

## 8, 9, 10. ANIMALS (3/01, 3/03, 3/08)

In the next section of the course, we will primarily be looking, not at formal kinds of symbolism like tropes but rather at kinds of symbolism based on what domains or fields in life they draw on.

We will look primarily at animals and the human body, with glances at food, color, architecture, and place

We will be concerned both with how we draw on those domains in order to make symbols about other things, but also how those things are themselves invested with meaning.

Also, as we work through animal and body symbolism, we will also recognize some other symbolic forms or mechanisms like the three tropes

### **Animals in Coclé polychrome pottery**

Ancient Panama is famous for two kinds of art, small gold pieces and polychrome pottery. The polychrome pottery is most of all associated with the Sitio Conte, an archaeological dig in western Panama on the estate of Sr. Conte excavated in 1930s.

Many of the designs on the pottery are of highly stylized animals and many of the excavated pots are associated with mass burials (See the illustration).

To understand the symbolism of the animals, we cannot turn to ancient manuscripts or hieroglyphic writing, as is sometimes possible in ancient Mexico and Guatemala, because there are none in Panama.

An archaeologist, Olga Linares, deciphered some of the symbolism based purely on the distribution of the animals, which are included or excluded, and their place in the burials (“Animals That Were Bad to eat Were Good to Compete With” in *Ritual and Symbol in Native Central America*, P. Young & J. Howe, eds., U. of Oregon Anthropological Papers 9, 1976, pp. 1-20; 1977, *Ecology and the Arts in Ancient Panama*, Dumbarton Oaks.)

We can do the same, with a little thought and work.

### **Animal Motifs in Coclé Pottery**





Animals that are represented: stingrays, sharks, ticks, turtles, deer with antlers, frogs, worms, needlefish, crocodiles, jaguars, crabs, hawks, curassows (large forest birds with big crests)

Q. So what do all the animals or some of the animals have in common? Not all same size, because range from crocodiles down to ticks; not in one genus or family. Several are dangerous to humans or even might eat them (sharks, rays, needlefish, crocodiles, big cats)

Some are small but aggressive and/or pinch or sting (crabs, scorpions, ticks)

Some are no danger to us but obvious predators (hawks, frigate birds)

Some are poisonous or repellent (snakes, worms, frogs) (Some bright-colored tropical frogs highly poisonous)

Animals that might be seen to have weapons (crabs, ticks) or hard parts, defensive (turtles, armadillos, crustaceans)

Q. If we turn the question backwards, what sorts of animals are *not* there?

No everyday food animals---even though lots of their bones found in these sites

Few or no animals with soft body parts (raccoons, rabbits, monkeys etc.)

In region there are two kinds of deer, horned and hornless---only horned deer depicted.

No song birds or butterflies.

One mystery animal, curassow, flashy jungle bird. May be relevant that very showy, makes displays, also that it seems to “charge”, also that very aggressive among selves

Representation of animals highlights certain features: wings, claws, spines, teeth, beaks organs for running, grabbing, seeing etc.

pots found in mass burials, all adult males, evidently killed at same time

And many of the pots have decoration only on the inside, in effect on the top

What does this suggest about the symbolism of the animals?

In one way or another, all seem warlike, like animal warriors

Seems to be burial of men fallen in battle

Given the lack of large temples and other buildings, the inference is that this was not a centralized society, a state or an empire, but a chiefdom, in which competed for power and prestige through war  
stingrays, both motif on pots and poisonous spines as points on spears

As we will see, quite a few cases of animal symbolism involve multiple animals.  
Another and very famous case in readings, by Mary Douglas

### **The Abominations of Leviticus**

Douglas concerned with food taboos in the Book of Leviticus in Old Testament

Most famous prohibition on eating pork, shared with Islam

But as in previous example, Douglas emphasizes the collectivity

Q. What kind of metaphor is traditionally used to interpret the animals, which Douglas rejects?: allegory, each animal separately considered is a metaphor for one vice or virtue.

Q. What is the classical explanation in terms of public health? Somehow they recognized that pigs were dirty.

Q. Is there a theme or overriding concern---like fierceness in war in the Coclé example---that Douglas sees shaping the prohibited animals? Wholeness, physical and spiritual, as a sign of holiness

Q. What characteristics of animals are most significant?---not weapons or aggressiveness, as in Coclé example. Forms of locomotion, limbs, and body coverings, connected with different environments, and different animal families: in water, fish, swim, fins but no limbs, with scales; in air, birds, two legs, wings, fly; on land, four-legged, hop, jump, or walk

Anything with inappropriate limbs, coverings, or locomotion is yucky

Q. What further restrictions are there for domestic animals? Prototype of good animals are herds---cattle, sheep, goats. Domestic animals must be cloven-hoofed and cud-chewers.

Everything else is prohibited as food : both camels and pigs have cloven hoofs but do not chew cud.

Q. Can you see any problems with this explanation or alternatives, esp. concerning pigs? Why is the prohibition on pork so prominent and so intense? Is the fact that pigs don't chew the cud really powerful enough as a characteristic to explain disgust? If it is, why are pigs so much worse than camels, which also fail to chew cud? Why aren't really anomalous, disgusting animals that swarm and teem more prominent than humble old pigs?

The pig taboo is shared with Islam, but not most of the rest of the prohibitions---is it an accident that this taboo is shared by two neighboring religions, and if not, why can't we find explanation that encompasses both Islam and Judaism?

How do we know that the classification of animals came first and the prohibitions followed? Given the rationalizing ability of priests and prophets with time on their hands, they could have devised a system into which they folded a pre-existing taboos on pork. Douglas assumes causality in other direction.

Competing theories: Marvin Harris and others have suggested that pigs, which are the only major domestic animals that give no milk etc., provide just meat, are in long run esp. degrading to environment. Even though religious prohibition doesn't mention environment, the culture is without anyone knowing it shaped by requirement---a form of explanation called functionalist. Ban pigs for seemingly religious but actually environmental reasons. But goats do terrible damage in very short order---why are they not prohibited and unclean?

Many authors suggest that for some historical reason in past, pigs became marked as a boundary between peoples, and over time they became increasingly prominent, as need to differentiate self from foreigners and enemies continued. Doesn't matter how first focused on pigs---once not eating pork marks boundaries between groups, then it will be perpetuated.

Douglas' article one of the most widely read and cited in anthropology. Poor Mary Douglas went on to write many more things, develop her ideas in complex ways, but many readers, especially outside anthropology, only know this piece.

Whether she is right or not, Douglas shows us a very useful way of looking at animal symbols systematically and as part of a particular society and culture. She also introduces a key concept, *liminality*. A liminal animal (or food or anything else) is something anomalous or on the margins. It either combines attributes otherwise kept separate, or at edges where one thing shades into another. A huge dinosaur in "Jurassic Park" or King Kong is scary, but a liminal wolfman or a mutant is creepy.

A third and very different case concerns dogs in Victorian Britain.

### **Cave Canem**

One chapter in a wonderful book, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (1987). Harriet Ritvo, at MIT.

Q. What is the paradox of rabies, as Ritvo sees it? Not that dangerous to humans, and not that common. Very few had any direct experience. But inspired panic. (even psychosomatic cases). "more threatening as a metaphorical disease than as an actual one" (p.170).

Brings us back to Sontag and way diseases imbued with metaphorical qualities. Rabies was kind of contamination, connected with moral state of sufferer. Dogs as “guilty”.

So what made dogs immoral, dangerous? fighting dogs, poaching dogs, “curs”, pets of lower class.

Also foxhounds, associated with upper classes, who got to violate middle class morality. Cf. New England Puritans, who minded very much that Indian men spent time hunting deer, which in England was pastime of leisured immoral aristocracy.

But very threatening to think that middle class pets could transmit, in bosom of family, so denial.

Ritvo goes on to discuss ins and outs of debate, different segments of middle classes taking different positions. For all of them, dogs heavily imbued with meaning. Great deal to do with social boundaries, in this sense brings us back to Leviticus, though particulars very different.

What Ritvo doesn't do is bring story up into 20<sup>th</sup> century, when anti-rabies measures became barriers not between classes but between English and foreigners. Six months quarantine of dogs brought into UK, even though ten days sufficient to detect rabies. Kennels had financial interest in preserving ban, but not complete explanation. Rabies was French threat, infected French foxes and French dogs. Restrictions on horses much weaker. Rabies law changed only in last few years.

Much more recently, smaller scale in eastern US, rabies swept through raccoons, killed many or most, but for while didn't cross onto Cape Cod; opposition to tourist hordes expressed in immunity to rabies, though later sick raccoon presumably made it across one of the bridges.

Q. What other animal disease scare? Mad cow disease. Tremendous concern, though actual number of humans thought to have died from it very small, drop in bucket compared to cars or heart attacks. But insidious, it crosses species boundaries. Weird symptoms.

When first outbreak in late '80s, French and Germans stigmatized as a British disease, bragged of absence on continent. Some experts thought they were actually covering up outbreaks in own countries, greater danger from unacknowledged local outbreaks. Joke that when “Chunnel” under Channel was completed, a rabid French fox would bite a mad British cow somewhere in the middle.

United States gave up idea of sea level canal in Panama in part because of fears of sea snakes (in cobra family) moving from Pacific to Atlantic.

Q. What dogs are sources of fear and contamination today in U.S.? Rottweilers, Pit Bulls. Owners' fantasies of aggression, others' fears. But not just fear of danger, is social class, immorality of raising dogs to fight.

Q. What about “urban legends”? Are there dangerous animals? Most famous story about Chihuahua that turns out to be a rat. Like many other urban legends, disquieting moral about threats to boundaries, about world of social dangers, about false appearances, creepiness of other people and things.

Obviously, to understand animal symbolism, often have to know about humans with which associated: both sides connected with and sometimes equated with each other. Also have to know habits of animals, how used, how controlled or not.

In many Third World countries there are many stray, feral dogs, either individuals or in packs. Symbols of contamination and danger. Famous novel, *Under the Volcano*, by Malcolm Lowery, Mexican pariah dogs as menace. In rural US, fear and hostility toward roaming dogs, sometimes shot on sight.

Irony that strays may resemble original association with humans thousands of years ago, how dogs may have been domesticated: not kept by individuals, but rather hung around at margins of camp or village, scavenged, learned to placate humans.

So we have some examples. Also others from previous classes, e.g. Bororo macaws. Will be others in later sections.

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Animals have features of several sorts that make them apt subjects of symbolism. However, for many years, anthropologists concentrated heavily on one aspect of animal symbolism, the use of different kind of animals to represent human groups.

Interesting in part because shows how possible for field to go off on side track for many years, waste time and energy

began in 19<sup>th</sup> century, decided that there was something called **totemism**. Was based on Native American word, typically got word wrong. Survives in our term for carved “totem poles” of NW Coast peoples.

At root was human kin groups named for animal species. Bear clan, eagle clan, etc. Other things were thought to go with naming in a totemic complex: exogamy, i.e. marrying out of one’s own group; taboo on eating animal; belief that it was group’s ancestor; other beliefs and taboos and rituals relative to totemic animal.

So idea of totemism became way of understanding animal symbolism. became widely recognized complex, even seen as origin of religion. Every theorist had a go at explaining totemism.

McClellan, 19<sup>th</sup> century theorist, did much to get concept established. Had entirely speculative theory. Said people originally lived in primal hordes. Through speculation, they decided that ancestor was an animal. They killed female babies, which created

shortage of women, which led to polyandry, i.e. several men marrying one woman. But then conflict within the group causes it to split up. Men of different groups try to get wives by stealing from other groups, eventually leads to rule that one must marry out of own group. Each group had own totem, led to system of intermarrying clans. Completely speculative, today looks ridiculous.

James Frazer, great popularizer of anthropology, esp. in *The Golden Bough*. He tried out several theories. Last one: primitive man didn't understand connection between intercourse and childbirth. So how could he explain where children came from? Attributed child to whatever animal mother saw last before birth. So totemism based on a mistake in reasoning.

Sigmund Freud, in his worst book, *Totem and Taboo*. Primal horde, living on plains. The patriarch, daddy, hordes all the women, including own daughters. Frustrated sons ultimately kill and eat him and have sex with all the women. Then they feel remorse, which was the basis for the incest taboo and worship of totem. Freud inconsistent whether this had actually happened.

Emile Durkheim, great French social scientist, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912), discussed above. People living in horde felt power of group, esp. in group rites. Totem, and later deities, are simply a symbolic representation of the group and its social power. In literal form, theory no more correct than others, but led to very useful theorizing about society and religion.

Functionalists, esp. British social anthropologists between 1920 and 1950. One functional explanation: totems were animals that useful to society, good to eat and use. But when pointed out that some totem animals negative or harmful, they answered that totem animals either really good or really harmful. Functional explanations of this sort are often ad hoc, slippery. But then pointed out examples where animal pretty neutral: obscure worm or bird that appears briefly once a year.

Another line of thinking, comes from Durkheim and partner Mauss, work we will read in part soon. Seeing totemic classifications of animals etc. as basis for ability to classify in general, ultimately derived from group. Also wrong, but got theorists thinking about totemic classifications as systems of ideas. British anthro, usually functionalist, Radcliffe-Brown, suggested that differences between animals, white cockatoo vs. black crow, were used to represent differences between groups. What important not the relationship of single animal to particular group, but the whole system of animals and differences among them.

Picked up by Claude Levi-Strauss. famous phrase, animals less good to eat than good to think. Analyzed as systematic classification, a constellation of animals making coherent symbolic whole. Very useful, provocative idea. Some of examples we have looked at, Leviticus and Coclé analyses, very much in that tradition.

His classic example, Bear, Eagle, and turtle clans, earth/air/water. But over time logic of system may be obscured. Bear clan dies out, turtle clan grows and splits, leaves Eagle clan and two different kinds of turtle. Logic of system obscured. Neat but completely speculative explanation.

Problem was that in many instances didn't work that way at all. Where many totems but kept secret: how could they form system if no one knew? In a case from Australia where an anthro observed addition of new totems, didn't follow L-S's logic.

Even though L-S denied that there was really a single totemic complex, he went on to act as if there was. But he was right to deny reality of totemism. There are really a great variety of associations between animals and humans. To insist that they were all part of one complex called totemism was really an intellectual dead end, though at least some of the approaches tried out had useful implications.

### **Animals are good to think and good to prohibit**

The title of the reading by Tambiah obviously plays off of L-S's famous aphorism  
Q. What does T tell us about practical implications of "totemic" classification of animals?  
How does connection to marriage rules and eating matter? What about location in house, and movement from one place to another by animals, especially invasion?

### **Hummingbird transformations**

To understand animal symbolism, often have to know good bit about habits, characteristics, also about how contrasts with other animals  
Eva Hunt, deceased anthro who taught at Boston University, found little poem about hummingbird among Mayan group in town of Zinacantán, Chiapas, Mexico  
Funny little poem, said hummingbirds were big, not little, white rather than brightly colored

Don't you believe that it is little, it is big  
Just like a dove its wings are white  
All of it is white.

The poem ends up calling the hummingbird one-legged

Hunt started to write an article to explicate poem, ended up doing whole book (*The Transformation of the Hummingbird*, 1977)

One key to deciphering poem was discovery that in much of region, ancient civilizations as well as modern, the hummingbird was associated with sun, and with Aztec sun god, who was also god of war

Depends on whole series of observed similarities between sun and hummingbird:

- like sun, hummingbirds not out at night
- hummingbirds shine brilliantly like sun
- hummingbirds are fierce little things, so like war god

-hummingbirds can fly backwards or hover, unlike other birds; sun as it moves across sky over course of year seems to stop and then move backwards

-hummingbirds take nourishment from flowers; flowers not peaceful symbol in Mesoamerica; Aztecs had what called flowery war.

-hummingbird beaks like thorns, which used for religious self-torture and sacrifice

-Also different birds are associated with different seasons and colors:

Spring with blue-green and hummingbirds; summer with white (doves) and hawks

-Hummingbird is said paradoxically to be big and white because it transformed itself into hawk with change of season from Spring to summer.

-Also complex associations and oppositions among flying animals: hummingbird vs. bats; hummingbird vs. Quetzal bird.

-Quetzal bird emblem of famous god, Quetzalcoatl, supposedly peaceful; Sun god was warlike, many human sacrifices offered to him, ripped out hearts.

-Hummingbird is one-legged because sun god was lame or one-legged. Was also god of hurricanes and tornados---word hurricane comes from his Maya name. Tornados are one-legged, so hummingbird symbolically is too.

Many more complications. May not be totemic per se, but complex system of interrelations between animals, which also linked to seasons, colors, and many other things.

Hunt even has discussion of rabbits and drool and Mexican drink pulque.

So can see that decoding symbol may be immensely complex

Fortunately not always as difficult as in this case.

### **Cockfighting: opposed interpretations**

Probably the most famous and influential example, not just of the interpretation of animal symbols, but of symbolic anthropology in general, is Clifford Geertz's reading of the Balinese Cockfight. In the readings, we have both G's article and an essay on cockfighting by a prominent folklorist, Alan Dundes, the conclusion to a reader D edited of articles on cockfighting around the world.

D has a lot of criticisms of G, and the two offer diametrically opposed visions of how to interpret symbols. In effect a little cockfight of their own, though G may not have known about it.

Dundes and some other critiques of G say he read people's minds and put words in their mouth concerning what was going on in cockfight. Q. Do you think that's fair? What kinds of info is G using to get into the meaning of the event? The emotional tenor of the event as he observed it. The nature of the betting. And then G's 17 numbered points (pp. 437-440) on distribution of bets and antagonism etc. In no.17, he says the Balinese themselves can articulate a lot of the claims in his article. So G may be incorrect or partial in his analysis, but D to the contrary, it's not as if G made it up out of whole cloth.

D says G sees cockfight as “a charter or articulation of social structure”. Q. Is that fair or true? G denies his interpretation is concerned with “social mechanics”---among other things not a charter rationalizing or justifying things. When D talks about anthros and their supposed obsession with social structure (p. 272), he doesn’t really get it. He sees anthros somehow relating some aspect of symbolism mechanically to support of, say kinship system, in way Radcliffe-Brown, famous functionalist, alleged that ancestor cults supported descent systems. But G not concerned with anything that crude. Rather G concerned with nature of social life, its rhythms, complexities, contradictions, with nature of people as social actors. That’s why the article is so appealing to anthros. D just doesn’t get it. Also, the approach he espouses misses entirely how social systems work, the dynamic nature of symbols. He just sees individual psychology.

Q. So how does Dundes’ approach differ from G’s?

D is strongly comparative. Denies that one can do an adequate job studying anything just within a single culture. Explicitly critical of anthropologists, ethnographic approach. Concedes in principle that there might variation in meaning from one culture to next, but in practice doesn’t think so. G on other hand famous for digging into particular culture, fine-grained analysis of its idiosyncrasies. G also famously resistant to simple cross-cultural comparison.

Q. What does D say the relationship is of folklore to culture? Says anthros follow idea inherited from Boas at beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, that folklore is a *reflector* of culture. Says in fact folklore can be a sanctioned escape from culture (p.248).

Q. How might G reply? Doubt he would think that any culture was completely consistent. Even departures or escapes from other aspects of culture are still part of the cultural whole. D has a very old-fashioned and limited idea of culture. G is very explicit that the betting in “deep play” is quite different from normal Balinese behavior. They are “playing with fire.” D really oversimplifying G and making him into a straw man.

Q. What does in fact G claim is relationship between cockfight and rest of culture? Is it a charter, straightforwardly supporting and justifying? No. One of key points of idea (pp. 448-453) is that the event should be seen as a *text*, “saying something of something”, a commentary, or in jargon, a meta-commentary of social life. Very different from what D says.

Q. So what does D see cockfight as about? Is a sexual contest between males, in all cultures. Cocks are proxies for men themselves. Pretty plausible, also G really supports this interpretation more than D gives him credit for. Despite what D says, this interpretation really not contradictory to what G saying, simply that G wants to go deeper.

D goes further into Freudianism, sees cockfight as masturbatory. Evidence for this seems much thinner, forced. Also, in classically Freudian way, D thinks if he finds this identification at some level, then that that is the *real truth*, and the rest is just superfluous

or cover-up. I think a cultural anthro like Geertz would say that idea that it is sexual contest is obviously true but doesn't take you very far, and that if one finds hints that there is a parallel between masturbation and cockfighting, that doesn't mean that it is necessarily *the* absolute truth but rather one level among several. Dundes can't handle the idea of multiple levels of symbolism and multiple meanings.

The opposition is less between two disciplines than between 2 different paradigms or mindsets or approaches found in number of disciplines, between reductionism (it's only about X, it all boils down to X) and universalism vs. a particularistic, humanistic, and "hermeneutic" approach.

### **Why animals?**

Q. So what can we say about animals as vehicles for symbolism? They are often very strong symbols. Q. What is it that makes them strong or absorbing symbols? (We may say someone is prickly as a cactus, but we don't call him a dirty son of a cactus.) Q. What do we have to know about animals to understand them?

Animals are strongly associated with humans. Domestic animals, pets, farm animals. But also wild animals. So, among other things, can talk about one in terms of other. Also, some animals are so associated with us, it has been argued, that they may violate or threaten the boundaries between wild and tame, nature and culture. They are inherently liminal.

Animals are associated with places. As in Douglas article. They may share or absorb symbolism from location or movement. Irish exile mercenaries were called "The Wild Geese". Today in US, many geese stick around and poop and cause problems, very different associations.

They may violate boundaries by invading space or by rejecting association with place--- fox in the henhouse, strays and pariah dogs like humans with no fixed abode, bums, gypsies, etc. So animal symbolism overlaps spatial symbolism.

Animals come in species, identifiably different kinds. May seem obvious, but not everything in the world is so clearly differentiated. Different cultures agree for most part on species boundaries among animals. The differences between kinds of animal often used to mark social boundaries: One Jesuit missionary recorded that Kuna said that roosters were roosters, jaguars were jaguars, but now he didn't want to let them be Indians. Species boundaries often likened to human racial boundaries.

Humans obsessed with drawing boundaries---class, ethnic, gender, national, racial.

We do tremendous number of things to animals: kill, eat, hunt, pickle, stuff and mount, domesticate, train, experiment on. We get them to herd other animals, bark at intruders, kill pests, jump through hoops, leap over waterfalls, dive for fish, lead the blind, etc. etc. We dock their tails, castrate them, dress them in bonnets, take their portraits, change their

appearance drastically through selective breeding, put them on the Letterman show, feed them bananas and periodically pluck their feathers. All of this provides a tremendous range of potentiality for metaphor.

Esp. eating. We put them in our mouths, take them inside ourselves. Another overlap: food and animal symbolism.

We can create large variety of symbolic statements according to what we do to animals. e.g. Cattle-herding peoples of Sudan, primary symbolic act is animal sacrifice, communication between humans and spirit. If want to end feud, don't just kill animal but attack it, hack to pieces. If close cousins sexually involved and want to cut tie between them, divide animal neatly down middle into two halves, separate. A symbolic idiom.

We also observe animals do many things to each other. many kinds of action and relationship. Very apt for metaphorizing human relationships: predator/prey (cat and mouse, fox and rabbit, lion and gazelle); other antagonism (cat and dog); parasitism (shark and remora, lion and hyena, leeches)

Animals resemble us in ways that no other kind of symbol does. They eat, have sex, give birth, fight, run, die. Even if a culture works overtime to keep up barriers between animals and humans or denies the resemblance, it is always there, always powerful.

No wonder that animals are among the most pervasive and powerful domains for symbolism.

We can do the same for other domains of symbolism. For food, we have no special section in readings but comes up repeatedly, esp. in Tambiah article. We can also do a lot based on own experience.

### **Food and symbolism**

Q. If we consider food as did animals, what can we say is distinctive about it, based on readings to date, your own experience? brainstorm.

We ingest it, take it inside ourselves. Very potent form of use of symbol. Can establish an identification with us, with our bodies.

Can have all the symbolic properties of the plants and animals from which it is derived. Can transfer qualities of natural world to our bodies. Or, as with host, the body of the deity. Many many elaborations of symbolism according to what ingest: wide variety of hallucinogens in Americas. Siberian shamanism, consume own urine to conserve hallucinogens.

Q. How do foods become markers of social boundaries and differences and group identities? Ethnic identity thru metonyms discussed before---Beaners, Limeys, etc.

Elaboration of ethnic cuisines very important to identity. Also for social class, different foods, different cooking, different etiquette for eating. Also, who you willing to eat with.

Cultures make all sorts of distinctions about what is OK or not OK to eat. Those in turn can have all sorts of ramifications, establish all sorts of social distinctions. Leviticus. Kuna drawn line between selves and Black merchant sailors they deal with in terms of eating shark, which sailors do, Kuna even catch sharks for them, but which they find incredibly gross to eat. When Kuna hostile, might accuse me of eating shark too. With urban outsiders, Kuna point to things like salad, say eating greens is like a tapir in the forest---not as strong a distinction.

Ultimate distinction, ultimate taboo is on eating humans. Has been controversy in anthropology. Claim by anthro William Arens that, except in cases of starvation, cannibalism universally just a myth, or rather a slander. Peoples contacted by colonial powers would accused neighbors. Also used to stigmatize by colonial powers. Esp. early in Spanish empire, when laws forbid enslaving Indians unless shown that they were cannibals. Arens claimed that except when people starving, cannibalism unknown, but he wrong, many well attested examples.

All sorts of symbolic statements are made through processing of things into food. Distinctions between everyday and special: boiling daily stew, broil for feast. Or by gender: with us, males grill. Or by social level: plain cooking for masses, complex processing, sauces etc. for elite. Lévi-Strauss sees elaborate code in mythology: raw/cooked, roasted, boiled, baked, fried, rotten. Among chefs in 18<sup>th</sup> century France, conscious emulation in cooking of industrial processes.

Food is connected with other processes, of body. Defecating, vomiting. In Kuna puberty ceremonies, mother of girl must drink until she vomits, seems to be symbol of letting daughter leave childhood, give up close control.

Pervasive metaphorical equation of eating and sex in many cultures.

Gift exchange is socially extremely important in all societies. (Gift is misnomer, often misleads: they are non-market exchanges, even if don't fit our stereotype of gifts.) Food exchange and sharing one of most important forms of exchange. Sharing food often defines the in-group, or marking fact that even stranger is under host's protection. Kuna used to see most disgusting thing about city life was restaurants, because can only get food if pay.

Finally, as Tambiah points out, many cultures link eating and sex