’ is and has always been dynamic for any given culture and is not always an easy thing to measure or describe.”<sup>645</sup> The challenge of measuring and describing totemism is great because it is a changing cultural practice. This change can come from within the community or from outside the community. As the ethnic community grows and forms another clan, new totems are adopted to be the members of the new clan. Another example of internal change are wars and disagreements between

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<sup>643</sup> Jan J. de Wolf, “Conditions of comparison, a consideration of two anthropological traditions in the Netherlands” in Andre Gingrich, Richard G. Fox, *Anthropology by Comparison* (London, New York: Routledge,2002), 95.

<sup>644</sup> Ladislav Holy, “Introduction: Description, generalization and Comparison: two paradigms”, in Ladislav Holy (ed.), *Comparative Anthropology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell,1987), 16, as cited by Jan J. de Wolf, in *Anthropology by Comparison* 95.

<sup>645</sup> Roberta Anne Lee and et al, “Cultural Dynamism and Change, An example from the Federal States of Micronesia,” in *Economic Botany*, vol.55, no.1 (Jan., - Mar. 2001): 9.

families in a clan. This breaks the clan and a new totem is adopted for the breakaway clan. There are many reasons that brings change from within the clan and, hence, affecting the totemic thinking of the people. Communities and clans are not living isolated on islands; they live with other clans and other tribes. The contacts with other tribes or confrontation with another culture, like Christianity, have a great impact on the totemic society. All these is challenging for the study of totemism.

P. M. Worsley touches this pertinent theme in his article *Totemism in a Changing Society*. As he studied the totemic system of Wani NdiJaugwa of Australia, he saw the falsity of studying totemism as if it was a fixed order. For Worsley, it was false to study the communities practicing totemism and conceiving this in terms of a fixed order of Universe laid down in creation period, in fact totemism changes as society changes.<sup>646</sup> Societies undergo many changes and likewise the understanding of totems and the practice of totemism. This makes the study of totemism challenging and complex. These changes happen due to the change in internal and external environment. Worsley reiterates that:

“It is a relationship to a particular environment, not to Nature in abstract: the location of plants and animals, water supplies, etc., for example, is intimately known to the aborigine; his environment therefore has a selective interest for him. This selective or limited interest, is further conditioned by his way of life- the natural order around him is not a *tabula rasa* waiting to have some form of classification inscribed on it, and the aborigine creates his totemic categories in accordance with this primary interest, interest which arise from his hunting- and- collecting way of life and not from contemplation of ‘Nature’ in abstract.”<sup>647</sup>

Keiyo totems today cannot fit into the classical unchanging totemism but to a changed and changing totemism. But within the process of change this thesis is attempting to re-discover the values contained in the practice which, despite changes, has endured to the present.

#### **5.4. Keiyo Totems and Community Re-examined**

##### *5.4.1. Social Aspect of Keiyo Totemism*

Just like other communities in Kenya also the Keiyo community has been encountered with tremendous changes. Yet, despite all that, the social aspect of totemism is still there. Susan Chebet pessimistically comments on the totality of changes that, “the truth is that the future is going to be very different not only from the past but also the present: and this

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<sup>646</sup> See P.M. Worsley, “Totemism in a Changing Society”, in *American Anthropologist* 57, vol. 4 (1955): 851.

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*, 859.

uncertainty will affect individuals, communities and society at large.”<sup>648</sup> The change, as stated by Chebet and Dietz, is accurate but like any cultural change it is continuous and discontinuous. The Keiyo people are undergoing a rapid but not a total change, therefore it would be inaccurate to describe this only from the perspective of a discontinuity. In the process of change the Keiyo people have discarded or retained values that were relevant to them. Every generation was involved in a process of bringing modernity into the traditional beliefs.

Therefore, the process of change should be studied from the perspective of continuity and discontinuity. The Keiyo totemism demonstrates the process of change from the old to the new totemism by linking the past with the present. The old and the new totemism are different, yet related with each other. What has remained, though neither in a pure form nor very strong, is the social aspect of totemism.

From the very beginning, the leadership of the Keiyo people was not in a hand of a single person but the clan leader consisted of a group of elders<sup>649</sup>. This system has assured that Keiyo clans and clan totems build an important social cultural web. Still today there are locations named after their totems like *Kapsaniak* (bush baby), *Kaptargok* (guinea fowl), *Kapsogom* (hawk), and are inhabited by these clans. The social aspect of totemism is still very visible in the clans up to today. Totemism is, therefore, not a past social system but a present social system that is in the process of change just like many other cultural practices among the Keiyo people. Keiyo totems consist of several social elements that are very important to the people. The land and the clan are much attached to the totemic practice.

The pre-colonial land boundaries were laid following totems of a clan. This totemic group was a knit of social group that was further subdivided into families. The totemic names brought together related people in a clan. The totem, therefore, became a social symbol of relatives and their land. They were attached to their land that brought together the living relatives and the dead ancestors of the totem group. The totem animal became not only the social symbol of this bond with the land but also a symbol of this big family. During the colonization period, some of these totem boundaries were respected but some were not. That has led to inter-clan feuds and some of these are present up today, especially now with the hopes for oil discovery in the Keiyo area. Fred Kibor and Edwin

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<sup>648</sup> Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*, xi.

<sup>649</sup> See Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, 52.



Cheserek noted that “The hope for oil being discovered in Elgeyo/ Marakwet County has split local clans down the middle. The clans are now engaged in disputes over land [...] Clans that have been engaged in tussles in Keiyo, include *Kongot*, *Kayoi* and *Setek*. Each is laying claim to a strip of land along the Kerio River on the Keiyo side, where oil is believed to lie.”<sup>650</sup> The clans owned land and the boundaries were marked with boundary stones (*koita*) but with the advent of different colonial land boundaries, there has been confusion which boundary to follow.

The past generations of Keiyo people outlined the boundaries of totem or clan land, until the colonial boundaries appeared. One member of the clan stressed this that, “History is very clear on this. There must be respect to boundaries erected by our forefathers. The true owners of the land are known.”<sup>651</sup> The clash of boundaries is problematic in the present time. There is the confusion between historical totemic boundaries and the later colonial boundaries. Indeed, as Susan Chebet comments, “for vast majority of Africans, colonial rule meant a rapid disruption of their way of life and the denigration of local cultural norms.”<sup>652</sup> The re-examination of totemism in Keiyo involves the re-examination of totemic boundaries, a very thorny issue now, with historical roots. The re-examination of totemism might help Keiyo people to solve their land problems taking into consideration the historical issues. It would be helpful for Keiyo people to restore a personal relationship with their land for which they care and consider as their cultural inheritance and not as material good.

Another aspect of totemism, that is still very relevant is the importance of totemic clan as kinship with one another. It shows a web of relationships in the community. When one knows somebody’s totem then it is easy to know the line of relationship that exist. So as said earlier, totems are sign of individual identity in the web of clan and community relationships. Among the Keiyo people, it is only through totems that one can know relationships between clan members. Without totemic system, the Keiyo community social web relationship would be broken. That is why the totemic system is still very alive in the marriage related ceremonies because at this level the kinship ties between those who intend to marry becomes important. The marriage between relatives through blood

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<sup>650</sup> Fred Kibor, Edwin Cheserek, “Oil prospects fuel disputes between Elgeyo Marakwet clans.” *in Standard Media Newspaper*, September 28.2013, accessed 25.04.2017, <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/lifestyle/article/2000094421/oil-prospects-fuel-disputes-between-elgeyo-marakwet-clans>

<sup>651</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>652</sup> Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*, 134.

and through marriage is a taboo among the Keiyo people. Through the totemic system intermarriage between relatives will be avoided and bigger web of relationship will be created. It is through blood and marriage relationship that the clan and the community will relate with other clans and other communities. The social relationship will always be greater. The re-examination of totemism will encourage a realisation that relationship with one another is much bigger than the family. That one is born in a web of relationships and hence the sense of belonging. There is a problem of street children and street families in most of the towns in Kenya. This are “marginalized people who spend a great part of their lives on the street. They are the street children commonly referred to as the “*chokoras*” who consider the street to be the best place.”<sup>653</sup> As the social network and the feeling of belonging to a community is being broken down by new development, children and women get marginalized and end up on the streets in towns. The breakdown of the social system that has been assuring the living in a close relationship under one totem is one of the reasons why children and families are forced to live on streets. The present system stresses individualism and nuclear families and rejects the clan’s system where there was a place for everybody. The greater is the rupture of traditional social structures, the more marginalized children and women end up in Kenyan streets. The street children are a threat to security in many towns. They are being recruited by criminal gangs who terrorise other citizens. Actually, the authorities are trying to solve this serious and growing problem by means of the short term and inefficient methods, forgetting the root cause of the problem.

The zeal of re-examination of totemism is the restoring of traditional social structures on the clan level which will grant the togetherness and caring for each other. This is the way to solve problem of street children and homeless people, now and in the future. For the totemic community which is sharing of one totem, it is an obligation of all members of the clan for mutual help. This system of kinship does not permit to leave any member of the clan without help, especially children.

#### *5.4.2. Religious Aspect of Keiyo Totemism*

Totemism among the Keiyo might not be regarded as a system of religion but as a system of religious worldview. The religiosity of totemism has been a contentious point in the

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<sup>653</sup> Mark Abiero “Why more boys end up as street children than Girl.” *Standard Media Newspaper*, November 2016, accessed 25.04.2017, <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/ureport/story/2000222642/why-more-boys-end-up-on-the-as-street-children-than-the-girls>.

earlier study of totemism. This religious aspect was a motivation for many to study totemism, especially anthropologists. By many, totemism had been studied and searched under assumption to find out the origin of religion but few hoped to find out the religious feelings of people towards their totem. But when one goes to the root meaning of the word and understands it from the community of origin, then one will conclude that totemism has a religious element and this element cannot be separated from other cultural elements. This is because the religious element binds relationship with the spiritual world and the material world. Therefore, to revisit totemism is to revisit the sacredness of relationships in nature. The Keiyo people, apart from the social nature of totemism, consider totems as religious personalities that are alive and worth to be related with. This worldview of seeing the life generally as alive, and particularly as kin, has its origin in the religious consciousness of the people. The kinship with totems is therefore a religious bond that extends to the ancestor and to God. Totems are sacred 'persons'. The Keiyo clan relates, in a religious way, to a species of animals, plants or some phenomena of nature. All are united religiously in a bond of kinship with other members of the clan. This complies with the general African view of seeing the sacred which dwells in nature. Mbiti noted that this belief in a God who is Great Spirit, who is immaterial and non-physical but present in nature, exists in most African communities.<sup>654</sup> The Keiyo believed in a God who is spirit but also a God who is present in the kinship of people with one another and with nature. And that is why marriage and procreation always had a religious meaning. Totems fit into this religious understanding of nature in a special way because totems were considered to have a special religious quality that is special to the clan. This sacredness of nature and the sacredness of all totems are disappearing with the coming of secularization that is sweeping over the whole African continent. There is a process of secularization of nature what Philip Sherrard calls as 'desantification' of nature. For him it is a "process whereby the spiritual significance and understanding of the created world has been virtually banished from our minds, and we have come to look upon things and creatures as though they possessed no sacred or numinous quality."<sup>655</sup> This new worldview is being forced into the mentality of the indigenous people through international and national political, economical and educational programmes. The

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<sup>654</sup> See Mbiti, *The Concepts of God in Africa*, 25.

<sup>655</sup> Philip Sherrard, "Desanctification of Nature" in Barry McDonald, ed., *Seeing God Everywhere, Essays on Nature and the Sacred* (Bloomington Ind.: World Wisdom, 2003), 109.

disanctified worldview sees the “created world as composed of so many blind forces, essentially devoid of meaning, personality and grace, which may be investigated, used, manipulated and consumed for our own scientific or economic interest.”<sup>656</sup> This worldview, encouraged by the powerful presence of media, is an ambivalent worldview for the local community.

“It has led us to see the world only as so much secularized or desacralized material, with the consequence that we have ruptured the organic links and spiritual equilibrium between man and nature, and have restricted religion more and more to the privacy of individual conscience or to concern for the beyond of a transcendent God or of an individual salvation after earthly existence is over.”<sup>657</sup>

The secularisation process of the Keiyo totems therefore, aims to force Keiyo people to see their totems and other parts of nature as a source of economic wealth and prosperity. The re-examination of Keiyo totems is an effort to lead the modern Keiyo people, whose minds are in the process of secularization, to rediscover the valuable religious worldview of the past generations contained in totemic view of the universe. This view will help the Keiyo people to rediscover and to value their kinship with nature. The introduction of money economy in Africa, though with some benefits, have degraded the value of people and nature. Their value is now evaluated in money, the tendency that is in a process of transforming the main worldview. G.K. Omari identifies this African change and comments:

“African societies are now undergoing great changes due to the impact of Western value systems, especially as they are embodied in the Western economic systems. A money economy has not only altered social relations among people, but it has also affected people’s attitudes towards nature and natural resources. Because of the new values inculcated through Western education and religions like Christianity and Islam, people now see natural resources as objects for exploitation and profit making.”<sup>658</sup>

These changes are causing ecological crisis in the communities. The re-examination of the Keiyo totems aims to explain that despite the money economy, the communities should care for the environment for a religious reason. The Keiyo totem is one of many sacred members of the Keiyo community. African totemic spirituality, having its base in the indigenous African religions, is a big asset for the care of environment because:

“The reverence of Africans towards nature and natural places was a religious attitude and practice which, while it developed around the religious thought and history of a particular social group, indirectly served other social functions in the whole community. In the case of shrines and initiation rites centers, taboos developed around the destruction of trees, shrubs, and the sacred places themselves. The forests, certain kinds of trees, animals, and sources of water were preserved in the name of religion.”<sup>659</sup>

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<sup>656</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>658</sup> G.K Omari, “Traditional African Land Ethics,” in *Ethics of Environment & Development*, 171.

<sup>659</sup> Ibid., 169.

The rich and ecologically friendly culture should not be thrown away in the name of modernization and development but should be wisely introduced into the process of modernization. To be modern and developed does not mean to reject the cultural base. Instead, a true modernization and a sustainable development means to combine the positive values from both, traditional culture and modern development, and use these in the service of humanity. The present approach of replacing cultural values with imported values, pretending that modern is equal with good, will result in an unsustainable development, and more so in a social destruction. The Keiyo people and most of the African communities do not need just any form of development but they need a sustainable development, atuned with the cultural practices of the people. Totemism is one of these important cultural systems that encourage kinship with one another, with nature and with God. When the totemic view of nature is inculcated into the deveopment process of the Keiyo people, then it will contribute to its sustainability.

#### 5.5. Resume

The present world is yearning for a better relationship between human beings and all parts of nature. The ecological problems of our time let us to realise the existence of a serious crisis of relationships in our world. This crisis has been created by human beings who failed to coexist with other parts of nature. Despite enormous progress in science, economy, political and religious issues, human beings have failed to invest in good sustainable relationships. A great propaganda has been done by national governments and international agencies about the need to care for environment, but this action has produced less fruitful results. As Rajni Kothari rightly notices, the intellectual and political efforts on environment are proving to be a classic case of ‘double speak’ and a lot of sophistry.<sup>660</sup> It is a double speak because on the one side the relevant authorities speak of the need to solve the crisis and on the other side there is no genuine action to solve the problem. This is because “environmentalism has been reduced to a technological fix, and as with all technological fixes, solutions are seen to lie once more in the hands of the manager technocrats.”<sup>661</sup> The environmental problems have been marked by technocrats as a rhetoric issue. The most of them wish to keep the status quo because it is profitable for today. The wars and environmental destruction are a profitable business to the privileged

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<sup>660</sup> See Rajni Kothari, “Environment, Technology, and Ethics,” *Ethics of Environment & Development*, 27.

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

groups of technocrats and managers who understand that the economic growth can be achieved through an intensive technology and excessive exploitation of nature, and sponsor this short-sighted attitude as the only right way of development. This has led to a divided world, the world where good relationship between human beings and nature has been broken. Kothari further stresses that; “the world in which we live is indeed very badly divided, but the divisions are more fundamental than those of ideology, or military or economic power. Perhaps there is something wrong with the basic model of life humankind has created in the modern age.”<sup>662</sup>

The re-examination of totemism is necessary especially in the communities like the Keiyo community who still practice totemism. This attempt is a search for solutions not only from modern scientific methods but also from the perspective of historical indigenous values. It is worth going back to the indigenous roots in order to learn from old the wisdom and to elaborate new directions and solutions in the time of crisis. The past is not only past; the past can also provide solutions for the present and future problems. Totemism as a traditional sacred, relational worldview is still relevant today and can be helpful in correcting and enriching the technocratic approach to the solving of today’s problems. This approach could only be successful if truly sustainable alternative models of development would be found. Totemism, therefore, offers a worldview that might be helpful to develop such alternative model. A model that starts at the local level (clan) and bring a holistic approach to ecological solutions. By the re-examination of totemism, we go back to history and search for ecological wisdom that can help modern generation to solve problems holistically. This research participates in the new approach to totemism from the Keiyo community perspective. But this is one of the many innovative approaches that are being done from anthropological, psychological, and pagan religious perspectives. Despite many challenges involved in this new approach from an old theme, one cannot fail to discover from the indigenous wisdom, an insight which can help the Keiyo community or other communities that still practice totemic worldviews. Just like the native Americans, the traditional Keiyo people:

“Share a reverence of nature as locus of Divine presence, a kinship with all forms of life, a vision of the Sky or Heaven as their father and Earth as their mother, a respect for the land, a sense of their guardianship of sacred places, a tradition of direct communion with various animals, experienced not only biologically but also as embodiments of celestial archetypes, and the like.”<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>662</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>663</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 209.

## CONCLUSION

The ecological challenges we are experiencing in the modern world, are a clear call for the humanity to think and to act anew. We cannot continue thinking and acting in the same way as we have been doing over the past centuries. Today, the ecological problems are about the existence or not existence of life on the planet earth. The path the world has been marching through under the flag of economic development and prosperity is accidentally a route leading to the ecological destruction. A blind belief in the market and the marketing as the only law in life is bringing ecological destructions in the modern world. As Jürgen Moltmann comments about the actual situation:

“The global marketing of everything and every service is much more than pure economics. It has become the all-embracing law of life. We have to become customers and consumers, whatever else we may be. The market has become the philosophy of life, the world religion, and for some people even ‘end history’. The marketing of everything destroys community at all levels, because people are weight up only according to their market value. They are judged by what they can perform or by what they can afford.”<sup>664</sup>

The worldview focussed on the economic aspects only is becoming obligatory in the new modernization process worldwide. This purely economic worldview of life is leading the world towards an ecological catastrophe. Therefore, we need a new approach to life and to nature. We need a paradigm shift to solve actual ecological problems. The worldviews which lead us to the ecological destruction must be critically evaluated and discarded.

Every academic discipline or field of study is called upon to search for the solutions and ways of making this earth a home for all; a good home for all humans either rich or poor, and for all living creatures and nature. In order to find out the right solution, we must search for an ecologically friendly worldview propagating the care for nature.

This thesis is a contribution to such an ecologically friendly worldview which originates from the indigenous traditional communities. The modern world may gradually adopt the worldview of these communities and learn to perceive the world differently. T. C. McLuhan stresses the connection of the past and the present and its positive contribution.

“The connection of the past and present within each culture has revealed a continuum of sacred beliefs that has sustained the traditions. Placing the cultures side by side exposes a commonality of themes that is illuminating. Juxtaposing knowledge and observations from diverse sources contributes to further knowing. The interaction of the information can lead to new ways of seeing and perceiving.”<sup>665</sup>

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<sup>664</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 153.

<sup>665</sup> McLuhan, *The Way of the Earth*, 19.

Totemism is one of the sacred and social worldviews of traditional societies. Existing over centuries, this worldview has survived until the present time. It is a worldview that perceives nature as a relative of a group of people. The root meaning of the word totem is “my relative”, “my friend” or “my sister”. And based on this simple understanding, the scholars tried to create a great theory about totemism.

The historical debate on totemism shows how the totemic discussion has been progressing, from John McLennan who saw it as a stage of evolution of early human beings and the beginning of early religion, to Claude Lévi-Strauss who saw it as an illusion. Meantime, the totemic phenomena had raised vivid discussions among many disciplines of study, across the continents. As a result of the discovery of similarities between totemic phenomena in different parts of the world, the scholars were motivated to intensify the studies on the meaning and the origin of totemism. The research was expanded worldwide, from Algonquin tribes in the North and the South America, to the Aborigine tribes in Australia, and further to Africa. The growing interest in totemism encouraged for new research and the generated resource material was so vast that could not be analysed thoroughly, what made impossible to come to the conclusion on the meaning of totemism. At the end, the effect of an “academic fatigue” overshadowed the subject of totemism. The article of Aborigine anthropologist Lester R. Hiatt (1931-2008), *Totemism Tomorrow: The Future of an Illusion* (1969), revived the dead end of totemic discussion of Lévi-Strauss, and gave incentive to undertake the study on understanding totemism out of the evolutionary frame work. His approach was to “maintain a realistic and pluralistic position, against a form of intellectual monism that seeks to reduce cognitive, conative, and affective complexes to modes of thought.”<sup>666</sup> The pluralistic phenomena of totemism in different parts of the world exposed its differences and similarities. Despite the differences, there is visible a common pattern for all forms of totemism among indigenous communities. This pattern helps us to revisit totemic interrelationship between totemic phenomena in different traditional cultures of the world. But like any scholarly work, it must start from a standpoint. This thesis is focused mainly on totemism in the Keiyo community, the main area of research.

The existence of totemic phenomena among the Keiyo ethnic community today has been proven and encouraged the author of this thesis to further research on the Keiyo totemism and its relevance to the present time. This study has revealed that generally the Keiyo

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<sup>666</sup> L. R. Hiatt, “Totemism Tomorrow: The Future of an Illusion ” in *Mankind*, Vol.7, No.2 (1969), 93.



ethnic community still have the totemic system that is of a social and of a religious nature. The results of this research support the assumption that totemism is not a “dead” theme of the past. Totemism is still present among the Keiyo and other Kalenjin sub-tribes. The Keiyo totemism presents itself as a part of the overall complex network of cultural practices. A better understanding of the Keiyo totemism can be attained under an aspect of the general cultural matrix which is complex and of very secretive nature. The current study could, therefore, only examine what is in a public domain. The Keiyo totemism promotes the kinship between the members within the same clan, with other clans, and with their totems which are animals and objects of nature. When comparing totemism between the Keiyo, the Marakwet and the Nandi clans, who all belong to the Kalenjin tribe, the differences and similarities between them were quite obvious. But what is common to all clans, is the aspect of kinship. The people who share one totem are related with one another and with their totem. They are brothers and sisters. Only from the perspective of kinship, it is possible to understand the Keiyo totemism. This relationship between people and their totems is not only social but also sacred. And this sacredness of the relationship between totem and the members of the clan is the most misunderstood part of totemism. The first scholars, like John McLennan, George Frazer and William Robertson Smith understood totemism as an early stage of religion. Later, the study of totemism, done analytically by A. A. Goldenweiser, delivered slight evidence on the totem worshipping especially among most of the African tribes.<sup>667</sup> He judged the religious side of totemism as very weak and of little religious value. He preferred to call the relationship between totem as objects and symbols of emotional value.<sup>668</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, on the other hand, saw totemism only as a logical classification of human thought process, a method of the savage tribes but of no religious meaning. The presence of religious element in totemism is a controversial topic. The study of the Keiyo totemism indicates the existence of religiosity in the relationship between the totem and the members of the clan; although some members of the clan have lost this important element of religious bond with their totems. For those who still possess this bond, like the bee clan, and the rain clan, totems are believed to be sacred to a particular clan.

But to better understand this idea, one should understand the Keiyo totemism from a broad perspective of an African understanding of the sacred. Among the Keiyo and other

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<sup>667</sup> See Goldenweiser, “Totemism: An Analytical Study,” 261.

<sup>668</sup> See *ibid.*, 274-275.

African communities, the sacred is the basis of relationship among the members of the community and their environment. There is a strong belief in the force or a spirit that unites the members of the clan with their totems. It is this vital force that is at the core of all relationships.

This sacred force in nature is the basis of the relational nature of people with their totems, because African communities consider nature as alive and sacred. The Malian writer and ethnologist Amadou Hampâté Bâ points out that this force is the source of existence and relationship that animates African cosmology:

“Black African man is born a believer. He does not need books of revelation to make him believe in the existence of the One Force, the All-Powerful source of existence and prime mover of all activities and motions of beings. He does not consider this Force to be outside of creatures- it is inside each being. It gives him life, and it watches over his development and his eventual procreation. Surrounded by a universe of the tangible and the visible-men, animals, plants, stars and so forth - African man has always perceived that in the depth of these beings and of these things there dwells an indescribable power that animates them.”<sup>669</sup>

This power has different names in Africa. The anthropologists called it a vital force or spirit. It is the force that unites human beings and other creatures and parts of nature into a one living whole. Human beings are a part of nature and the force unites all creatures. The most important role of humans on the earth is to live in a harmony with nature. That is why it has been so difficult for the anthropologists to separate totemism from animism. So, the kinship in the universe exists because all creatures share the same vital force. Most of the African communities believe that the origin of vital forces is God, and that makes every creature alive. Therefore, the African universe is a sacred arena. Prince Modupe, from Sousou Guinea, expresses precisely the core of the African thinking when he says, “a life to a tribal African is synonymous with a religious living. His beliefs come into play in the smallest detail of his life. We believe in one Supreme Being but we don’t visualize this being in the image of man. We feel this being as soul-force or spirit-energy manifesting itself in all life.”<sup>670</sup> Therefore, from this perspective totemism can be understood as a religious and at the same time as a social system; the both are inseparable. Thus, totemism forms a religious and social kinship between the clan and its totem. A great challenge now is to understand totemism from a Christian perspective. Nowadays, most communities in Africa are Christians, yet they still cherish their traditional beliefs;

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<sup>669</sup> Amadou Hampâté Bâ, *Aspects de la civilisation africaine* as quoted by McLuhan, *The Way of the Earth*, 338.

<sup>670</sup> Prince Modupe, *I was a Savage* (London: Museum Publishers, 1958), 27, as quoted by McLuhan, *The Way of the Earth*, 1994, 343.

and one of them is totemism. Can the totemic worldview contribute to a better understanding of Christianity for totemic communities?

The first scholar attempt to understand and to search for the presence of totemism in the Bible was done by William Robertson Smith. It was a courageous endeavour to painstakingly comb the Old Testament in search for the totemic traces. The study of Smith has revealed that the Old Testament which is the basis of Judaism, Christianity and Islamic religions, contains elements or relics of primitive Semitic religions. One of these relics is totemism. For W.R. Smith, the names of people and clans indicate on the existence of these totemic relics in the Old Testament. Despite his assertion, he pointed out that biblical religions are unique religions. Smith's research and findings that primitive religions and worldviews are present in the Old Testament were praised by African theologian Gillian Bediako. For her, the primitive religions and worldviews create the basis for the growth of other religions, also for the growth of Christianity in Africa. But when totemism is understood as kinship with one another and with nature, then it opens a better understanding of the Bible. The kinship theme is a central theme in the Bible. It begins with the kinship with God, proceeds through the creation in the Old Testament, and leads to a new kinship with God through the salvation in Jesus Christ. The kinship with God through creation and salvation means the kinship with one another and with the entire creation. We are all related, because God is our creator. This relatedness between all God's creatures has been subject of many theological pursuits of theologians. But for a long time, most theologians have secluded themselves to the issue of the relationship between God and human beings as the culmination of God's creation. They believed that theology must focus solely on human history with God. Human relationship with nature has never been a main theological topic. But many verses in the Bible, mention not only about God relationship with the human beings but also with nature. It is possible to discern the roots of Christian thought about nature.<sup>671</sup> The kinship with nature and with God could be an ecologically friendly motif that can be rediscovered anew in creation theology.

The advent of ecological crisis, including a crisis in relationship between human beings and nature, has created the trend of "back to nature" mentality. The world is rediscovering the indigenous ways of life as ecologically friendly. The new trend "back to nature" has

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<sup>671</sup> See Santmire, *The Trivial of Nature*, 13.

a positive impact on the traditional communities by encouraging them to cherish their own culture. Consequently, more research is expected to proceed in this field.

Totemism is one of these indigenous worldviews and knowledge that is being revisited in a modern religiosity. The rediscovery of vital energy that stems from good relationship with the natural world is at the centre of the new religiosity. This search for kinship with nature in the modern world is evident with the advent of a New Age and esoteric movements. The “Sacred Earth”<sup>672</sup> is becoming a catchword of many these eco-religious movements and discussions. We are reading again about the sacred forest, the sacred rivers, sacred trees and sacred animals. The rediscovery of indigenous worldviews and its evident benefits for the modern world goes over to traditional therapy, economics and medicine, and along with these grows the interest in totemism.

But as the industrialized world rediscovers the worth of indigenous ways of life, some indigenous people and the developing countries overstress economic development and industrialization. This mentality is damaging for their indigenous worldviews and their habitat. Most of the communities in developing countries sacrifice their sacred forest, sacred animals or sacred rivers on the altar of the development and productivity. The Kenya and in particular the Keiyo community are in this process of development that at the end might bring tragic results of ecological destruction. The developing countries and indigenous communities should not lose their environmentally friendly worldviews in the name of economic development. Otherwise, they might plunge into ecological crisis before they would comprehend the worth and importance of the sustainable development. This study is supportive for a growing need of rediscovering the ecologically friendly indigenous worldviews. This should be done by integrating not only environment as suggested by the green crusaders, but also considering the social and economic aspects as suggested by Pope Francis.<sup>673</sup> Totemism is not only about caring for nature as a relative but also about caring for other human beings as a relative.

Like any other worldview, totemism has its own limits and challenges. In the past, the anthropologists and psychologists stamped a negative image on totemism, as a savage primitive mentality. That is why nowadays totemism is a scary theme for the indigenous people who are trying to be modernized. The modernization project for them entails the

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<sup>672</sup> See Roger S. Gottlieb, “This Sacred Earth” 2004 which is a book that records a comprehensive overview of the relationship between religion, nature and environment.

<sup>673</sup> See *Laudato Si*, 137.

forsaking of the 'primitive and savage' worldviews and embracing the 'developed and modern' ways; a new way of life that seems to be much promising as advertised by the global media. To discard the negative image labelled on totemism in the past, and to enhance a positive image is an uphill task. Every community should study their culture; sieve out the bad and irrelevant tradition but maintain the good traditions that can be of help today. On the clan level, totemism is a small but valuable cell for the society. When the clans promote the kinship and the ethical demands towards their members and environment, then a big step forward would be achieved. The desire for big unions and allies at the national and international level should not hinder the local unity of people. The re-examination and better understanding of totemism on a local clan level among the Keiyo people would be a step in the right direction. Such step should be done also by other communities with the same totems and the same worldviews. This will be a great contribution in generating the good religious and social relationship between human beings and nature. The sacredness of these relationships among the indigenous communities assures a firm spiritual foundation for Christian theology and other religions. They might use it for creating a well-grounded, ecologically friendly, and understandable creation theology. Therefore, in the present time, totemism among the Keiyo community is a relevant cultural practice that would help to cement an appropriate holistic relationship with one another and with nature.

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## **ABSTRACT IN GERMAN**

Die anspruchsvollste Herausforderung im 21. Jahrhundert ist ökologisch. Es ist wichtig und tiefgründig, weil es die Existenz der Menschheit in Gegenwart und Zukunft in Frage stellt. Der Mensch lebt im Namen der fortschrittlichen Entwicklung auf Kosten der ökologischen Nachhaltigkeit gefährlich. Es gibt eine neue Erkenntnis, dass die Menschheit auf eine ökologische Katastrophe zusteuert, wenn der gegenwärtige Trend der Übernutzung der natürlichen Ressourcen beibehalten wird. Es gibt einen Ruf nach neuen Methoden und Ansätzen zur Lösung dieser globalen ökologischen Herausforderung. Wir beobachten sowohl globale intellektuelle als auch politische Bemühungen bei der Suche nach benötigten Lösungen für die große ökologische Herausforderung. Diese Studie beteiligt sich an dieser ernsthaften Suche der traditionellen Völker weltweit nach einem umweltfreundlichen Entwicklungsansatz. Der Autor dieser Arbeit greift das interessante Thema des Totemismus auf, ein Thema, das in den Diskussionen des späten 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts wichtig war, aber in unserer Zeit schnell in Vergessenheit geraten ist.

"Totemismus" ist ein komplexes Glaubenssystem indigener Völker, das eine bestimmte soziale und religiöse Verwandtschaftsbeziehung zwischen Teilen der Gemeinschaft, die Clans genannt werden, und natürlichen Objekten oder Tierarten (wie Wildtiere, Vögeln, Insekten usw.) wahrnimmt. Diese Verwandtschaft zwischen dem Clan und ihrem Totem kommt mit gegenseitigen Pflichten und Verantwortung. Das Thema des Totemismus war ein vieldiskutiertes Thema, aber auch das umstrittenste Thema auf dem Gebiet der Ethnologie und Anthropologie. Jede Generation und jedes Fach hat versucht, den Totemismus aus einer bestimmten Perspektive zu verstehen.

Trotz des früheren Interesses am Totemismus erforschte keine frühere Studie den Totemismus als Verbundenheit zwischen Natur und Mensch und als traditionelles Wissen der Ureinwohner. Der Autor dieser These wurde durch frühere evolutionistische, analytische und reduktionistische Annäherungen an den Totemismus herausgefordert, die den Totemismus falsch verstanden und falsch dargestellt haben. Dies hat dazu inspiriert, das Thema des Totemismus neu zu betrachten und zu erforschen und neu zu verstehen. Die Forschung konzentrierte sich auf die Keiyo-Ethnie in Kenia, ein Volk, das immer noch Totemismus praktiziert. Die zentrale Frage dieser Forschung war: Könnte eine traditionelle Denkweise und Strukturierung der sozialen Beziehungen innerhalb der Gemeinschaft und ihre Beziehung zur Natur mit Hilfe des totemistischen Systems in der

heutigen Zeit funktionieren; - trotz starker kultureller Veränderungen während des Modernisierungsprozesses durch die letzten Jahrzehnte? Durch Gruppen- und Einzelinterviews, offene und geschlossene Fragebögen und Teilnehmerbeobachtungen wurden Daten von Keiyo-Leuten gesammelt und mit der „Grounded Theory“ analysiert. Die Studie bot eine interessante Gelegenheit, unser Wissen über den Totemismus heute als eine Weltanschauung der Verwandtschaft untereinander und mit der Natur unter den Keiyo-Leuten zu erweitern. Eine Weltsicht, die bei der Lösung globaler Umweltprobleme auf Clan-Ebene relevant ist.

Die Gesamtstruktur dieser Studie besteht aus fünf Kapiteln. Kapitel 1 wird die komplexe Debatte über den Totemismus untersuchen, die mit John Mc Lennan im späten 19. Jahrhundert begann. Er verstand Totemismus als ein weltweites Phänomen primitiver Gesellschaften und schloss daraus, dass der Totemismus die erste Stufe der primitiven Religion war, die mit der Vergötterung von Tieren, Pflanzen und natürliche Gegenständen verbunden ist. Nach einer langen Debatte in ethnologischen und anthropologischen Zyklen wurde diese Hypothese dekonstruiert. Dies wurde besonders von Claude Lévi-Strauss gemacht. Mit analytischer und struktureller Methode lehnte er den Ansatz der sozialen Evolution ab, der in der Diskussion über den Totemismus verwendet wurde. Er sah den Totemismus als eine Konstruktion der viktorianischen Anthropologen. Für ihn ist der Totemismus nichts anderes als ein primitives Klassifikationswerkzeug, eine Form konkreter primitiver Intellektualität, eine selbstgemachte Wissenschaft (*Bricolage*) der Klassifizierung durch natürliche Umwelt. Mit diesem Ansatz wurde der Totemismus in akademischen Kreisen teilweise vergessen. Der Autor dieser Studie greift den Totemismus neu auf, insbesondere in dieser Zeit der ökologischen Herausforderungen.

Das zweite Kapitel versteht Totemismus aus afrikanischer Perspektive. Der Totemismus ist ein untrennbarer Teil des traditionellen Verständnisses des Religiösen. Um den Totemismus zu verstehen, sollte man daher die religiöse Weltanschauung der Urbevölkerung verstehen. Die Gelehrten und Philosophen der indigenen Religionen betrachten dies als eine wichtige Weltanschauung der meisten afrikanischen Volksgruppen. Die afrikanischen Totems sind ein integraler Bestandteil der afrikanischen philosophischen und religiösen Weltanschauung. Es lohnt sich daher, den Totemismus als Teil der indigenen Verwandtschaft mit der Natur zu verstehen.

Der dritte Abschnitt präsentiert die Ergebnisse, der in der Keiyo-Volksgruppe durchgeführten Forschung. Die Keiyo-Volksgruppe, auf die sich diese Dissertation

konzentriert, hat eine totemistische Weltvorstellung. In der Sprache des Keiyo-Volkes heißt Totem *tiondo*, was wörtlich übersetzt Tier bedeutet. Tatsächlich wird die wahre Bedeutung von *tiondo* nicht nur auf die Tiere, sondern auch auf andere natürliche Objekte angewendet. Es gibt eine große Vielfalt an Tieren und Naturerscheinungen. Große Tiere wie Elefanten bis zu sehr kleinen wie Safariameisen; Naturerscheinungen von Sonne bis Blitz und viele von ihnen werden als Totem verwendet. Es gibt mehr als dreißig Arten von Totems unter den sechzehn Clans der Keiyo. Wenige Clans haben nur ein Totem, aber die Mehrheit besitzt mehr als ein Totem. Die Feldforschung fand heraus, dass Totems immer noch wichtige religiöse und soziale Identität Symbole einzelner Clanmitglieder und des gesamten Clans sind. Totems verbinden die Keiyo Menschen religiös und sozial mit ihren Clan-Mitgliedern und mit ihrer natürlichen Umgebung.

Das vierte Kapitel versucht die theologische Inkulturation des Totemismus. Um dies zu tun, wird Totemismus als Verwandtschaft mit der Schöpfung Gottes verstanden. Im Totemismus liegt der Schwerpunkt auf einer Verwandtschaft zwischen der menschlichen Welt und der nichtmenschlichen Welt. Dies passt in die Theologie der Schöpfung, die die Beziehung zwischen Gott, Menschen und der natürlichen Welt betont. Dieses Thema ist zentral in der Bibel und in der Lehre der Kirche und der Theologen. Es konzentriert sich auf Beziehungs-Theologie zwischen allen Geschöpfen Gottes. Das Leben des heiligen Franziskus von Assisi und Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, sind das Beispiel für das Verständnis der Theologie der Schöpfung aus einer vernetzten Perspektive. Diese Perspektive fördert ein neues Verständnis der Schöpfung aus einer relationalen Perspektive, einer Perspektive, die in unserer Zeit der ökologischen Krise benötigt wird. Das letzte Kapitel öffnet die neuen Bereiche, in denen der Totemismus heute wieder aufgegriffen wird. Es gibt eine neue Wiederentdeckung des Totemismus in Form eines "neuen Totemismus". Die ökologische Krise, die eine Beziehungskrise in der modernen Welt darstellt, hat dazu geführt, dass die Menschen zu den indigenen Weltanschauungen zurückkehren, die umweltfreundlich sind. Als indigenes Wissen informiert der Totemismus über Öko-Spiritualität und Vernetzung im Universum. Die Welt von heute entdeckt die indigenen Lebensweisen als ökologie-freundlich wieder. Der neue Trend "Zurück zur Natur" wirkt sich positiv auf die traditionellen Völker aus, indem er sie ermutigt, ihre eigene Kultur zu pflegen. Folglich wird auf diesem Gebiet mehr Forschung erwartet. Der Totemismus ist eine dieser indigenen Weltanschauungen und Erkenntnisse, die in einer modernen Religiosität wieder aufgegriffen werden.

Während die Welt den Wert indigener Lebensformen wiederentdeckt, überschätzen einige Entwicklungsländer den rücksichtslosen wirtschaftlichen Fortschritt. Diese Mentalität schädigt die indigene Weltanschauung und ihren Lebensraum. Die meisten Entwicklungsländern opfern ihren heiligen Wald, die heiligen Tiere oder heiligen Flüsse auf dem Altar der Entwicklung und Produktivität. Die Entwicklungsländer und indigenen Völker sollten ihre umweltfreundlichen Weltanschauungen nicht im Namen des wirtschaftlichen Fortschritts verlieren. Diese Studie schließt sich daher der Neuentdeckung ihrer traditionellen Weltanschauungen und deren Anpassung an unserer Zeit an. Die erneute Untersuchung und ein besseres Verständnis des Totemismus werden die Verwandtschaft zwischen Mensch und Natur fördern.

# **ATTACHEMENT OF FIELDWORK REPORT**





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# FIELDWORK RESEARCH REPORT- August-September 2014

Totemism Re-examined: A Study of Totems and their Relevance Today with Special  
Reference to the Keiyo Community in Kenya

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Totemism is an old anthropological topic that fascinated scientists in the 19th and 20th century. The Keiyo community is still a totemic community even after many changes in the 20th and 21st century. This was a challenge to do a field work among the Keiyo people, and to focus the research on the relevance of totems to the Keiyo tradition today. The aim of the research was to obtain the answer to the following question: Does traditional way of thinking and structuring of social relations within the community and the relationship with the environment using totemic systems of classification still have a place in Keiyo community after the severe cultural changes that have taken place in the process of modernization during the last decades? Furthermore, the task was to find out the present status of the Keiyo totems comparing to the neighbouring communities, and find out the differences and similarities between them. The field work data collection was done by means of qualitative interviews, closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires, and participants' observation. Hand in hand with data collection followed the data analysis based on Grounded Theory using an initial, focused, axial coding and theoretical coding. This research has been done in three steps: an initial coding, a focused coding, and an axial coding. The theoretical coding was omitted as not objective for the search of a theory of totemism.

## 2. INTERVIEWS

### 2.1. Introduction

Semi structured qualitative interviews were conducted and brought a lot of responses and discussions. The interviews were performed successfully in groups as well as in individual meetings. The flexible approach encouraged to an open dialog with the interviewees and helped to generate more information. The first group interview was a brainstorming with the Keiyo elders. The second one was meeting with individual elders from Keiyo, Marakwet, and Nandi clans. The last interview was performed with the individual Keiyo church leaders. Most of the interviews were conducted in the Keiyo language and memos were written in English. The brain storming interview with the elders was very successful as it involved the traditional method of learning and sharing the ideas in a group. There were six elders, eight listeners and one moderator. The elders became very informative and the participants made it lively by asking for explanation on many issues. The informants were very knowledgeable on the cultural issues. They gave many important data about the Keiyo community that cannot be found in any book on the Keiyo community. The interactional space was well set by the moderator who was an experienced leader in the community. The moderator guided the discussion in a very professional Keiyo way of talking, listening and asking question. The issues were discussed from the historical and the current perspective, most of the issues were essential to the lives of people. Great ideas were generated during discussions. The informants and participants set the pace and the tone of the discussion. At the end of the group interview, all were satisfied.

The individual interviews were also successful. The author visited each person in his home and took time for discussion, letting each interviewee set the pace and the ton of the interview. The interaction space in most cases was very conducive because interviewee was at his home and ready to share his deep cultural knowledge without fear. The interviews were done in the Kalenjin language, avoiding eventual misunderstanding and assuring that questions and answers were well understood by both parts. Most of the information was written down in short memos and later translated and edited in English.

## 2.2. Group Interview

On 28.08.2014 a brain storming session took place with six elders of the Keiyo community at Keiyo culture centre. Among the six senior elders were two women. There were also seven young men who participated actively in the discussion. The moderator was the chairman of the Keiyo cultural centre Mr. Joseph Kwambai. There was a vivid interaction and discussions on issues pertaining Keiyo culture and traditions. The main objectives of the group interview were to gather a general knowledge about the Keiyo culture.

Elders' group and the moderator

1. Mr. Chepseba Kendagor, age 80, from the Mooi—Soet clan
2. Mr. Kigen Kipsangut, age 90, from Saniak-Chereret clan
3. Mr. Ngurumah Stephen Kwambaiage, age 75, from Moi-Soet clan
4. Mr. Rotich Chesire, age 80, from Moi-Soet clan
5. Ms. Kimoi Kipkemoi, age 80, from Moi-Soet clan
6. Ms. Kabilo Kemboi, age 60, from Kobil clan
7. Mr. Kwambai Joseph, moderator, from the Kimoi-Soet clan.

Other participants

1. Francis Kigen, age 45, from Moi-Soet clan
2. Evans Kimutai, age 25,
3. Kenneth Arapsoimo, age 30
4. Felix Kipchirchir, age 18
5. Samuel Kigen, age 43
6. Paul Tarus
7. Ezekiel Likali
8. Amos Kiyieng

I. Brief History the Keiyo People	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keiyo is one of the many Kalenjin tribes.</li> <li>• Keiyo is both land and a language.</li> <li>• Location (<i>bororiet</i>)</li> <li>• Clan</li> <li>• Cluster of very close related families (<i>Oret</i>)</li> <li>• Keiyo history not clear</li> <li>• Totems-called also <i>tiondo</i> or <i>tiongik</i>. -into more than 30 totems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Keiyo people are part of the wide family of the Kalenjin people who include Tugen, Marakwet,</li> <li>• dispersed and came to Keiyo area.</li> <li>• The different clans entered Keiyo at different times and through different routes. They were few and the land was still big and so each searched for a good place to live and to take care of his animals. The first Keiyo people were foremost pastoralist and they practiced little farming at the <i>Mosop</i> (the Highlands). The Keiyo people have eight Age Sets and they use to circumcise both boys and girls to make them men and women. But these days the circumcision of girls has been illegalized by the Government and refused by the Christian church.</li> <li>• The teaching of traditions in Keiyo comes from the elders. Both men and women have the responsibility to pass good morals and teachings to the young generation.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keiyo entered Kerio Valley from different entry points.</li> <li>• pastoralists but they became later small-scale farmers after colonization</li> <li>• divided mainly to eight Age sets called <i>ibinwek</i> that were rotational or circular in nature</li> <li>• Elders are important</li> <li>• They Keiyo people love caring for cattle.</li> <li>• In Kerio Valley there are different species of plants, birds and animals and beautiful natural environment.</li> <li>• The elders were only men and formed the council of elders that made decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Keiyo lived in the Keiyo district and this covered the lower part until the Endo River (<i>Kewanin</i>), near the escarpment were people lived and through the forest to flat today Uasin Gishu district where they bordered the Maasai. When the Europeans came they were chased away from the highlands and they went to the small strip along the forest. After losing most of their animals because of lack of grass, they went and worked for the Europeans who had occupied their flat grazing field.</li> </ul>
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**II. Blessings and Curses**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blessings are important</li> <li>• Avoid curses as much as possible by following norms</li> <li>• Ancestors are members of the past, present and future community</li> <li>• Ancestors reward and punish</li> <li>• Elders will be ancestors soon.</li> <li>• Words from Elders can bless or curse</li> <li>• Respect for elders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keiyo in all they do they try in all possible ways to avoid curses. The blessing means to enjoy a life of health and prosperity in the community, the curses cause the opposite.</li> <li>• To get blessing one must always obey the norms and the laws of the community. God is the source of all blessings but also the source of punishment if someone acts against the norms of the community. The ancestors also played a big role in punishing of wrong doers of the community.</li> <li>• The power of words. – The Keiyo people believed in the power of words spoken by the elders and the weak members of the society. They could curse, and they could bless. Thus, the members are always encouraged to care for the elders to get blessing from them and to avoid any harm to the elders and the weak members of the community.</li> </ul>
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<b>III. Offerings and Sacrifices</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elders leaders in sacrificial rituals.</li> <li>• Sacrifice only during special occasions.</li> <li>• Everything in nature has sacred meaning that it is a holy place (<i>ole tilil</i>), some parts of nature were more sacred than other.</li> <li>• The places where sacrifice (<i>kapkoros</i>) was made were the most sacred places.</li> <li>• At <i>kapkoros</i> people offered sacrifice to God (Assis)</li> <li>• The sacred leaders (<i>bik chetililen ak kolibwob</i>), who are the elders of the elders, led the people in the sacrifice.</li> <li>• Rain totem (<i>Toiyoi ropta</i>) responsible to bring rain</li> <li>• Daily sacrifices by family elder</li> <li>• The Keiyo community had also blessings (<i>berur</i>) as a sacred function of the leaders of the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To bring blessing the elders of the community were always in a forefront to give offerings and sacrifice to God (<i>Asis Cheptalel</i>). In case of a calamity e.g. a sickness of people or of animals, the time of drought, and any other calamity that the community the elders used to go to the mountains, like Kibargoi, to offer sacrifice. The men offered sacrifice and the women brought the offerings. The men brought a sheep and honey on a top of the mountain to burn the sacrifice and to share part of the meat (<i>takateet</i>) with all people. Only the pure people (<i>biik che Lipwop</i>) were allowed to climb the mountain and to offer the sacrifice.</li> <li>• In the case of lack of rain people used to perform a beat water ritual (<i>birei bei</i>) to bring rain as fast as possible. The ritual was done by the Toiyo clan whose totem is the rain.</li> <li>• There was also an everyday offering. It was the responsibility of the father in the family. He was supposed to observe the sun or the stars every day and to read the message from them. For example, when a rising sun was very red, or a bad star appeared, then this was a bad sign, a bad omen to the animals and to the people. The man was expected to make a special offering immediately. This offering was called <i>Kekerei karatut</i> and was intended to close the entrance for bad spirits to the family. This ritual involved the burning of special trees (<i>namtaiwet</i>), the remains of the sheep's stomach (<i>eiyat</i>), fat of the sheep (<i>mwaitab kechet</i>) and a special grass (<i>sekwot</i>). As all ingredients burn the man was supposed to hold his spear and wait until all was completely burned.</li> </ul>
<b>IV. Holy Areas and Holy Trees</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kapkoros</i>, very respected place of sacrifice. The Keiyo had sacred (animals, sacred plants, sacred things and sacred areas)</li> <li>• Sacred things and places are respected</li> <li>• Holy because used for sacred functions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In every clan special holy areas (<i>kapkorosusiek</i>) are dedicated for holy functions of the clan, for example as the sacrifice area. In these areas nobody was allowed to cut the tree or destroy the forest. It was supposed to be private place and only elders of the clan could enter this area. No child was allowed to be in this place. It was set aside for holy functions and, so it was a holy ground for the clan.</li> <li>• The Keiyo people considered certain trees as holy and used them for ceremonies of the clan,</li> </ul>

	<p>e.g. the <i>sinendet</i> tree. Soime trees assembled the weather patterns. Other trees assembled the human patterns or behaviours, for example <i>Lonwo or Chebobenio</i>. When <i>the Lonwo</i> tree is in a full blossom and the flowers are red, it means that the women will run away to their homes.</p>
<p>V. Graduation, Rites of Passage</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rites of passages are religious and social activities of the community.</li> <li>• Rites of passage are community celebrations</li> <li>• Naming-initiation-marriage-bore-death.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is the motion from one stage to the next as one grows. Every passage to the next stage was celebrated with a ceremony having a social and a religious meaning. The birth of a child was welcome with a naming ceremony. The child becomes a young warrior man or a young woman through initiation ceremony. A warrior man graduates to a young elder through marriage ceremony. The elders also have graduation ceremonies. The remaining respected elder of elders is the men who went to BORE rite. In every rite of passage, the initiates get a new name. When a child is born he gets the ancestor name (<i>kurenet</i>) and his name. His name may be called <i>Kipkorir</i> (one born early in the morning). When he gets circumcised the name changes and he gets the name of the warriors of the community. When he marries he gets the name of his father, starting with '<i>arap</i>'. When he goes to a <i>Bore</i>, he uses a special respectable name of <i>Bar</i> (Barmaasai). The name changes within the stages in life. The highest name for a woman is the name of the clan and the clan totem e.g. Kobilo, Talaa, or Kimooi</li> </ul>
<p>VI. Divination (<i>kesach barbar</i>)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divination-Prayers for power and direction from spirits and ancestors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was seen as prayer for asking questions from the spirits, ancestors and God and to receive the reply from the <i>barbarek</i>. There was a special person to do it. The man took eight black stones and eight white stones. He put all these stones in an animal horn (<i>lalet</i>) and shook it four times as he talked and called the ancestors, spirits and God asking them for an answer. Then, he threw the stones out and watched the pattern. And from the pattern he could interpret the answer to the question he asked for. The neighbours, the Tugen and the Marakwets used shoes for the divination prayer (<i>kebir kweinik</i>).</li> </ul>

## VII. Community Leadership

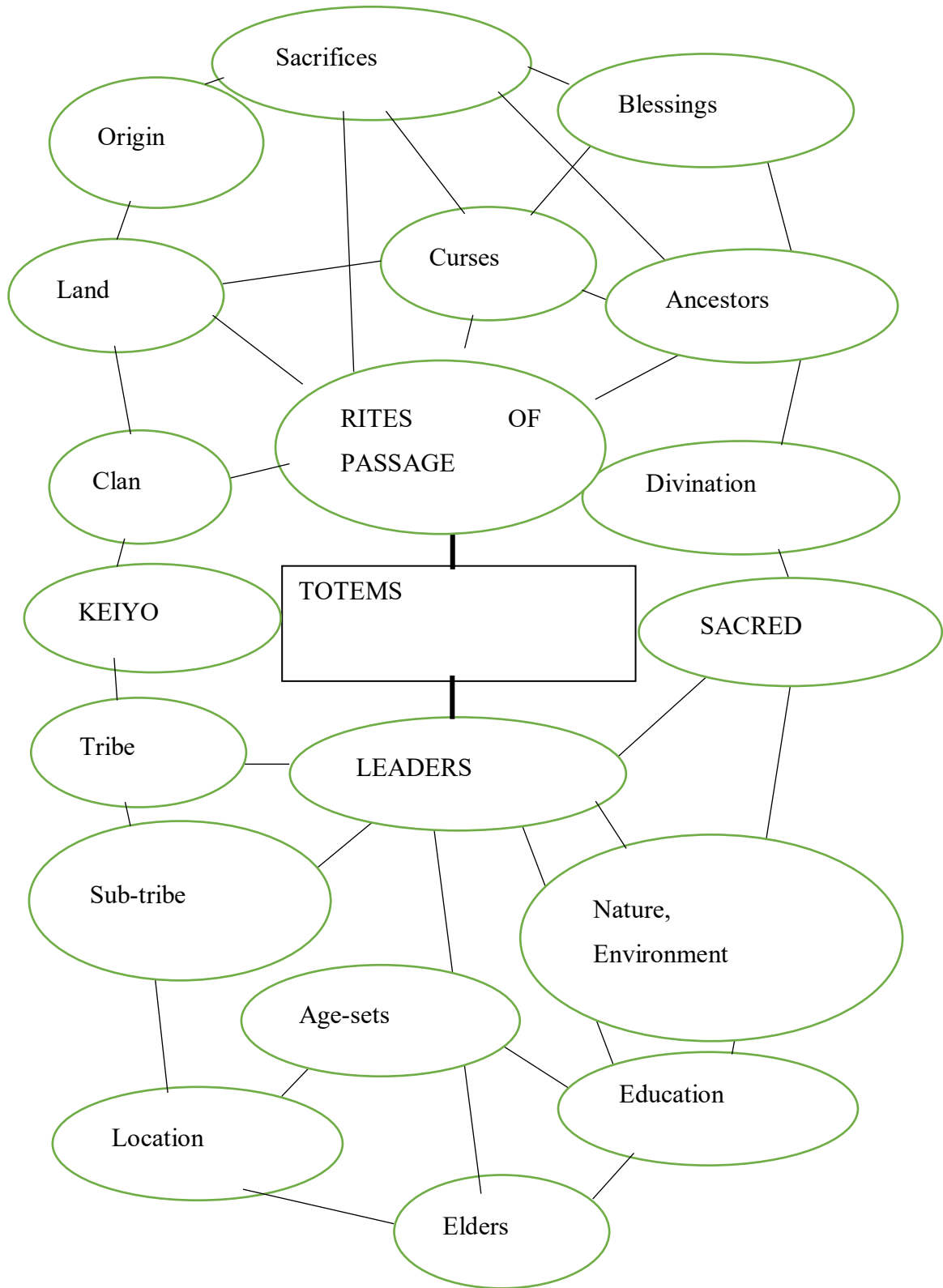
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Elders become leaders</li><li>• Different types of leaders but all had a religious meaning. Leadership is religious.</li><br/><li>• There is leadership specialisation</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>i.</b> Orgoik were the Elders</li><li><b>ii.</b> Elders formed the group of leaders in the Keiyo community. To be an elder was to be a leader. Elders met in elders meeting (<i>Kokwet</i>) and made decisions regarding the clan. The Keiyo had other special leaders having the gift of prophetic dreams. They warned the community of a big danger that would come in the future. They also warned worriers who went for <i>luget</i> or fight and prophesied whether the battle would be won or lost. They always consulted the community elders giving them advice. The great Keiyo <i>Orgoik</i> includes <i>Kipyator</i> in Mutei area and <i>Toromo</i> in Rokocho area.</li><li><b>iii.</b> <b>Rain-men</b> were special people who could call the rain in a draught time or chase the rain away in the case of the flood. They were the leaders in rain chasing or rain calling rituals. They were experts in the examining the movement of the stars and the sun. When the sun went ahead of a particular star, they prophesied a big drought. They prayed to the sun to remain behind and let the star to go ahead. This was done mainly by the people who had the star or moon as the totem (<i>mokicho</i>).<br/>Seeing intestines of a sheep (<i>kebirmo artet</i>). The elders in the community used to strangled (<i>kegul</i>) a sheep that is usually consumed in any ritual or celebrations of the community. They opened the belly of the sheep and read the messages contained in the inner organs. In this way they could predict the future happenings in the community and in the family. They could also predict the rain.</li><li><b>iv.</b> <b>Medicine Men and Women</b><br/>These were people specialised in the healing using the herbs and other means from nature in order to cure various illness in the community. This knowledge was learnt as well as inherited from the family. People used to travel from place to place looking for such people among the Keiyo and in the neighbouring communities, like the Tugen people. Their work had a religious function in the community.</li></ul> |
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<b>VIII. Keiyo Education</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional education went with the age and accompanied the rites of passage.</li> <li>• The highest education state was <i>Bore</i>, they were priests of the clan and tribe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Keiyo people were highly educated in every stage of their growth. The exclusion in the rite of passage gave the elders time to teach the members of the community and to prepare them for the pass to the next stage of life. The circumcised boys remained in seclusion for a long time. The boys remained in the bush (<i>mencho</i>), to learn all what was important in their age and as the future elders in the community. The girls had a space at home that was a place of learning. The circumcised boys who were promoted to be <i>Moran</i> in a ceremony called <i>sokobei</i> which was like a handing over ceremony. Then the <i>Morans</i> who were promoted to elders. The elders of the community took time to teach those becoming worriers about the new responsibility of defending the community. The warriors were welcomed back to the community to marry and to be elders they were also advised about their new role in the community as young family people. The elders, who reached the status of <i>bore</i>, received the highest education that will make them the priests and elders in the community. Some elders were specially honoured by given them the highest name in the community. These elders had the name starting with <i>koi-</i>, which means stone, names like <i>Koitalel</i> and <i>Koitaba</i>. This was the highest level of education of the Keiyo community.</li> </ul>
<b>IX. Keiyo Problems Today-Oil Exploration</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discovery of oil in the area is a blessing and problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What came very clearly in the last part of the meeting was issue about the Oil Company called Tullow that is drilling for oil in the area. It was a big cry that the company is looking for oil without informing and respecting the people culture. They are doing explorations and destroying the natural environment. The meeting of the elders decided to form a group that will agitate for their rights and for respect even from a multinational company. They made it clear that company has no respect for the people and their cultures and therefore, it should be at all costs resisted.</li> </ul>



X. Keiyo Totem ( <i>tióngik</i> ) and clans.	
1. MOOI	SOET (bufallo), BOINET (anthelope); KONGONYOT (crane); KUIGUIYET (crocodile); SEKEMNYAT- <i>kapcheburinik</i> (a type of bee) ---TAIYWET(quail)
2. SANIAK	SEKEMNYAT; -Teberer-negwan-kamakirob, chebiryo, (red stinging bees); CHERERET (bush baby)
3. KOBIL	TORET (warthog); SABTIT (porcupine) CHEPKIRAGIT—nelel kat (crow with white strips)
4. KONGATO	MAT (fire); KIPEMSET-netui (black monkey)
5. TARGOK	TERKEKCHAT (guinea fowl); KIBEWIT
6. TALAI	MOROROCH (frog), MELILDO (leopard)
7. KABON	MOSET-kiyagan, (baboon), MURIAT-Ornegei (rat)
8. TERIK	BELYOT; neo-ongen,nemining-Kapketieny (elephant)
9. SOKOME	CHEPSIRERET;(makimenye ole kameny sokome) (hawk;eagle)
10. TOIYOI	ILAT (lightning) ROPTA (rain) BIRECH (safari ants)
11. MOKICHO	ARAWA (moon)
12. SHAKWEI	SEKEMNYAT- (chebiriryot, kapkosetiek, kapchebirinik) (red stinking bees) CHEPNGASIET; KOROIT (colobus Monkey)
13. TINGO	KIMAGET (hyena)
14. SOTI	KUTIET; ASISSTA-kipangau ak chemalus (sun)
15. TULA	LELWOT; -kipkorok, (fox)
16. RINGOI	SNAKE,erenet

### 2.3. Initial Coding of Keiyo Leaders Interview Data



### 2.3.1. Who are the Keiyo People?

1. Keiyo are part of the bigger Kalenjin tribe.
2. Keiyo means both the Keiyo land and the Keiyo people.
3. The origin of the Keiyo people is not very clear.
4. Most elders agreed that the dispersion point was the Mount Elgon (*Tulwopkony*).
5. Keiyo entered Kerio Valley through different entry points.
6. The neighbors of the Keiyo are the Marakwets, the Tugen and the Nandis.
7. Keiyo people came to the Kerio Valley as pastoralists, but they became later small-scale famers.
8. Keiyo people love caring for cattle.
9. In the Kerio Valley there is a multitude of species of plants, birds and animals and a beautiful natural environment.
10. Keiyo were grouped mainly in the eight age sets called *ibinwek* that were rotational or circular in nature.
11. Both boys and girls were circumcised to make them men and women respectively.
12. Every member after circumcision became a part of the age group.
13. Circumcision was the entry to the adulthood for both men and women.
14. Circumcision is among the highest secrets of the Keiyo people and nobody is allowed to say what happens during the circumcision.
15. The Keiyo land is divided into areas called *bororiosiek* and each *bororiet* was a clan.
16. Clans were divided according to totems, called *tiondo* or *tiongik* (pl).
17. Totems can be animals, birds, insects, reptiles or natural phenomena.
18. There are more than 30 types of totems among the Keiyo people.
19. Totems were divided into family clusters that were led by family leaders who were the elders.
20. The elders were only men and formed the council of elders that made decisions.
21. The decisions made by elders were always accepted and respected by all in the community.
22. The elders saw to it that the secrets of the community are kept and are to be taught to the young in different ages through the rites of passage.

### 2.3.2. What are the rites of passage of the Keiyo people?

1. The Keiyo rites of passage include birth and naming ceremony, initiation and warrior, marriage, elder, elder of elder's and death.
2. In every stage the person receives a new name.
3. All rites of passage are accompanied with religious rites hence sacred and respected by all in the community.
4. All members of the community participated in the celebration. Some rites of passage are top secrets of community.
5. Birth and naming ceremony is a ceremony that makes the young child a member of the community. The circumcision rite of teenagers makes them men and women
6. The initiates are secluded from the community for some time.
7. The circumcision of women has been outlawed by the government and religious groups.
8. Keiyo also became the warriors and defenders of the community and after being a warrior one became young elder through a ceremony called *sakobei*.
9. The last rite is for the elders only. The elders from the elders are elected for ceremony a ceremony called *bore*.
10. After each rite, the member becomes a new name.

2.3.3. *What is the meaning of the sacred to the Keiyo?*

1. The Keiyo people comprehend everything in nature as sacred. That might be a holy place (*ole tilil*) or some parts of nature were more sacred than others.
2. The places where people offered sacrifice (*kapkoros*) were considered more sacred than other places.
3. At *kapkoros* they offer a sacrifice to God (Assis)
4. The Keiyo people had sacred leaders, sacred animals, sacred plants and sacred things.
5. The sacred leaders (*bik chetililen ak kolibwob*) who are the elders of the elders led the people in the sacrifice.
6. The Keiyo community had also blessings (*berur*) as a sacred function of the leaders of the community.

2.3.4. *Who are the leaders of the Keiyo people?*

1. Keiyo community is led by elders who make decisions for community and family.
2. Among the Keiyo people are specialized leaders who have duty to perform special activities in the community.
3. Leadership has a social and a religious nature character.
4. To be a leader and an elder was the highest status in the community that every man strived to be.
5. Elders were always respected, and their decisions followed.

**2.4. Individual interview with Keiyo leaders**

After interviewing the elders group that gave me data for an initial coding, I continued to interview other elders individually in their homes in order to collect more data and to make a more focused coding. I managed to visit five elders and conducted a semi-structured interview with each of them. My objective was to get a profounder and more focused info about the totems. I interviewed the senior people in the village who are experienced in the Keiyo culture. I asked the questions and as they talked I listened and took notes. The main guiding questions included: the history of the totems, importance of the totems to the clan, relationship of the clan with the totems, the past, present and the future of totems.

2.4.1. *Ms Kimooi Kopchebet*

<b>I. About the Person</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From buffalo clan but married to the sun clan</li> <li>• Proud of her age as a sign of blessing</li> <li>• Thanks to God, the source of her blessings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kimooi Kopchebet comes from Kapterik village and is married to a man from Kaiyoi village. She is born in <i>Mooi soet</i> clan and married to <i>Soti-Sun chemalus</i> clan. She is a daughter of <i>Nyongi</i> age set and she is approximately 95 years old. She is proud of her age and she has seen a lot of good and bad things in her life. Her blessings are her children who are senior people by now. She is happy that she is blessed with good health in the old age. She</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and good health is God's blessing</li> <li>• Life was good and bad.</li> </ul>	<p>is widowed, has many grandchildren. In most times, she takes care of the land and the animals.</p>
<p><b>II. History of the Keiyo People and Their Totems</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Origin of Keiyo is from <i>Kony</i> mountain</li> <li>• Clans and totems are important for identity</li> <li>• When Totems can be related well them people can relate well too.</li> <li>• Continue with cultural values because they are important</li> <li>• Marriage and birth of children is a blessing and a religious act.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She remembers that the Keiyo people came to the present place from the <i>Kony Mountain</i>. Of course, with a lot of stop over and splitting before they arrived in the place where they are now. For her the clans found themselves here in Keiyo valley. She sees that the clans are very important because they are the identity of the people. Totems are important for the community activities. Before choosing <i>chepkarin</i> (marriage godfather) and <i>matiriot</i> (initiation godfather) one has to assure that they are right people. The clans and the animals are a sign of identity and relationship with one another. She asks the young generations to continue to live with the cultural value as today. The elders should teach youth about the culture and tradition that they have inherited from previous generations. She sees the marriage in a community as a religious function. To give birth to children is religious act and the marriage is a blessing from God.</li> </ul>
<p><b>III. Totems in the Religious Rites of Keiyo</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gods attributes Chepo ongelo, Chepokipkoiyo, Assis</li> <li>• God has many attributes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Keiyo people believed in God, they prayed and asked for blessing from God. The God in Keiyo is called Chepo ong'elo, Chepokipkoiyo and Assis. It has many names due to many attributes (<i>salanik</i>).</li> </ul>
<p><b>IV. Case of Mystical Relationship with Totems</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In case of absence of rain, the <i>Toiyoi</i> woman is active</li> <li>• <i>Toiyoi</i> people can talk to lightning whom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When there are problems in the community and more so when there is no rain, people ask a <i>Toiyoi</i> woman (rain totem) to come to the river. She had to step down in the water, make bubbles and pray for the rain whilst the community stay on the riverside and also pray.</li> </ul>

they consider to be their totem with rain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the case there is a very strong lightning, only those who have girl as the first-born child, and those from the <i>Toiyoi</i> clan can talk to the lightning and stop it from causing destruction. People talked mystically with rain and lightning.</li> </ul>
<b>V. How important is the belief for the Keiyo?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keiyo believes are important. They should be followed for one to be blessed with old age.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She stressed that the cultural beliefs and traditions should not be abandoned because they are very important for the healthy and prosperous generation in the future. She stressed that she is blessed with an old age because she lives according to the culture and traditions. She respects God and the ancestors.</li> </ul>
<b>VI. The past, the present and the future of totems</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Totems are very important and must be kept</li> <li>No totems, no life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For her totems are very important and should be kept now and in the future. Totems are important to every generation. No generation can live without the totems otherwise they will die. She stressed that the elder people should teach the young people about the culture of the Keiyo.</li> </ul>

#### 2.4.2. Ms Christina Soti

<b>I. About the Person</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From Sun Clan</li> <li>Other totems don't marry another because they are brothers and sisters</li> <li>Longtime ago they never married one another, but today they can marry if the relationship is not very near.</li> <li>To share a totem and come from same area means relationship.</li> </ul>	<p>She is above 70 years, from <i>Soti</i> clan, the sun clan, <i>Chemalus</i>. She said that Soti is a big clan which included the Soti or sun clan-<i>Kipangau</i> and <i>Chemalus</i>. Long time ago they could not marry one another but today as the clan is now very the marriage is allowed. But the people from the <i>Soti</i> clan in Kayoi village are close relatives so they cannot marry one another. The other clans are <i>Targok</i>, <i>Kobilo</i>, <i>Kabon</i>, etc.</p>

<b>II. Importance of the totems</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Totems are symbol of identity</li> <li>• For respect and know relationship</li> <li>• As a woman one takes the clan name</li> </ul>	<p>Totem is a symbol of a bride. She is proud to be called Soti. It is a name of respect because she is an elder and can guide the young people to follow the way of the elders. The name is very important for her because it is the same name that she will keep for all her life in this world and in the next world. She says that the young generation should not refuse to take the name of elders. It is a special name, it is a clan name. Which name is better than this? Asked Soti.</p>

### 2.4.3. Mr. Changwony Arap Chebos

<b>I. About the Person</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sun clan-chemalus and wife from rat clan</li> <li>• Keiyo like their culture because it is gives them a sense of direction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He is above 76 years, and he comes from the <i>Soti</i> clan-<i>chemalus</i>. He is married, has children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. His wife comes from <i>Kabon</i> (rat) clan. He was born in Kayoi clan but when the Europeans came to the highlands he had to leave his land. Then he worked for Europeans. He always cultivated the culture of the Keiyo people. He likes the Keiyo culture very much because it gives him a direction in life and the feeling of belonging. In one's culture one has a home.</li> </ul>
<b>II. History of the Keiyo people and their totems</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keiyo are from Kony mountain.</li> <li>• Some totems should not be married, and some can be married</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He remembers that the people of Keiyo came from Kony as the elders told him. The <i>Soti-Chemalus</i> clan members could marry other totems, except <i>Targok</i>, <i>Kobil-sabit</i>, <i>Tula-kimaget</i>, <i>Kipyagan-moset-kaboon</i>. The <i>Muriat</i> totems were allowed. But today they can may marry all. For him, <i>Soti Chemalus</i> don't marry <i>Soti Kipangau</i>. He believes</li> </ul>





<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People speak to their totems e.g. the rain totem</li> </ul>	<p>people were allowed to speak to nature, mainly the elderly people and the people of particular totems. For example, the <i>Toiyoi</i> clan can speak with rain and the Saniak clan can speak to bees. Certain people can speak to the animals or even to the lightning, but these might become more violent and even to kill the speaking person. Another example of speaking to nature is a daily routine for every man in the morning to speak to the sun to be white and bring blessings to the community.</p>
<p><b>IV. The future of Keiyo traditions and Keiyo totems</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture is important</li> <li>• If we care for totems then we have a future blessing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to Mr Chebos, culture is very important to the young generations, without culture they have no future in the Keiyo area. The ancestors are happy when the members of the community follow the culture. For the marriage, totems are very important because people can marry only between compatible (allowed by clan's law) totems. It is a taboo to marry somebody from a clan which totems are not friendly. The blessing in marriage is the future of the clan. These blessings are to be kept always by the young generations.</li> </ul>

2.4.4. *Mr. Peter Rotich*

<p><b>I. About a Person</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hawk clan but leaves among sun clan</li> <li>• is a Christian</li> <li>• clan came with their totems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He is approximately 70 years of age. He was born in the Sokom village but went to work in Uasin Gishu and bought land in Kapsoen. Later he came to the land that he bought in Keiyo among the <i>Sun (Soti chemalus)</i> clan. He is a Christian and has helped to build a lot of churches in the area. He comes from the Hawk clan (<i>Sokome-Chepsireret</i>).</li> </ul>
<p><b>II. History of the Keiyo people</b></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He heard from the old men that the Keiyo people came from Egypt, along the river Nile, until they reached the Mount Elgon from where they dispersed in many directions. The Keiyo came to their present land after passing a lot of other places. It seems that every clan came with their totem to this present Keiyo area. Mr Rotich has never heard any story about the history of the clan totems.</li> </ul>

### III. Totems and history

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hawk is holy bird to him and he cannot kill</li> <li>• Origin of totems not known</li> <li>• Totem is a symbol of relationship</li> <li>• Is a living object and must be respected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He comes from the Hawk clan (<i>Sokomechepsiret</i>).</li> <li>• For him the hawk is a holy bird for the clan. The members of the clan are not allowed to kill this bird unless the bird caused serious harm to the people. Everybody is obliged to respect the hawk.</li> <li>• Long time the Hawk clan was not allowed to marry one another within the clan, but today the clan is so big that it is allowed.</li> <li>• The Hawk clan cannot marry the <i>Mooi</i> of <i>Kapchebar</i> because of the history of hate between them. They don't also marry the <i>Kobil</i> of <i>Sego</i> because the first women they married died when they were pregnant and others died during pregnancy.</li> <li>• The history of the totems is not known. Totems are here there and it has to continue.</li> <li>• The culture is very important and the children should be taught that without cultural foundation there is no future development.</li> <li>• According to Mr. Rotich, long time ago it was a taboo to kill one's totem. He respects his totem as a symbol of integrity, he is proud of it. It is not only his totem but also every animal has to be respected and not be killed without any reason. Every animal has life and it must be respected.</li> </ul>
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#### 2.4.5. Mr Joseph Kwambai

<h3>I. About the Peron</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture is very important to care for environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He is a member of the Buffalo (<i>Mooi-Soet</i>) clan. He was born about 1954 at the Kaptel village. He worked for the Keiyo cultural research for a long time. He was an important resource person for people studying the Keiyo culture. He helped Dr. Benjamin Kipkorir in his anthropological research on the Keiyo people. Mr. Kwambai is the director of the Keiyo cultural center in Chekobei. He wrote a book on the Keiyo culture called <i>The Keiyo Kalenjin Mirror 3000 years BC</i>. He is married and his wife comes from the Sun (<i>Soti chemalus</i>) clan. He has done a lot researches about the Keiyo</li> </ul>

	<p>culture as a person and in a group through the Keiyo cultural center.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He considers the Keiyo cultural heritage as very important and more so the care of the Keiyo environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>II. The Keiyo Totems and their meaning</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keiyo totems are part of culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Mr. Kwambai, the Keiyo totems can only be understood from the perspective of the Keiyo culture. Totems are a part of the Keiyo culture. What is important in the Keiyo culture is also important for the totems.</li> </ul>
<p><b>III. Importance of the Keiyo culture</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture helps to care from environment.</li> <li>• Keiyo culture is environmental friendly.</li> <li>• Keiyo respect animals and don't kill them anyhow.</li> <li>• Totems helps people to respect nature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture is environmental friendly.</li> <li>• The environment means all the things that surround the Keiyo people.” Culture use to keep good our environment” It was a taboo to cut trees along the rivers and even to cut trees anyhow or without any good reason. It is taboo to kill some totem animals or any animal without a reason, it is a taboo to cut a plant without any reason „OUR CULTURE IS ENVIROMENTAL FRIENDLY” To him this environment friendly culture should be kept and even more encouraged. For him it is sad to see what is happening know in the name of money, everything is killed in the name of money?</li> <li>• The Keiyo people use to respect their culture and they use to only kill the animals they are going to eat or kill animals that are dangerous to the people. A bird with a nest and laying eggs was not allowed to be killed. The Keiyo people also had holy and bad omen birds and animals. The bad omen birds included the owl and woodpecker. Generally, the people of Keiyo respected all animals and trees. The animals that could be eaten were killed for meat. The totem classification helped the people to know and respect the animals which were around them and were part of the community of the Keiyo people.</li> </ul>

<b>IV. Culture is Gender sensitive</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Culture stressed on gender roles of men and women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Keiyo culture was a good culture that brought most of the time good gender roles. There was gender equality, for example when slaughtering a goat, everybody in the family had his part of the goat. The expectant mothers were highly respected because they carried life and had therefore a special place in the community. The community elder women specially kept special milk (mursik) and special food for them. The pregnant women were given time to rest from a lot of work, more so nobody was allowed to beat a pregnant woman. It was a taboo and it was punishable to beat a pregnant woman.</li> </ul>
<b>V. Keiyo culture encouraged good morals</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Morals are central to the culture and taboos played a central role as sources of morals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keiyo culture is a culture that stressed respect of elders and more so respect according to the generations. The younger generations had to respect the elders and reciprocate the elders also use to respect the younger generation. To marry a girl, one had to seek advice from the parents before any courtship so that they see if there is possibly a possibility of marriage or not. In case there was an historical murder case one was not allowed to marry until a cleansing ceremony is done. To be pregnant before marriage was not allowed in the community. This was part of the taboos of the community, because the born child will not have a clan. The Keiyo people had taboos and it should be checked today if these are still relevant or not. For example, the libation is not relevant today. The good custom, for example is, that any newly born child had to be brought to the grand parents to give them the community and ancestor name. The child receives a traditional blessing from the elders. This is a very good tradition that can be kept and handed over to the next generations.</li> </ul>

<p><b>VI. Generation/ Age Sets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age set was an important social classification of all Keiyo people as per their ages.</li> <li>• Respect between age sets was important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was a good Keiyo organization strategy that brought respect between the old and the young. The old was to advice the young on how to live and how to behave in the community. These eight generations include: <i>Kipnyigeu, Nyongi, Maina, Chumo, Sawe, Korongoro, Kipgoimet, Kapelach</i>. The elders of the community are above 60 years old, from 60 years up to 20 years old are Morans or the warriors and below 20 years is the youth of the community. Nobody will develop without elder's advice.</li> <li>• The elders have their own classification. Some among the elders are elected to be the priests of the community. The priests go to seclusion (<i>Bore</i> ceremony) and they reach the status <i>Bare</i> which is the highest position in the community. They were not allowed to touch unholy things and they had to live a respectable life. They were dedicated people and they use to eat special food e.g. special meat and some parts of the animals was a taboo to eat for them. They were not allowed to use just any cup for drinking. They had a special cup. These elders could spell the cursing upon people who had done wrong in the community. They had power to advice and to bless the members of the community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>VII. Divorce</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divorce was only allowed under very special circumstance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Keiyo people never allowed a divorce without a tangible reasons or evidence. Marriage was respected and only in special cases that marriage was allowed to end; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In the case of unfaithfulness with good evidence</li> <li>○ In the case of beating and mistreating</li> <li>○ In case of breaking taboos in the family and community. For example, it was a taboo to beat a wife who runs to hide under the bed.</li> <li>○ In case of witchcraft the man was allowed to divorce his wife</li> <li>○ In a case of incest</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**VIII. Problems in cultural teaching.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The formal European school system is killing the traditional culture.</li><li>• All work has been left for the schools</li><li>• No time for children to be with parents and grandparents.</li><li>• Cultural centres to support school formal education in connection with informal cultural education.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The culture today is dying slowly partially because of our school system. There is limited time with children and no time to get education from the elders of the community. The children are becoming school children and so they are losing the contact to the basis. There is also no space for cultural teachings in the community. The school system does not admit the traditional system of learning. It is also sad the parents don't talk very much with their children and there is no time to meet with grandparents. The school system is fully absorbing the time of children. Long time ago the grandparents had a good relationship with children and that is why the respect is still present in the old people but the young people they don't have it despite learning a lot of things in school. Children need time to be with grandparents and be taught the secrets of the community. The modern structures don't give chance for the traditional cultures, for example, circumcision and cultural education of boy and girls. Cultural centers should be built and the children should be thought our culture and to learn that our culture will help them in a long way of life.</li></ul>
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**IX. Relevance of Keiyo totems today**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keiyo people arrived at the present Keiyo valley area from different direction but they came as clans with their symbols of totems. Clan and totem are the same. So, the totems are very important because they are symbols of clans. They are life flags of the clans. So, the clan without a totem is like a country without a flag and I have never seen a country without a flag. So, totems will always be relevant them if they will continue to be Keiyo people. The children should be taught to know their symbols.</li></ul>
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## 2.5. Focused Coding of Individual Keiyo Leaders Interview.

### 2.5.1. How did the history of the Keiyo people affect their way of life?

1. Mount Elgon was dispersion point for all Kalenjin sub-tribes
2. Keiyo as sub-tribe of Kalenjin share similarities because they were one tribe in Mt. Elgon
3. Long time between dispersion and today brings also differences
4. Environment of Keiyo affected their culture.
5. Totems and clans were established firstly, then the sub-tribe.
6. Keiyo are not writing tribe just like other Kalenjin's as so totem symbols were very practical to know one another and prevent incest
7. As pastoralist, people lived close to animals and nature that is why there is no plant totem.
8. Keiyo were divided into clans and each clan lived in an area called *Bororiet*
9. Clans have one or more totems e.g. *Mooi* clan have Buffalo, Antelope, Crane, a type of Bee, and Quail
10. Small clans like *Tingo* have only one totem - Hyena also *Tula* clan have a fox for totem.
11. Some totems like *Mooi*-Buffalo appear across most of the areas. Why? More research must be done.

### 2.5.2. What is the meaning of the Keiyo totems?

1. The Keiyo people have totemic system, (*tióngik*) system with more than 30 *tióngik*.
2. Some Keiyo totems include; Buffalo, Antelope, crane, crocodile, Bee, Baby Bush, Warthog, Porcupine, Grow, Fire, Black Monkey, Guinea Fowl, Rhino, Frog, Leopard, Baboon, Eagle, Lightning, Rain, Safari Ants, Colobus Monkey, Hyena, Sun, Fox, Moon.
3. Some Keiyo people have special relationship with their totems e.g. *Toiyoi*-Rain, *Toiyoi*-Lightning, *Shakwei*-Bee, *Soti*-Sun
4. Most people give respect their totems. Some believe that person resembles his totem.
5. The name totem in the Kalenjin language *tióng'ik* means an animal.
6. Totems are symbols of identity for people related in the clan.
7. Children take the totem of the man
8. Women have the name of totem name and the end of clan totem
9. In normal circumstance the members of the totem are not supposed to marry one another.
10. Today there is a special case for big clans that they can marry one another-relationship within the clan.
11. Plants and domestic animals are not included in the Keiyo totems.
12. Totems are very important cultural practice among the Keiyo people especially during the marriage which is center of relations among the Keiyo
13. Totems have social and religious functions in the community
14. Totems and Keiyo culture in general is important in solving today's problems. e.g. destruction of environment. Cultures are environmental friendly
15. Totems help to bring good morals to the community because they prevent people from the same totem or clan from marrying one another i.e. it prevents incest in the community

### *2.5.3. What is the relation between Keiyo worship and Keiyo totems?*

1. Keiyo people do not worship the totems but they respect them.
2. Totem like the sun (*Assis*) was a symbol of God
3. Rain or lightning is always seen as God's activity
4. To name the clan after the animal creates a close relationship with the animal
5. The worship means to pray for good relationship with God and nature.
6. The worship has both social and religious perspective.
7. The leaders of worship are the elders of the community, they pray in the name of community
8. Every clan had areas of worship (holy places) where the names of the ancestors are remembered.
9. Nature is alive one must be red.
10. Sadly, the Keiyo traditions are disappearing.

### *2.5.4. What is the importance of totem for the clan?*

1. Totem unites clan and families
2. Totems are symbols of identity
3. Associated with Keiyo land
4. Unites Keiyo people with nature
5. Harmony with nature brings blessings and disharmony brings curses.
6. Keiyo people look always for blessing
7. Part of the religiosity of relationship among the Keiyo people

### *2.5.5. What role does the totem play in the rites of passage?*

1. Totems create good relationships with one another within the clan and with other clans
2. Rites of passage are the ceremonies in the clan improving relationship.
3. Rites accompany person from birth until death.
4. Rites of passage have social and religious functions in the community.
5. Marriage is one of the most important rites of passage in the Keiyo community
6. Totems plays a central part in the marriage preparation.
7. Rites of passage are handed from one generation to the next.
8. Most rites of passage have secret functions in the community.

### *2.5.6. What special role do totems play in the marriage rites?*

1. Marriage has sacred and social function in the community
2. The aim of marriage is procreation with the aim to increase the population in the community.
3. Duty of every member of the community it to have children and increase the community.
4. Through new-born children the ancestors are re-born back into the Keiyo community.
5. Engagement is the one of the first stages of marriage.
6. Blessed engagement means blessed marriage and blessed children
7. Marring a close relative will bring punishment to the individual and to the clan.
8. Marriage is a process that begins with the show up, then the engagement and finally the marriage ceremony.



9. Divorce is difficult because of culture and the social and religious meaning of the totems. In case of the divorce it means that the both totems do not merge for each other, also for the future generations.

## 2.6. Interview with Keiyo neighbor clans

### 2.6.1. Marakwet, Elders at Chesoi

The Elders Present

1. Mr Pius Chelimo Komen, 61 years
2. Mr Ishmael Kiptoo, 60 years
3. Mr Joseph Yator Kibiwot, 70 years
4. Mr David Komen, 60 years

They all participated in the research about the Marakwet culture that produced the book about the Marakwet culture.

<b>I. Brief Introduction</b>	
<p>On 14<sup>th</sup> September 2014 I visited Chesoi area and met with the Marakwet elders. The meeting took place after the church service in Chesoi. There were the members who also participated in the ongoing research on the traditions of the Marakwet people in Kenya. I was the moderator and the discussion was very animated. The main objective of this interview was firstly to know generally about the Marakwet totems, secondly to find out the relationship between each totem and the members of the Marakwet community, and lastly to find out the past, present and the future of the Marakwet totems. The discussion was fruitful and brought information of what I aimed to get.</p>	
<b>II. The Brief History of the Marakwet People</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marakwet people are part of the Kalenjin sub-tribe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Marakwet is a sub-tribe of the Kalenjin tribe. They live in today's Marakwet district bordering with Keiyo, Pokot, and Luhya tribe. The Marakwet area is divided in the Kerio Valley, the moderate Highlands and the Cheranganyi Hills. Just like other tribes of Kalenjin people the Marakwets originated from the Mount Elgon (kapkuko). From Katalel (Kitale) they dispersed in many directions and several groups migrated to Baringo while other settled in Transzoia or Uasin Gishu. Some of them remained in those areas but other clans went forwards and settled in the Kerio Valley. The Marakwet people are divided into clans and each clan has his totem/animal.</li> </ul>

### III. The Marakwet clans and Totems

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have 13 clans</li> <li>• Each clan with one or more totems.</li> </ul>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>1.KOBIL</td> <td>SESET, SUKEI(dog), SABIT (porcupine)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.KIMOI</td> <td>SOET(buffalo)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.KIPTUL- TULA</td> <td>CHEPTIBI, LEEL(fox)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.TALAA</td> <td>CHEPKIRAK- lelgat-tui gat (crow with white stripes) CHERINGIS (house lizard) CHEPLANGA (leopard)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.SHOKWEI</td> <td>NGEMUR (duiker) NGONGONYOT (crane)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.TERIKI</td> <td>BELIOT (elephant)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.SANIAKA</td> <td>CHERERE (colubus monkey)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8.TUNGO</td> <td>KIMAGET- chepkechir (hyena)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9.KABON</td> <td>MOSO (baboon) KIPCHOTWA (frog) MURIAT (rat)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10.MOKICHO</td> <td>ARAWET (moon)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11.SOTI</td> <td>ASIS (sun) MOCHAN (worm)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12.SOKOMO</td> <td>CHESIRERE (hawk)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13.TOIYOI</td> <td>ILAT(thunder)</td> </tr> </table>	1.KOBIL	SESET, SUKEI(dog), SABIT (porcupine)	2.KIMOI	SOET(buffalo)	3.KIPTUL- TULA	CHEPTIBI, LEEL(fox)	4.TALAA	CHEPKIRAK- lelgat-tui gat (crow with white stripes) CHERINGIS (house lizard) CHEPLANGA (leopard)	5.SHOKWEI	NGEMUR (duiker) NGONGONYOT (crane)	6.TERIKI	BELIOT (elephant)	7.SANIAKA	CHERERE (colubus monkey)	8.TUNGO	KIMAGET- chepkechir (hyena)	9.KABON	MOSO (baboon) KIPCHOTWA (frog) MURIAT (rat)	10.MOKICHO	ARAWET (moon)	11.SOTI	ASIS (sun) MOCHAN (worm)	12.SOKOMO	CHESIRERE (hawk)	13.TOIYOI	ILAT(thunder)
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### IV. The relations between clan members and their totems

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Totems are sacred symbols</li> <li>• Some no personal relationship with totem.</li> <li>• Characteristic of the totem may be the characteristic of the members of this totem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Totems are sacred symbols of the clan. Some people like the <i>Toyoi</i> clan have a personal relation to the rain and sometimes they act as rain makers. The <i>Kimoi</i> buffalo clan has no personal relationship with the animal. But buffalos are respected animals in the community as the clan symbol and identity for the Marakwet people.</li> <li>• The clan totems also show the characteristics of the clan members. For example, the <i>Teriki</i> people are thought to be strong like the elephants while the <i>Tungo</i> clan (hyena) show the quality of clever scavenger and survivor.</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More important in marriage</li> <li>• Some totem members marry one another and other don't</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Totems are very important at the marriage ceremonies.</li> <li>• Certain clans, like the <i>Soti</i> clan, do not permit intermarriage between persons with the same totem, while in other clans, like the <i>Mooi</i> clan can, allow the marriage.</li> </ul>
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**V. The present and the future of the Marakwet totems**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships between members</li> <li>• Young members of the clan must learn the culture of the elders</li> <li>• Women remain with the clan name but their children take the fathers totem name.</li> <li>• Future of traditions like totems at stake.</li> <li>• Totems bring identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The totems are very important as symbols of integrity and relationship.</li> <li>• Totem can help to estimate the character of the person.</li> <li>• Totemic traditions are important for the present and the future generations. Traditions are very important for the future generations.</li> <li>• That is why the book 'has been written under the title 'The Marakwet Community of the Elgeyo Marakwet County' so that the young people can learn more about the Marakwet culture.</li> <li>• The children take the name of the father's totem. The woman remains all her life with the name of the family totem. Elderly women are always proud and respected when they are called by the clan name.</li> <li>• This culture should be continued for it brings the identity in the community. It is the pride of the people and it helps them to know their totems and to relate well with the totems that live among them. These totems are animals that are found in the community.</li> </ul>
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### 2.6.2. *Nandi Elder-Arap Saina*

<b>I. About the Person</b>	
<p>Mr. Saina is 65 years old and comes from the <i>Kibois</i> fox clan in Nandi. He never went to any school because during that time his father took him to Maasai land so that he will never get the new learning that had spoilt his elder brothers. He comes from Nandi-Kaiboi area.</p> <p>The Nandi people are part of the Kalenjin tribe who dispersed from the Mount Elgon. They came in Nandi long time ago.</p>	
<b>II. Nandi Totems</b>	
1. MOOI	CHEPTIRKICH (antelope), KONGONYOT (crane), KIPKAMORIAT, SOET (buffalo)
2. TALAA	NGETUNDO (lion); talai nandi ak talai kutwo-kapsisiywo ak orkoek
3. KIPAA	NDARE (snake), TISIET (colobus monkey)
4. KIRAMKEL or KIBOOIT	BELIOT (elephant), KIPLENGWET (rabbit)
5. KIPKENDA	SEKEMIK (bees), MOROROCHE (frog)
6. TOIYOI or MORISO	ROPTA (rain), BIRECH (ants)
7. KAPYUBI or SOKOM	CHEPSIRERET (eagle)
8. KABASISO or KAPKOLUU	ASSIS (sun)
9. TUNGO	KIMAGET (hyena)
10. KIPBIYEGEN	MOSET (monkey), MURIAT (rat)
11. KIPSIRGOI	TOROT (warthog, bush pig)
12. KIBOIS	LELWOT (fox, jackal), SOLOPCHOT (cockroach)
13. KIPOONGOI	TAIYWET (guinea fowl)

14. KIBAMWI	CHEPTIRKICH (duiker)
15. KAPCHEMURIK	KIPTUSWET (wild cat)
16. KIPKOKOS	CHEPKOKOSYOT (buzzard), CHESIMBOL, BIRECH-CHE TUEN (black stinging ants)
17. KIPTABKEI	CHERERET (bush baby), SEKEMIK CHEBIRIREN (red ants)
<b>III. The Nandi people in the past</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The culture is very important to the people of Nandi and so is the totem. Especially in every engagement and marriage the totem plays an important role. They always ask <i>Obo or ne?</i> (Which is your way or which is your totem?). <i>Oret</i> means a way or a branch. It is always used for the relatives. If people are related they are <i>bik ab oret</i>, meaning the people of one way. Before the engagement people are asked: how are you related to the Nandi people? Which part of Nandi people are you? And the people who came for the engagement will respond by naming their totem. They respond with the pride: we are '<i>Kibois sang</i>', which means 'one who works outside – fox. The <i>Kimagetiet</i> (hyena) clan will always respond that we are <i>Korabor</i>, which means <i>one who follows</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>IV. The history and the meaning of totems</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Totems are the identity of the people and prevent them from an improper marriage so that the bad omen would not affect the community. The elders checked whether their totems can merge together. These totems are important symbols in every clan although these days the name of the clan is more known than the totem the symbol of the clan. For example, people say more about <i>Tungo</i> and less about hyena as the symbol. The name is overshadowing the symbol.</li> <li>The big clans allow the intermarriage but the small clans do not.</li> <li>Some clans respect their totems and consider them as their signs of identity in the community.</li> </ul>

	<p>Following the totem, one can learn the name of the sub-tribe and from where they came to Nandi.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The people talk to their totems, especially some clans like the <i>Kipkenda</i> bee clan can communicate with their totem, also the <i>Toiyoi</i> clan -rain clan.</li> <li>• People communicate with their totems especially at the time of crisis. This is done by the elders of the clan. The young people do not possess such power.</li> </ul>
<p><b>V. Totems and cloth of power</b></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sambut is a very important cloth in Nandi clan. It is the symbol of leadership. The Talai family is from a lion clan and wear a particular lion skin cloth Sambut that is a symbol of power and leadership in the community,</li> <li>• Kutwet is the type of helmet, a sign of leadership and respect. It is made of a lion skin and worn by the Talai clan on special occasions. It is a sign of leadership and only the leader who is anointed by the community to lead the people was supposed to wear both the Sambut and the Kutwet.</li> </ul>
<p><b>VI. Nandi people in the present times</b></p>	
	<p>The Nandi's today is in the process of a big change. The young people are doing in the school so much up to extent that they forget their traditions and culture. The youth is migrating to towns and mixing with other cultures and in this process, they are losing their identity. A person without identity is already a lost person and cannot do much for the society.</p>
<p><b>VI. Nandi people in the future</b></p>	
	<p>The future of our culture is not optimistic. It is a sad that our culture may disappear and we as Nandi people may disappear as well as.</p> <p>The older people should do more to bring back the disappearing culture. The totems are disappearing. This will bring a lot of problems because the close relatives will marry one another hence bringing a curse for the all community. They will give birth to sick children.</p>

**2.7. Focused coding by comparing the Keiyo Totems with Nandi and Marakwet Totems.**

*2.7.1. Comparison of Totems*

KEIYO	MARAKWET	NANDI
<p>MOOI,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SOET (buffalo)</li> <li>2. BOINET (antelope)</li> <li>3. KONGONYOT (crane)</li> <li>4. KUIGUIYET (crocodile)</li> <li>5. SEKEMNYAT kapcheburinik (a type of bee)</li> <li>6. TAIYWET (quail)</li> </ol>	<p>KIMOI;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SOET (buffalo)</li> </ol>	<p>KIMOOI</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SOET (buffalo)</li> <li>2. CHEPTIRKICH (antelope)</li> <li>3. KONGONYOT (crane)</li> <li>4. KIPKAMORIAT</li> </ol>
<p>SANIAK</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SEKEMNYAT, Teberer-negwan-kamakirob, chebiryo, (red stinging bees)</li> <li>2. CHERERET (bush baby)</li> </ol>	<p>SANIAKA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CHERERE (colubus monkey)</li> </ol>	
<p>KOBIL;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TORET (warthog)</li> <li>2. SABTIT (porcupine)</li> <li>3. CHEPKURAGIT nelel kat (crow with white stripes)</li> </ol>	<p>KOBIL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SESET SUKEI (dog)</li> <li>2. SABIT (porcupine)</li> </ol>	
<p>KONGATO</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MAT (fire)</li> <li>2. KIPEMSET, netui (black monkey)</li> </ol>		
<p>TARGOK</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TERKEKCHAT (guinea fowl)</li> <li>2. KIBEWIT (rhino)</li> </ol>		
<p>TALAI</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MOROROCH (frog)</li> <li>2. MELILDO (leopard)</li> </ol>	<p>TALAA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CHEPKIRAK, lelgat-tui gat (crow with white stripes)</li> </ol>	<p>TALAA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NGETUNDO (lion)</li> <li>a) talai nandi a</li> </ol>

	<p>2. CHERINGIS (house lizard)</p> <p>3. CHEPLANGA (leopard)</p>	<p>talai kutwo- kapsisiywo ak orkoek</p>
<p>KABON</p> <p>1. MOSET, kipyagan, (baboon),</p> <p>2. MURIAT, ornegei (rat)</p>	<p>KABON</p> <p>1. MOSO(baboon)</p> <p>2. KIPCHOTWA (frog)</p> <p>3. MURIAT (rat)</p>	<p>KIPYEGAN</p> <p>1. MOSET (monkey)</p> <p>2. MURIAT(rat)</p>
<p>TERIGI</p> <p>1. BELIOT,neo-ongen,nemining-kapketieny (elephant)</p>	<p>TERIGI</p> <p>1. BELIOT (elephant)</p>	<p>KIRAMKEL, KIBOOIT</p> <p>1. BELIOT (elephant)</p> <p>2. KIPLENGWET (rabbit)</p> <p>3. NYIRITIET (chameleon)</p>
<p>SOKOME</p> <p>1. CHEPSIRERET (hawk, eagle)</p>	<p>SOKOMO</p> <p>1. CHESIRERE (hawk)</p>	<p>KAPYUBI OR SOKOM</p> <p>1. CHEPSIRERET (eagle)</p>
<p>TOIYOI</p> <p>1. ILAT (lightning)</p> <p>2. ROPTA (rain)</p> <p>3. BIRECH (safari ants)</p>	<p>TOIYOI</p> <p>1. ILAT(thunder)</p>	<p>TOIYOI OR MURISO</p> <p>1. ROPTA (rain)</p> <p>2. BIRECH (ants)</p>
<p>MOKICHO</p> <p>1. ARAWA (moon)</p>	<p>MOKICHO</p> <p>1. ARAWET (moon)</p>	
<p>SHAKWEI</p> <p>1. SEKEMNYAT,chebi riryot,kapkosetiek,kapchebirinik (Red aggressive bees)</p> <p>2. CHEPNGASIET</p> <p>3. KOROIT (colobus monkey)</p>	<p>SHAKWEI</p> <p>1. NGEMUR (duiker)</p> <p>2. NGONGONYOT (crane)</p>	<p>KIPKENDA SEKEMIK (bees)</p>
<p>TINGO</p> <p>1.KIMAGET (hyena)</p>	<p>TUNGO</p> <p>1. KIMAGET- chepkechir (hyena)</p>	<p>TUNGO</p> <p>1. KIMAGET (hyena)</p>



<p>SOTI</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. KUTIET</li> <li>2. ASISSTA (Sun) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Kipangau (very hot sun)</li> <li>b) Chemalus (warm sun)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>SOTI</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ASIS (sun)</li> <li>2. MOCHAN (worm)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. KABASISO or KAPKOLUU ASSIS (sun)</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TULA</li> </ol> <p>LELWOT kipkorok (fox)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TULA</li> <li>2. CHEPTIBI; LEEL (fox)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. KIBOIS</li> <li>2. LELWOT (fox, jackal)</li> <li>3. SOLOPCHOT (cockroach)</li> </ol>
		<p>KIPAA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NDARET (snake);</li> <li>2. TISIET (colobus monkey)</li> </ol>
		<p>KURBEI OR KUCHWA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MOROROCHET (frog)</li> </ol>
		<p>KIPSIRGOI</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TORET (warthog, bush pig)</li> </ol>
		<p>KIBOONGOI</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TAIYWET (guinea fowl)</li> </ol>
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. KIBAMWI CHEPTIRKICH(duiker)</li> </ol>
		<p>KAPCHEMURIK</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. KIPTUSWET (wild cat)</li> </ol>
		<p>KIPKOKOS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CHEPKOKOSYOT (buzzard-hawk)</li> <li>2. CHESIMBOL</li> <li>3. BIRECH-CHETUEN (black stinging ants)</li> </ol>
		<p>KIPTABKEI</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CHERERET (bush baby)</li> <li>2. SEKEMIK CHEBIRIREN (red ants)</li> </ol>

## 2.7.2. Analysing the difference between Totems

### 2.7.2.1. General look at totems of the three sub-tribes

Most totems are symbolizing wild animals; there are reptiles, birds, insects, and also natural phenomena.

Totems are manifesting what is in the environment of the people.

Marakwet and Keiyo are much related in terms of names of totems because they are close neighbors.

### 2.7.2.2. Similarity and difference between the Keiyo, Nandi and Marakwet totems

#### 2.7.2.2.1. Similar totems

- i. Kimooi clan - buffalo
- ii. Kabon clan- monkey and kabon-rat
- iii. Terigi clan - elephant
- iv. Sokome clan -eagle
- v. Tingo clan - hyena
- vi. Soti clan - sun
- vii. Tula clan - fox

#### 2.7.2.2.2. Why have these three sub-tribe's similar totems?

Might be these were the original Kalenjin totems. This subject requires for a further research and a comparison of totems from the entire Kalenjin tribe.

#### 2.7.2.2.3. Which totems are special to one tribe?

- i. Targok-rhino Keiyo
- ii. Kongato-fire Keiyo
- iii. Talaa-lion Nandi
- iv. Kibois-cockroach Nandi
- v. Kiboit- chameleon Nandi
- vi. Kipaa- snake- Nandi
- vii. Kobil- dog Marakwet
- viii. Talaa-house lizard Marakwet
- ix. Soti-worm Marakwet

#### 2.7.2.2.4. Why are differences between the totems?

1. May be some totems were taken from the neighbour tribes. More research with all neighbouring tribes is needed. For example, a snake totem in *Nandi* might be from the group that joined *Nandi* people from the *Luo* tribe.
2. To be a part of the community one was supposed to have a totem. So, the strangers who join the community must have a totem.
3. Totems are similar and different from one another. Every community has a special totem depending on the neighbouring tribes and the environment
4. When we compare totems, it is possible to know the origin of the Kalenjin tribe.

## 2.8. Interview with Keiyo Church Leaders

The main aim of this interview is to relate totemism to the modern Christian religion of the Keiyo people.

### 2.8.1. Rev. Fr. Ben Kiriswa-Catholic Theologian

<b>I. About the Person</b>	
Rev. Fr. Kiriswa Ben is the first Keiyo to be ordained a priest. He 65 years old. He has a master degree in the Applied Theology with specialization in Pastoral Theology from the Union Berkley University California, USA, Masters in Pedagogy and Psychology of Education from Pontifical University of Antoniana, Rome; Licentiate in Moral Theology/Ethics from Pontifical University Academia Alfonsiana, Rome. He is Moral Theology and Pastoral Counselling lecturer at Catholic University GABA. He is a practicing counselor.	
<b>II. Brief history of the Keiyo people and the Catholic Church</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christianity in Keiyo is less than 80 years old.</li> <li>• Missionaries started schools as channels of change.</li> <li>• Catechism was a question and answer method.</li> </ul>	The faith came to the Keiyo land by the Mill Hill missionaries that settled St. Johns to be a mass center in Eldoret in 1929, in Tambach in 1944, and Nerkwo in 1948. Nerkwo and Tambach became the catholic centers for the Keiyo people. The missionaries started building schools and from the schools it became a channel of faith and change in the community. He was among the first students of the catechism in the Nerkwo church. The catechism was about question and answer method and more so they stressed the mass and the sacraments.
<b>III. How is the Christian faith fitting in to the Keiyo traditional cultural system</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic missionaries never interfered with good cultures.</li> <li>• Keiyo culture and Christian Culture went parallel and had no integration.</li> </ul>	The catholic missionaries never interfered with the Keiyo cultural customs. The Keiyo customs and the catholic faith went separately and had no much conflict except glaring differences like witchcraft, sorcery and polygamy which were very obvious. They would say that was evil. The faith never tried to enter the culture, for example to understand the rites of passage from the African perspective. There was no integration between the Keiyo person who was a Christian and the Keiyo person who was a traditional person. There was no compatibility with cultural morals and values. The ancestor veneration and faith continued without being touched by the early missionaries. One thing I knew about our people, they had faith in one God. The ancestors were early respected through the naming

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorizing bible, sacraments and prayers was the missionary approach.</li> <li>• Christian faith became superficial and never was deeply rooted</li> </ul>	<p>ceremonies. If a child is born, they give him the name of the ancestor. This is powerful and will bring clearly the meaning of totems in the Keiyo community. The naming ceremony was aimed to keep the kinship and the clan. To keep the clan was to keep the ancestors alive.</p> <p>The protestants on the other memorized the bible but the Catholics were very much with prayers and sacraments. The faith never sunk deep in the life of the people because they never personalized or internalized the faith; it was something to be known. Hence a very little teaching to the Keiyo people. Other missionaries like the Kiltegan Fathers of St. Patrick came and used the same method of schools, children, catechists and memorizing methodology. It took a long time before the faith was picked up by elders who were more important. The missionaries were afraid of cultural implications for if they would be rejected so they had to leave the culture totally.</p>
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**IV. The Keiyo culture fitting in to the Christian culture**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are good values in Keiyo culture like the respect for life</li> <li>• Some good Keiyo cultures have not found a home in Christianity.</li> <li>• Also, there are bad practices among the Keiyo people for example sorcery and witchcraft. This was not also accepted by the community.</li> </ul>	<p>As regard the Keiyo culture, there are a lot of positive traditional values, for example hospitality, courage and respect for life. Many cultural values continue to inspire the Christian faith. Respect for life was not totally free from errors. They never use to respect the life of foreigners and disabled children. Therefore, some traditions were good but some were bad. The biggest hospitality is towards the foreigners. When they came asking for water, first the milk was given them, even when there was hunger in the area and people had to help one another. Priority was to help a neighbor and a stranger. Some cultures match with Christianity and others do not. Things that don't fit can be easily identified, for example sorcery, which was also practiced by some Christians who could not be cured by western medicine. They looked for a witch who could make diagnose what happened or who bewitched them. Medicine men were not bad. But the sorcery was very bad because it might cause death.</p> <p>Integrity was one of the biggest values also for the Keiyo people. The courage and ability to endure was also emphasized because the Keiyo area was all they had.</p>
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<b>V. Totems in the past</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No researches about totems.</li> <li>• In marriage is very visible.</li> </ul>	<p>It is always hard to research on tradition. Missionaries left the culture totally aside, nobody studied and researched those cultures afterwards. The totems system may have been a fear of inheriting a personality disorder from another clan. Totem was a mean of identifying your clan and maintaining integrity within the clan and to marry people with good character to avoid intergenerational transmission. Hence avoiding the transmission of a problem from one clan to another. Totems never meant so much anywhere else; it is very visible only in marriage ceremonies. To bring Totems and Christianity together is not easy. It needs more research on the Keiyo people.</p>
<b>VI. Future of Keiyo traditions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keiyo positive values should enrich Christianity and the negative values should be allowed to die.</li> <li>• We need inculturation of Keiyo cultures with Christianity.</li> <li>• People must love their cultures first before inculturation</li> <li>• Keiyo people understand their cultures more and can be helpful if Christianity uses it as a method e.g. Cultural reconciliation</li> </ul>	<p>I see positive culture inspiring the life of the Keiyo people. The positive values will enrich the Christian faith but the negative ones will die out naturally. We must also accept other culture and social values from other people. There will be a lot of mixing of cultures that could destabilize the structure of Keiyo. New customs will come and other Keiyo cultures will also enrich other cultures. The western culture is coming in also with its own distortion. As for an inculturation - we have done so far, no research in this subject. We should make researches and find out what is valuable, what is good, what is helpful. What can make Christians more African and Africans more Christian? We have oral tradition which is disappearing with the death of older people and so in the future we shall be left with nothing. Somebody should research traditional values. Like Fr. George Cheboryot who tried to adapt the name of God in Kalenjin which is called <i>Asis</i>. This met with the resistance from people who thought that we are going back to negative cultural values. Something can be done easily like dance; art music was aimed to make the church richer. The proverbs, language and poems were used to teach moral values. We have to do research to get a deeper meaning of all these things and incorporate them in the Christian faith. For example, our people feared sin <i>ngoki</i>; it was very deep in the mind of our people. This can reinforce the Christian teaching of respecting other people property and life. This can</p>

<p>method is more powerful than the people Christian sacrament of reconciliation.</p>	<p>help to stop malice against other people. You do not kill someone and keep quiet. You have to confess to the elders so that they can do the cleansing ceremony. In Marakwet the reconciliations were very powerful. Sin affects all. Sin or transgressions are community affairs and the community judges about you. They should reconcile you with your neighbor and there is reparation. If you do not confess you are cursed (<i>kechubin</i>). People feared the curse very much because it might rend the cursed person useless. Reconciliation ritual is very important in order to reconcile the conflicting communities. The taboos were also very important part of the community laws.</p>
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**VII. The present and the future of Keiyo culture tradition, especially totems**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At present, we have native priests and pastoral misters hence a hope of a change to a Christianity to be more African.</li> <li>• Totems can contribute to a more African Christianity.</li> <li>• Bad cultures should be allowed to die naturally.</li>   <li>• Culture should enrich Christian faith.</li> <li>• The future is bright as the culture will be given more chance to play in the Christian faith.</li> </ul>	<p>At the present, we are in a transition from the European church to the African church. This transition will take time but there is hope for a success. The priests and the pastoral ministers are now the natives and thanks to them a lot will change in making the African faith more African and to incorporate the cultural values. It might be a little too late but better late than never. For example, the totems should be more studied and so that this will contribute to strengthen the faith by the means of identity and basic worldview of the people. The status of the marriage in the community is very important so that people marry carefully and every marriage will be blessed by the elders. Totems are our culture and can help the faith to be more stable in Keiyo today, because it should be seen positively and used to reinforce the fundament of Christian faith. It has to be incorporated with other good values within Christianity. Marriage is a very basic and fundamental to our culture. It is both social and religious institution among the Keiyo people. The bad or the negative cultures should be allowed to disappear from the community</p> <p>The Keiyo liturgy should be enriched with the own culture. For example, the Keiyo people, like other Africans, are singing people and so the songs should be incorporated in the liturgy. Our proverbs and poems should be part of our faith. To achieve that the present and the future generations should take part in teaching people about their culture and more so to research on the culture of the Keiyo. Our people have a very rich culture that the Christian</p>
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	<p>faith should take into consideration. African reconciliation practice is far deeper and understandable to the people and these should be used to enrich the Christian teachings. The culture is very important for the faith among the Keiyo people and should not be left to die because it will die with a lot of good things that would have helped us as the Keiyo people in the world of today.</p>
<p><b>VIII. Keiyo totems from a Christian point of view</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keiyo totems have not been reached for its role in Christianity.</li> </ul>	<p>Keiyo totems are central in the Keiyo life. As I said this subject has never been researched. It is very enriching culture, just like other cultural traditions that are very good and should be brought in and to enrich Christianity. We need to research Keiyo totems so that we can see how to fit them in the overall Christian faith. Good Keiyo traditions should find a place in the Christian faith. Some good cultures are matching very well with the Christian faith.</p>

*2.8.2. Pastor Simon Kiptum*

<p><b>I. About the Person</b></p>	
<p>Pastor Simon Kiptum is a Protestant Pastor in Kessup african inland church. He is 40 years old, has a diploma and bachelor degree in theology. He worked in the African Inland Church for 17 years and in Kessup for 7 years. He is married and has two children. Interviewed on 22.09.2014 at kessup as from 9.00 am to 11.00 am</p>	
<p><b>II. History of the Church in Kessup</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Church first as place of refuge for girls who never wanted to be circumcised traditionally.</li> </ul>	<p>Kessup African Inland Church is the oldest protestant Church in the Keiyo district, built in 1930 by the African Inland Missionaries (AIM). The church was planned as a place of refuge for girls who never wanted to be circumcised and wanted to follow the new way of life in Jesus Christ. The name 'kessup' means to follow. The school was then started and became a place of refuge for girls to follow a 'new way'. The missionaries left Kessup in 1990s and the school was handed over to the local church and local pastors. The Kessup AIC church is part of the big family of the AIC Kenya.</p>

### III. How is the Christian faith fitting in the Keiyo traditional cultural system

- Schools as a place to bring Christianity to Keiyo.
- Social work and medical work to make people accept the church.
- Christian church has also challenges-leadership.
- Keiyo people love their culture and hard to accept the Christian way of life.
- Government helped to change bad cultures like circumcision of girls an offence.
- Marriage is still traditional and few accept the Christian marriage.
- Witchcraft is still a problem among the Keiyo people.

Since the establishing of the church, the number of Christians in Keiyo, who belong to this church, grew rapidly and the Kessup girls' school has been a great benefit to the Keiyo community. The school has been providing quality education on a base of a Christian foundation. The church also has participated in the social work and medical work among the Keiyo people with a lot of success. The Cheptebo AIC development center was one of the development programs of the AIC church. The church also sponsors a lot of schools in the area and this is a great benefit to the community. The church, like most of the Christian churches in the area, faces also a lot of challenges. The first of the challenges for the church in Kessup is the leadership of the school and the church that has been for a long time very problematic. There is fight for a leadership in the school and the church has brought in a tribalism and bad blood against one another. The church in Kessup never picked up very fast as intended because the community leaders and the owners of the church were from Tugen sub-tribe and not from the Keiyo community. Therefore, the church remained a foreign church for most of the Keiyo people. The traditional culture is also very problematic because the Keiyo people love in their culture and to sway them to the new way of life, like the Christian life, is very hard. For example, the Keiyo people for a long time had a strong attachment to the circumcision of boys and girls. The government has helped to stop the circumcision of girls but the traditional circumcision of boys is still very rampant. The issue of traditional marriage is still very hard issue. The Keiyo people believe that to get married a woman, she must first have children, the marriage ceremony comes afterwards. There are very few new marriages in this part of the Keiyo.

There is also problem with the *Chepsogeinik* - the witchcraft. People still visit the witch doctors yet they are still or remain still the members of the church. They mix the faith in God and the faith in the traditional healers. They still have traditional preventive medicines with them. At



	<p>their core the Keiyo people are still traditional people. Polygamy is still a big problem among the Keiyo. Although it has decreased, but still their people who practice polygamy.</p> <p>The church is trying to do her best at her level and to teach and preach people to abandon the outdated traditional practices and embrace the modern culture.</p>
<p><b>IV. Totems and the Christian point of view</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Totems are not wrong it helps people not to get marriage with relatives.</li> </ul>	<p>Totems are a good tradition. The church has no problem with it today because it makes people love their animals and prevent people to get married with close relatives. Totems are the best classification and identity of the Keiyo people.</p>
<p><b>V. The present and the future of Keiyo cultural system</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keiyo at present are at cross roads from culture to new Christian life.</li> <li>• Theologians should help people in this cross roads- to take good values and leave bad values.</li> <li>• Future depends on how the young people are taught to accept the new culture without leaving the good culture.</li> <li>• The future is ecumenical- to realize that we all have a common future.</li> </ul>	<p>The Keiyo people at the present are at the cross roads of transition from traditional systems to the new culture. With the help of theologians, they are supposed to study carefully and pick what is good in the culture and contextualize it and present a new to the community. This needs a lot of advice in educational and social development of the people. There is still much work in the teaching and bringing the young people together to learn about the culture and more so about the marriage values today. The cultural values and the Christian values should be harmonized so that there is no contradiction between the Christian teachings and the traditional teachings. The young people should be the main target for the future development of Keiyo people. We need the <i>kokwet</i> of the young people. A forum where the young people can seat and discuss the present and the future of the clan.</p> <p>The future of the Keiyo people depends on how we teach the young people and prepare them to face the future that is very complicated and very international. The church should be very active to mold the young and prepare them for the future responsibilities and duties. The culture will always be important to the Keiyo people but this should be checked properly so that the church people will take the best from the culture.</p> <p>The place of ecumenism in the future is also very important and the different churches have to meet to chart together the way forward. The future of the Keiyo people is a common for all people. Every person has a role to fulfill.</p>

### 3. QUESTIONNAIRES

#### 3.1. Primary School Students

Twenty primary school pupils between the age of 13 and 14 years were given questionnaires. Here are questions and answers

1. Do you like your Keiyo traditions?  
Everybody responded positive.
2. How helpful are Keiyo traditions today?  
17 of 20 found it helpful always, and 3 of 20 found it partially helpful.
3. Where can you learn Keiyo traditions?  
1 of 20 - at school, 10 of 20 at home, 9 of 20 both at school and at home.
4. Do you know the name of your clan?  
All 20 know the name of their clans.
5. If 'yes', what is the name of your clan?  
Tiriki -7, Kimooi -6, Kabon -3, Soti -1, Saniak -1
6. Would you like to know more about Keiyo tradition?  
All 20 wishes to know more about Keiyo traditions.

#### 3.2. Secondary School Students

Ten secondary school students of Emsea between the age of 14 and 17 were given questionnaires.

1. Do you like your Keiyo traditions?  
Everybody responded positively.
2. How helpful is Keiyo traditions today?  
7 of 10 found it always helpful and 3 of 10 found it sometimes helpful
3. Where are Keiyo traditions taught today?  
4 of 10 only taught at home, 0 of 10 only at school, 6 of 10 both at school and at home.
4. Do you know the name of your clan?  
Everybody responded positively
5. If 'yes' what is the name of your clan?  
All could name their clan name Kobil, Saniak, Talai, Toiyoi, Terik
6. Do you know history of your clan?  
3 of 10 know and 7 of 10 do not know.
7. If 'yes' write about the history of your clan.  
Two students wrote what they know about their clan.

*Toiyoi*- (rain) the name means 'one who can bring or stop rain'. The young people are taught about their culture and the respect to the elders. They know age sets. There are a lot of taboos to be observed. They also make offering and sacrifice when there is a bad omen or disease.

*Kobil* (hawk) - they believed that they came from Kobil, they moved then to *Kapchelal* and moved further to the plain land in Uasin Gishu. The white settlers forced them to move to the hanging valley. When the settlers went back, the group returned and called themselves *Kapsokom* and those who remained called themselves *Kamok*.

8. Do you know the name of your clan totem (*tiondo*)?  
All responded positively.
9. If 'yes' what is the name and the totem (*tiondo*) of your clan?  
*Teriki* (elephant), Rain (*Toiyoi*), Hawk (*Sokome*), Baby Bush (*Saniak*), Hyena (*Tingo*), Frog (*Talai*).

### 3.3. Primary and Secondary School Teachers

Ten teachers were given questionnaires

1. How important is the cultural heritage of the community to you as a teacher?  
8 of 10 responded important, 2 of 10 responded not important.

Why is it important to you?

It is important because

- Promotes peace
- Gives the young people right leadership qualities
- Gives men and woman good role models
- It gives the young people motivation
- It reduces immorality
- It is against corruption that is very rampant today in our society.
- It gives the young people the right skills in life
- It is a way of giving people responsibility in the community
- Taboos are part of culture and are important until today in the community
- It brings unity in the community

Why it is not important to you?

It is not important because

- It takes us back to the old traditions instead of going forward
- We don't need them today. They are outdated.

Do you include these cultural values in your teaching lessons?

Responded 3 of 10 very often, 1 of 10 often, 4 of 10 not often, 2 of 10 never.

Why do you include (or not include) the good cultural values in your teaching lessons?

Include because;

- I take some time in the lessons to form the young people
- It helps me to make young people moral
- It prepares the young people to form a family and that is why give them time
- It helps me to put across the idea of self-reliance
- It is a source of most of the values in the society

Don't include because;

- They are good but I don't have time to add them
- Because of cultural diversity of the classes today, no one culture can have a say.
- They are not important today and so I don't see the need to add them.
- I don't know them and so I cannot teach them

Do you recommend cultural values to be included in teaching lessons at school?

3 of 10 strongly recommend, 2 of 10 just recommend, 4 of 10 don't recommend, 1 of 10 strongly opposed.

Can you give reasons why?

Recommend because;

- They are the basis in the community and so they have to be thought also in the school.
- For the society to be moral we have to put them in the syllabus today.

- It teaches the young people to use the local resources and so they have to be thought in schools.
- The school is an important place and so the culture has also to have a place in the community.
- It promotes respect in the school.

Do not recommend;

- Teachers are not cultural experts and so the schools cannot be the right place.
- The school should teach what is in the syllabus and the cultural issues be thought at home.
- Because of mixed cultures it is very hard to teach them.
- Nobody can take culture seriously and so it will be a waste of time for the student.
- There is no time and in the culture, it has been replaced by the Christian values.

8 How schools may actively promote traditional cultural values?

- Ethics
- Music and drama
- Sustaining of environment
- Cultural days in the school
- Folk tales and songs
- Religious values
- Myths and legends are the best from our culture.

### 3.4. Analysis of questionnaire

From the those who answered the questionnaires;  
Students

1. Most students like their culture
2. Majority of primary students find their culture helpful
3. Most of them know the name of the clan
4. They are very eager to learn about their culture
5. Most wish to know their cultural traditions
6. Majority of them find these cultural traditions helpful
7. For them these traditions are more taught at home and a little in school
8. All of them know the name of their clans
9. The history of the clan is not known by all
10. Everybody knows the clan totems of their clan

Teachers:

1. Many teachers consider tradition as a valuable part of the community.
2. Teachers appreciate tradition as important source of good morals in the society.
3. People still respect traditional morals. Most of them find it proper to teach culture at home rather than at school.
4. Some talk about tradition from their personal initiative and find difficult to include tradition as an official subject of their teaching.
5. Majority of teachers mind that traditional culture should be taught by the parents at home.
6. That traditional culture should be as it is now, out of the school system, School classes are mixed, and it will be very impractical to carry it out within the formal school set up.
7. Some teachers say that they are not experts in traditional culture

## 4. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION FROM A MARRIAGE ENGAGEMENT CEREMONY

### 4.1. Stages of the Ceremony

#### 4.1.1. Preparation

During my field work, I participated in an engagement (*koito*) ceremony between Pius and Abishag. In the morning, at 9.00, we met at the man's home in Chemurgui village. At the home there were family members, neighbors and friends of the Pius. We had tea and chatted with the elders of the clan who came from different parts of Keiyo. At 11 o'clock we began to drive by cars to the family of the woman in Chepsigot village, at nearly 10 kilometers distance. The old men and women left first, and the young people followed. I had the chance to go with the elders of the family. We reached the home of the woman at 11.30 but we were told to wait in certain area until noon. Then we were addressed and welcome by the family of the woman.

#### 4.1.2. The real engagement

As we entered at the compound of the woman family, I and the elders went straight to the marriage engagement house (kotab *koito*) that was prepared for this particular ceremony. Only elderly men and women chosen by both families were allowed to go in the house. As we entered this house the woman family was already seated. They showed us our chairs and we sat down. An opening prayer was started by the catechist. Then the woman's family began to talk, a dialogue follows:

Elder from woman's family: How was your journey?

Elder from man's family: We had a good journey

Elder from woman's family: Who are you?

Elder from man's family: We are *Moi-soet-* (buffalo clan)

Elder from woman's family: And we are *Tingo-kimagetiet* (hyena clan,) and what are you looking for?

Elder from man's family: We are looking for "a cow" that is in this house.

Elder from woman's family: Are you sure that you are looking for it at the right place?

Elder from man's family: Yes! We have followed the footprints and we are very sure that it is here.

Elder from the woman's family: (*Calls the woman and asks her*). Are these the visitors you said they are coming? The woman replied "yes". Is this the cow you are looking for?

Elder of the man's family: Yes

Elder of woman's family: Have you one time married a woman from *Tingo-kimaget*?

Elder from man's family: Yes!

Elder from woman's family: And, how was it?

Elder from man's family: sere! (It was a blessing) and that is why we are here again today.

Elder from woman's family: (*Talks with other elders silently and then says*) we *Tingo-kimaget* clan have accepted to give you *Tingo* our girl. May she be blessed and give your clan more children

### 4.2. Celebration after Marriage Engagement

The acceptance of the engagement was followed by a long negotiation about the dowry. How many cows should the man give to the family of the woman as thanksgiving? At the end four cows were accepted and this was followed by the exchange of gifts between the family of the woman and the family of the man. The last part was the drinking of milk

together to cement the relationship between the two families and the two clans' totems. Then women were dancing and singing *kagegonech* (we have been given). People planted trees. The holy mass was conducted and after that was the end of the official ceremony. But people continue to enjoy eating and giving gifts to the woman.

#### 4.3. Analysis of Participant Observation

1. The marriage engagement is taken seriously by the Keiyo people today, even the weather conditions are checked before the event begins.
2. There can be no marriage without the marriage engagement which is important preparation for marriage and for the life after.
3. Some changes have been added from the Christian religion. For example, now the ceremony begins with a Christian prayer. Traditionally, the ceremony began with a blessing from an elder.
4. The central event of the engagement is the negotiation between the elders of the two families. They proof if totems of both families are compatible and if no contradiction is found, then follow the blessings from the elders.
5. Totems are a symbol of identity for the clan. People to know one another better must say their totems. This happens also in marriage preparation
6. Today, the part of the totem discussion is done very fast and far more attention is focused on the dowry part and the exchange of the gifts.
7. Today this big event is also celebrated as a farewell party for the woman. The marriage preparation was never thorough fully studied. It is full of important things but the secrecy behind many of traditional marriage ceremonies hinders it from further research. Keiyo people are very secretive in their rites and so most things remain unknown to those who did not undergo the rite.

## 5. AXIAL CODING OF FIELD WORK DATA

### 5.1. What is the Origin and Who Are Neighbors of Keiyo People?

The origin of the Keiyo people could not be clarified during the interview because it has been handed over through stories, proverbs or songs. Much information has been lost as time went by. What is remembered is the last dispersion point in Mt. Elgon (Tulwetap Kony), the Keiyo sub-tribe is therefore part of the Kalenjin tribe. The Kalenjin tribe includes; Keiyo, Marakwet, Sabeii, Tugen, Nandi, Kipsigis, and Pokot. The Kalenjin were pastoralists from their origin from Mt. Elgon, but these changed as they settled in their present areas, as they learnt farming from other tribes they met. The Age Sets (*ibenwek*) and the totems (*tiogik*) are the eldest tradition of the clans; they brought it already to the dispersion point.

### 5.2. The Clans and Totems of Keiyo People

Keiyo is divided into clans and these clans may have one or more totems. Each clan occupied an area called the *bororiet*. To identify somebody, one has to name his *bororiet*, his clan and his totems. Keiyo people lived in 18 strips of land that expands from the highlands to the lowlands. Totems can be animals or natural phenomena; they are identifying symbols of the clans. Totem, therefore, came from their environment. In the Keiyo community, there are more than thirty arts of totems which were a part of the Keiyo environment. The totems are much respected among the Keiyo. How the totems were

chosen is not very clear. At present some animal totems are still within the community but others have been taken to the national parks. That is why people have no more a strong relationship with their totems. Those clans who have totems still in their vicinity, like the bee's totems, are very proud of their totem.

Clans and totems are still very important among the Keiyo people. But the people use the name of the clan and the symbol totems are left at the background. But in important celebrations of the community totems are remembered and cherished. Children always take the totem after the father and the wife is the only one in the family that has a different totem. That is why women/wives play an important role in bringing relationships between totems and families. In a normal circumstance those who belong to one totem are brothers and sisters and, so they are not allowed to marry one another. However, when the clans grow big enough they can marry the distant members within the clan.

Keiyo people do not worship the totems as they worship their God, but they pay them religious respect. A totem like *Assis* (sun) is both a totem and a symbol of God. From the fieldwork, it was clear that totems are very important to the clan because it was a symbol of unity between families. Marriage rite was the right place to bring a unity between two families with different totems. Up to today totems are symbols of identity among the Keiyo people. The totems not only distinguish people but also unite them under one symbol. Totem unites people among themselves, it unites people with nature, and with God. Someone who live in a harmony with others and with God, he is blessed by God. This is the big religiosity of kinship with nature and with one another.

Totems play a central part in the rites of passage and are symbols of kinship. Only those who are in good relationship with one another can participate in religious rites together.

### 5.3. The Rites of Passage of Keiyo People

The Keiyo people value the rites. They have many rites of passage in life, but the four rites are the main ones. These include birth and naming, initiation, marriage and death. These were community passages that each member of the community was supposed to pass. In every stage of the passage a member is given a new name appropriate to a new stage, step and responsibility in life. The rites of passage are sacred and social ceremonies in the community. Some rites of passage are free for all members and some are done with a lot of secrecy.

The birth and naming ceremony is a ceremony when a child became an official member of the family, totem and clan. The child gets a new name from the elders. The child gets the name of the ancestor and from this moment is related to the ancestral world. After the naming ceremony the child is an accepted member of the community and it receives the name of the father.

The initiation rite introduces a young boys and girls to the age-set of adults. During the big ceremony the initiates are sent to seclusion where they are taught by the elders and prepared for the next stage of life. The ritual of initiation is very secretive, especially a circumcision of boys. Tradition of circumcision for girls has been declared by the government as illegal and thus abandoned.

Marriage is a rite of passage from the age-set of youth to the family people. The Keiyo people had their traditional ceremonies of marriage. The marriage ceremony, like other rites of passage, is a process that takes a long time. The marriage begins with an engagement ceremony (*koito*). During this ceremony the elders check if totems of both people are compatible totems or if they are close relatives. When all have been checked and approved, then the traditional marriage will follow.

There was also a rite *bore* to appoint the elders from the elders to be the priests of the community.

Death was also accompanied by the rites of passage, with ceremonies of mourning and ceremonies of handing over the death member to the ancestors.

#### **5.4. Keiyo Worship and Prayers**

The Keiyo people considered all that exist as sacred, yet there were more sacred areas and more sacred plants, animals and natural phenomena than others. The places where the sacrifice was done were considered as the most holy places for the Keiyo people. Also, certain people who had specific functions in the community, like rain makers, were considered as holy. At sacred places (*kapkoros*) they offered sacrifice to God. They made it only when a big problem was troubling the community, like diseases or draughts. The Keiyo people had also blessings and curses.

### **6. FINAL DATA ANALYSIS OF THE FIELD WORK**

#### **6.1. Totems among the Keiyo community**

1. Keiyo people migrated from Mount Elgon and entered the present Keiyo area from different entry points.
2. Totems played a role as symbol of identity
3. Clans, totems and family form the basic social structure of the Keiyo people.
4. Keiyo is divided into 18 clans and each clan has more than one totem
5. A totem can be either an animal or plant or a natural phenomenon.
6. Some clans have a mystical relationship with the totems and some have not.
7. Keiyo people do not worship totems.
8. Some information about totems is lost.
9. Totems are social and religious symbols, especially important during an engagement and a marriage ceremony
10. Interviewed persons are of an opinion that totems are still relevant to the Keiyo community today
11. The origin of totems is not clear.
12. Keiyo people care for and respect the environment as manifestation of the sacred.
13. Totemic taboos, e.g. a taboo for incest, cared for moral among the Keiyos.
14. Some of the Keiyo totems have already physically disappeared from the community e.g. Targok-Rhino totem, Kimooi-Bufferalo, Tingo-Hyena, just to name a few. Now these animals can be only found in the National Parks. Therefore, the clan and totem relationship has been diminished.

#### **6.2. Comparison of totems of some Kalenjin sub-tribes**

1. The comparison has disclosed the similarities and the differences between the three Kalenjin sub-tribes. The Kimooi-buffalo totem is found among the Marakwets as well as among the Nandis and Keiyos. But the Marakwet's totem Tula-dog is neither in Nandi clan nor in Keiyo. Furthermore, the Nandi's totem Talai - lion is neither in Keiyo nor in Marakwet.
2. All these three sub-tribes have no plants as totems.

#### **6.3. The Young People and Their Culture**

1. The study found out that the young people are very much interested in their culture and most of them know the name of their clan and the totem
2. The youth wish to learn more about their culture in school and at home



3. Most of the young people do not know the origin and history of their clans.
4. The striking result of the research is that most of the teachers are not concerned very much with the tradition issue. They are focussed on teaching the school program and expect that tradition would be taught at home.
5. Both, the teachers and students think that traditional culture might be helpful in ethics and morals in the community
6. Majority of teachers see as problematic to include traditional culture to schools because schools are multicultural institutions.

#### **6.4. Theological Importance of Traditional Culture**

1. The protestant and catholic theologians that I interviewed accepted the importance of culture in the community and in the church
2. They agreed that only good culture can be incorporated in the Christian way of life
3. Christian protestant and catholic missionaries had different approach to traditional culture. But they had a common strategy to implement the teaching of Christian values in schools.
4. The use of schools as channel of change excluded the senior members of the community in this process of change. This also prevented healthy integration of culture with Christian values. Traditional Culture was parallel to the Christian growth. After more than fifty years of the existence of traditional culture side by side with Christianity, both cultures did not merge
5. Inculturation based on academic research should be a continuous process of merging traditional culture with Christianity.
6. Totems remain no fully researched field till today. It is a traditional practice, yet neither the Christian church try to adapt its value nor to reject it.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

This study was to determine if the traditional totemic thinking among the Keiyo people is still relevant today after the changes the Keiyo community had undergone. The field research found out that Keiyo people have a special totemic system that is very social in nature but never rules out the religious part. It is this totemic system that has organised the Keiyo community for a very long time. It has prevented intermarriage between relatives through strict taboos. The Keiyo totemic system has been weakened by the new social changes, but it has never been replaced by any other new social system; instead the totemic system is adapting itself to the changes taking place in the community. The Keiyo people need the totemic values to be re-discovered and to help them to adopt the new change in the community. This research is an eye opener for more research in this field and to try to rediscover indigenous cultural practices that have relevance to today. A further research is needed to study totemism in other communities of Kenya and worldwide.

Only the system based upon a solid foundation of good traditional culture is able to build a stable social and economic structure for the Keiyo and for the most of other African communities.