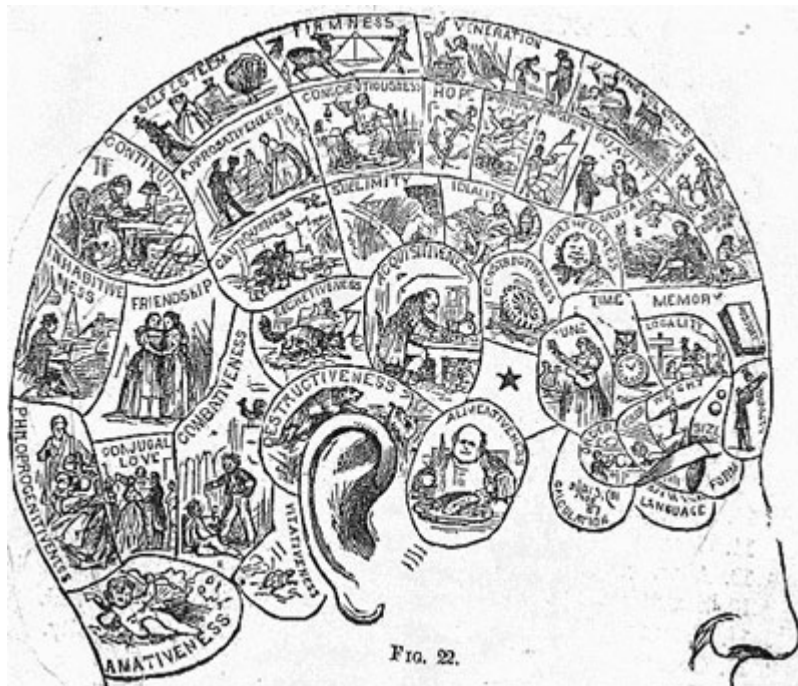




Myth, Ritual, and Symbolism



"Symbolical Head, Illustrating the Natural Language of the Faculties." (Image from Wells, Samuel. *How to Read Character*. New York: Wells Publishing, 1870. p.36.)

Course Highlights

This course includes a complete set of [lecture notes](#), an extensive [bibliography](#), and samples of [student work](#).

Course Description

Human beings are symbol-making as well as tool-making animals. We understand our world and shape our lives in large part by assigning meanings to objects, beings, and persons; by connecting things together in symbolic patterns; and by creating elaborate forms of symbolic

action and narrative. In this introductory subject we consider how symbols are created and structured; how they draw on and give meaning to different domains of the human world; how they are woven into politics, family life, and the life cycle; and how we can interpret them.

The semester will be devoted to a number of topics in symbolism.

1. Metaphor and Other Figurative Language
2. The Raw Materials of Symbolism, especially Animals and The Human Body
3. Cosmology and Complex Symbolic Systems
4. Ritual, including Symbolic Curing and Magic
5. Narrative and Life
6. Mythology

Syllabus

Overview

Human beings are symbol-making as well as tool-making animals. We understand our world and shape our lives in large part by assigning meanings to objects, beings, and persons; by connecting things together in symbolic patterns; and by creating elaborate forms of symbolic action and narrative. In this introductory subject we consider how symbols are created and structured; how they draw on and give meaning to different domains of the human world; how they are woven into politics, family life, and the life cycle; and how we can interpret them.

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6. Mythology

The course will focus primarily on symbolic forms and their analysis, rather than on intellectual history or the place of symbolic studies in social theory. Theorists, schools of thought, and intellectual history will be discussed for the most part in the context of the six topics listed above, and technical vocabulary will be kept to a minimum. Readings will consist primarily of articles and chapters, most of them by anthropologists, covering a wide variety of cases from traditional and modern societies. Students, in addition to keeping up with the readings and participating in class discussions, will be expected to write a series of short essays and field studies over the course of the semester.

There is one required text, *Illness as Metaphor / AIDS and its Metaphors*, (by Susan Sontag 1978, 1989, Doubleday). Otherwise, course readings consist of articles and chapters on different aspects of symbolism, which will be discussed in class.

Classes will consist of a mixture of lecture and discussion. Each class is keyed to a set of readings, and it is crucial that students keep up with the readings and be prepared to discuss them in class. Class participation — in terms of both regular attendance and participation in discussion — will count strongly towards the final grade. In the first weeks of the semester attendance will be taken.

There is no prerequisite: this subject is open to any student.

Written work will consist of a series of short papers, divided between essays and field reports. There is no final exam.

Calendar

LEC #	TOPICS	KEY DATES
1	Introduction	
2	Culture, Sign and Symbol	Response essay, on Susan Sontag's <i>Illness as Metaphor</i> (2 pages) due in class
3	Discuss <i>Illness as Metaphor</i>	
4	Metaphor and Other Tropes	
5	More Tropes	
6	Interpreting Metaphor	
7	Metaphorical Imperialism	
8	Animals	
9	Animals and Classification	
10	Roosters and	

	Interpretation	
11	The Human Body	
12	More Bodies	
13	Classification and Cosmology	
14	Ritual	
15	Passage and Persuasion	
16	Ritual and Power	
17	Magic and Ritual Curing	
18	Narrative and Life	
19	Narrative and Control	
20	Folktale and Form	
21	Little Red Riding Hood and the Freudian Wolf	
22	Goldilocks Meets Oedipus	
23	Hyenas and Demon Brides	
24	Jaguars, Vampires, and Starlets	
25	Movies on Myth	

26	Wrap up	
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Readings

Below are readings by class session and a bibliography of [supplementary readings](#).

Readings by Class Session

LEC #	TOPICS	READINGS
1	Introduction	
2	Culture, Sign and Symbol	
3	Discuss Illness as Metaphor	Sontag, Susan. <i>Illness as Metaphor</i> . New York: Doubleday, 1990.
4	Metaphor and Other Tropes	Cohn. "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals." <i>Signs</i> 2, no. 4 (1987): 687-718. Gregor, Thomas. "Far, Far Away My Shadow Wandered..." <i>American Ethnologist</i> 9 (1981): 709-720. Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. "Structure, Event, and Historical Metaphor: Rice and Identities in Japanese History." <i>J. of Royal Anthro. Inst.</i> 1, no. 2 (1995): 227-248.
5	More Tropes	Foong Khong, Yuen. <i>Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 174-190. (Excerpts)
6	Interpreting Metaphor	
7	Metaphorical Imperialism	Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. <i>Metaphors We Live by</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980, pp. 3-32. (Excerpts) Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. "Monkey as Metaphor?" <i>Man</i> 25, no. 1 (1990): 89-104.

8	Animals	<p>Douglas, Mary. "The Abominations of Leviticus." In <i>Purity and Danger</i>. New York: Routledge, 1966, pp. 41-57.</p> <p>Ritvo, Harriet. "Cave Canem." In <i>The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age</i>. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 167-202.</p>
9	Animals and Classification	<p>Tambiah, S. J. "Animals Are Good to Think and Good to Prohibit." In <i>Culture, Thought, and Social Action</i>. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985, pp. 169-211.</p>
10	Roosters and Interpretation	<p>Geertz, Clifford. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." In <i>Myth, Symbol, and Culture</i>. Edited by Clifford Geertz. Norton, 1971, pp. 1-29.</p> <p>Dundes, Alan. "Gallus as Phallus." In <i>The Cockfight, A Casebook</i>. Edited by Alan Dundes. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994, pp. 241-275.</p>
11	The Human Body	<p>Turner, Terence. "Tchikrin: A Central Brazilian Tribe and its Symbolic Language of Bodily Adornment." <i>Natural History</i> (Oct. 1969): 50, 52, 57-59 and 70.</p> <p>Firth, Raymond. "Hair as Private Asset and Public Symbol." In <i>Symbols</i>. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973, pp. 262-298.</p> <p>Hertz, Robert. "The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand." In <i>Death and The Right Hand</i>. Aberdeen: Cohen & West, 1960 [1909], pp. 89-113.</p>
12	More Bodies	<p>Martin, Emily. "Science and Women's Bodies." In <i>Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science</i>. Edited by Mary Jacobus et al. New York: Routledge, 1990, pp. 69-79.</p> <p>Gilman, Sander. "The Jewish Foot." In <i>The Jew's Body</i>. New York: Routledge, 1991, pp. 38-59.</p> <p>Gusterson, Hugh. "Nuclear War, the Gulf War, and the Disappearing Body." <i>J. of Urban and Cultural Studies</i> 2, no. 1 (1991): 45-52.</p> <p>Foucault, Michel. "The Body of the Condemned/ Docile</p>

		Bodies." Excerpts from <i>Discipline and Punish</i> , in 1984, <i>The Foucault Reader</i> . Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York, Pantheon, 1984, pp. 170-187.
13	Classification and Cosmology	Durkheim, Emile, and M. Mauss. <i>Primitive Classification</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, pp. 3-26 and 42-66. (Excerpts) Fox, James. "On Binary Categories and Primary Symbols." In <i>The Interpretation of Symbolism</i> . Edited by Roy Willis. New York: Wiley, 1975, pp. 99-132.
14	Ritual	Turner, Victor. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Phase in Rites de Passage." In <i>The Forest of Symbols</i> . Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967, pp. 93-110. Gusterson, Hugh. "Nuclear Weapons Testing — Scientific Experiment as Political Ritual." In <i>Naked Science: Anthropological Inquiries into Boundaries, Power, and Knowledge</i> . New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 131-146. Goffman, Erving. <i>Asylums</i> . New York: Doubleday, 1961, pp. 4-35.
15	Passage and Persuasion	none
16	Ritual and Power	Cohn, Bernard. "Representing Authority in Victorian India." In <i>The Invention of Tradition</i> . Edited by Eric Hobsbawm, and Terence Ranger. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 165-209. Howe, James. "Fox Hunting as Ritual." <i>American Ethnologist</i> 8, no. 2 (1981): 278-297.
17	Magic and Ritual Curing	Turner, Victor. "An Ndembu Doctor in Practice." In <i>The Forest of Symbols</i> . Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967, pp. 359-393. Holloman, Regina. "Ritual Opening and Individual Transformation: Rites of Passage at Esalen." <i>American Anthropologist</i> 76, no. 2 (1974): 265-278.
18	Narrative and Life	Bruner, Jerome. "The Legal and the Literary." In <i>Making Stories: Law, Literature, and Life</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard

		<p>University Press, 2002, pp. 37-62.</p> <p>Mattingly, Cheryl. <i>Healing Dramas and Clinical Plots: The Narrative Structure of Experience</i>. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 72-103. (Excerpts)</p>
19	Narrative and Control	<p>Howe, James, and Joel Sherzer. "Friend Hairyfish and Friend Rattlesnake." <i>Man</i> 21 (1986): 680-696.</p> <p>Ewick, Patricia, and Susan Silbey. "Subversive Stories and Hegemonic Tales: Toward a Sociology of Narrative." <i>Law and Society Review</i> 29, no. 2: 197-226.</p>
20	Folktale and Form	<p>Propp, Vladimir. <i>Morphology of the Folktale</i>. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1968, pp. 19-37 and 96-99.</p> <p>Colby, Benjamin. "A Partial Grammar of Eskimo Folktales." <i>American Anthropologist</i> 75 (1973): 645-660.</p>
21	Little Red Riding Hood and the Freudian Wolf	<p>Bettelheim, Bruno. <i>The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales</i>. New York: Vintage, 1975, pp. 3-19 and 166-183.</p> <p>Dundes, Alan. "Interpreting Little Red Riding Hood Psychoanalytically." In <i>The Brothers Grimm and Folktale</i>. Edited by James M. McGlathery. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.</p>
22	Goldilocks Meets Oedipus	<p>Leach, Edmund. "The Structure of Myth." In <i>Claude Lévi-Strauss</i>.</p> <p>Hammel, Eugene. "The Myth of Structural Analysis: Lévi-Strauss and the 3 Bears." In <i>Modules in Anthropology</i> 25, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1972.</p>
23	Hyenas and Demon Brides	<p>Beidelman, Thomas. "Hyena and Rabbit." <i>Africa</i> 31, no. 1 (1961): 61-74.</p> <p>Hymes, Dell. "The Wife who Goes out Like a Man." In <i>In Vain I Tried to Tell You: Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics</i>. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981, pp. 274-299.</p>
24	Jaguars, Vampires, and Starlets	<p>Howe, James, and Lawrence Hirschfeld. "The Star-Girls' Descent: A Myth about Men, Women, Matrilocality, and</p>

		Singing." <i>J. of Am. Folklore</i> 94, no. 373 (1981): 292-322.
25	Movies on Myth	none
26	Wrap up	none

Supplementary Readings

Bell, Catherine. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Douglas, Mary. *Natural Symbols*. New York: Vintage Books, 1973.

Fernandez, James, ed. *Beyond Metaphor: The Theory of Tropes in Anthropology*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.

Gibbs, Raymond. *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Humphrey, Caroline, and James Laidlaw. *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Kertzer, David. *Ritual, Politics, and Power*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The Raw and the Cooked*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

———. *The Savage Mind*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966.

Maybury-Lewis, David, and Uri Almagor, eds. *The Attraction of Opposites: Society and Thought in a Dualistic Mode*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989.

Needham, Rodney, ed. *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.

Ortony, Andrew, ed. *Metaphor and Thought*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Polkinghorne, Donald. *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany: Status University of New York Press, 1988.

Rappaport, Roy. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Sapir, J. David, and J. Christopher Crocker. *The Social Use of Metaphor*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977.

Tambiah, S. J. *Culture, Thought, and Social Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985.

Turner, Victor. *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.

———. *The Ritual process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969.

Hendy, Andrew Von. *The Modern Construction of Myth*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.

Willis, Roy, ed. *Signifying Animals: Human Meaning in the Natural World*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Lecture Notes

LEC #	TOPICS
1	Introduction (PDF)
2	Culture, Sign and Symbol (PDF)
3	Discuss <i>Illness as Metaphor</i> (PDF)
4	Metaphor and Other Tropes (PDF)
5	More Tropes (PDF)
6	Interpreting Metaphor (PDF)
7	Metaphorical Imperialism (PDF)
8	Animals (PDF)
9	Animals and Classification (PDF)
10	Roosters and Interpretation (PDF)
11	The Human Body (PDF)
12	More Bodies (PDF)
13	Classification and Cosmology

	(PDF)
14	Ritual (PDF)
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26	Wrap up

1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the anthropology study of symbolism

No prereqs, open to anyone

Run as combination of discussion and lecture

Readings keyed to each class, crucial that stay up, is core of course

No exam, just class participation and short papers

Will look at several kinds of symbolism anthropologists typically study.

1. **Myth.** Narratives, often set at beginning of world, very significant for life today but very different from today: Story of man who lives alone; one day comes home to find food cooked. So hides in bushes next time goes to forest, watches his dog turn into a woman, cook his food. Next time he keeps her from turning back into dog, marries her. Then more episodes...

But also everyday narratives: what I did yesterday; how I wrecked my car; why so-and-sos are no good; why all our projects fail; how I beat cancer.

2. **Ritual.** action of special sort. Some traditional African kingdoms, before new king put on throne, had to endure abuse, treated as vile. Famous Japanese temple rebuilt every twenty years, elaborate ceremonial at each step of taking apart and rebuilding.

3. **Magic.** Ritual that accomplishes something concrete. In society where I worked, man chants to animals before hunting, gets them to fall in love and come to him. If accidentally thinks of women while chanting, then no animals but lots of love affairs.

4. **Taboo.** prohibitions and negative magic, things shouldn't do. Don't eat pork, don't eat beef. If pregnant, eat crackers but not bread.

5. **Cosmology and symbolic systems.** Elaborate schemes of how the universe put together. In one system, 8 layers in universe. Soul must travel thru all 8 to get to heaven.

So we will be looking at lots of juicy, exotic stuff. But we will be looking at symbolism in our own society as well, often just as exotic, certainly a crucial part of life. Nothing secondary or trivial or decorative, often crucial issues in social life.

What is distinctive about anthropological approaches to symbolism?

Anthropology has borrowed from other fields concerned with symbolism, but we are different from most of them.

Many psychologists are most concerned with private symbols. Freudian analyst wants to decipher the symbols in patient's dream, use as key to patient's unconscious

When Freud looked at shared symbols, he often treated them as a kind of mass neurosis or psychosis

But anthropologists are most concerned with public, shared symbols. Something used or recognized by all the members of a group. And we do not treat public symbols as derivatives or offshoots of private symbols

Just because the symbols are public doesn't mean that their meanings are necessarily obvious. Some symbols may be public but obscure.

With the people I studied in the field, the Kuna of Panama, sometimes when I asked what something meant, it could be explained right away. Why did chief sing about termites in a tree trunk? Answer: It refers to a bad chief, who looks good on the outside but is rotten on the inside. For other symbols, they couldn't or wouldn't explain. At end of one ritual, they shoot a rooster with bow and arrow, I asked what it meant, they said they'd always done it that way, end of explanation. May even refuse to see as symbolic: a chief told me a myth, young men hiding behind a tree. I asked why that kind of tree, what did it mean? Chief said, well that just happened to be the tree that was there when they needed to hide.

Psychologists, when they leave the individual, often jump to the universal. Look for the meanings of a symbol in all cultures. e.g., every time someone dreams of a train going into a tunnel, always means the same thing. There may be individual variants---one patient may dream more often about trains, or a specific kind of train---but overall it is pretty constant. Jung and Jungians also looked for universals.

Anthros, on other hand, recognize wide variation in meaning from one culture to another. Some societies say the moon is female: the Kuna say it is an incestuous male.

Some cultures say dogs are wonderful, loveable; others that they are nasty, promiscuous, dangerous curs that eat, crap everywhere, and mount anything on legs. Others say neither, just that dogs very tasty.

Western culture makes much of the number three. Kuna and many other societies think four and multiples of four best: balanced, like the quarters of the universe. Chinese, I am told, avoid four because it sounds like the word for death.

So there can be great variation from one culture to the next. Also, the meaning in a particular culture is often most interesting and significant for how people understand and use symbols. This doesn't mean that we won't find things that are similar from one culture to the next. We may even infer the existence of some universals. But mostly we want to read symbols in their local context.

Many students of symbolism most concerned with meaning. Anthros are very concerned with meaning, but also want to know how symbols *used*, what symbols do.

Symbols can help maintain the status quo, or they can convince someone to spend a lifetime fighting the status quo. They can take a child and turn him or her into an adult. They can sometimes even cure the sick. So we want to look at symbols in action.

The readings for this course consist mostly of article and chapter-length selections on particular cases. Some easy, some more difficult. We will discuss and work through the readings and try to build up some generalizations. I will also supply some generalities in class.

We will focus on particular kinds of symbolism and particular problems and issues in the study of symbolism. We will not be doing a history of schools of thought or theorists of symbolism.

We will also not be introducing a lot of technical vocabulary, just a few basic terms and distinctions. Special terms are helpful sometimes, but in my opinion too many people working on symbolism and meaning get themselves lost in a thicket of terms and dogma.

[Class sessions will consist in large part of question-and-answer and discussion; in these notes, however, they are presented, with some exceptions, as discursive lectures.]

2. SYMBOL AND CULTURE

Today just lecture. You won't have finished first reading until next time. Also, since there are no prereqs for this course, I need to cover some basic anthropological ideas, as background to any course. Most basic of all, **culture**. Fundamental to anthropology.

We used to have more trouble introducing the concept, because of other meaning of culture, high culture, esp. art & music

But today the anthro meaning is pervasive. Used to explain everything:

-What was the problem with shuttle disaster? Culture at NASA What problem with rapes at air force academy—culture there. What cause of sex abuse by priests; culture among priests & bishops. You hear of corporate culture, academic culture, everything culture.

But it wasn't always so. Culture concept arose, mostly in 19th century, as way to talk about systematic nature of human thought and action.

Previously, many explanations of human actions and thought in terms of **environmental determinism**. Why do people in Alps believe in witches?---thin mountain air. Why are people in Latin America or Indonesia inferior to us Europeans? Hot, unchanging climate. Climate doesn't challenge them like our temperate climate

Montesquieu said Northerners were brave, vigorous, insensitive to pain, weakly sexed, intelligent, and drunkards.

Another Frenchman of the Enlightenment said Northerners faithful, loyal to government, cruel, undersexed. Southerners malicious, crafty, wise, expert in science but bad in government.

Another said northern languages have lots of consonants, because people afraid to open mouths and let in cold air.

Sounds silly now, but was very common, still pops up.

At other extreme, many things explained in terms of some basic traits common to all humans, so-called human nature, or else by traits thought to vary biologically from one population to another. Something innate. With development of racial and biological thinking was thought to be in our blood or genes.

So caught between external nature, environment, or internal nature, heredity

There was a vague sense that there was something in the middle, neither biologically nor environmentally determined, called custom / tradition / lifeway / mentality / habit / usos y costumbres. But vague.

Then, 19th century, word culture adopted. Borrowed from art/music, expanded to encompass everything. Most often associated with early British anthro, Edward Tylor. Was a complex whole that humans carried with them and passed on non-biologically.

Learned, not biologically programmed.

Varies independently of biology. People who look very different but share same culture, and vice-versa.

Carried on by a chain of learning, though doesn't mean that consciously taught.

Shared: has to be group, small or large.

But carried on by individuals, in their heads. Wholly or partly mental.

Includes ideas, values, assumptions, procedures, practices.

This does not mean that the environment and our biological natures are thus irrelevant. They may affect culture in all sorts of ways. Been suggested that all herding peoples, because of way must care for, move, guard animals, value independent personalities, aren't big believers in witchcraft but often warlike, etc.

Similarly, though people in two different societies may make facial expressions differently, there are pan-human constants in expressions, so how one smiles probably combination of "human nature" and cultural peculiarities.

Still many debates on relative importance of different factors. But neither the environment nor biology works by itself, with nothing in between. Cultures are systems with integrity of own, those other factors are inputs into system.

One way to talk about culture is by analogy.

Culture is like a game.

A game has a set of rules, procedures, assumptions: what is the prize? what are the moves? how do you win?

But also many procedures etc. that not in rule book. Even things that against rules.

-Pitcher learns how to dust off aggressive batters, may also learn to throw spitball.

-Boxer learns how to go into clinch with opponent to get breather

Even rules saying how bad different kinds of cheating are: Dusting off batters is resented but expected. Many famous pitchers, e.g. Roger Clemens, known to do. But spitballs really bad.

Even procedures for dealing with other people's cheating: soccer, when fouled, writhe on ground, great show of pain.

Culture like that, many rules, only some moralistic. We have rules about violence: It's wrong, but you can't be a man if not ready to fight, or can't be *real* man until killed someone.

Understandings about when violence Ok or expected, procedures for acting tough but not actually having to fight.

Another thing about games is that they create whole world, which seems natural, inevitable. But actually artificial, arbitrary. Historical accidents. Only realize when e.g. explain punting as metaphor in life to foreign colleague, or infield fly rule.

Another analogy:

Culture is like grammar.

Modern linguistics shows that everyone has grammar. Not something that consciously taught.

Learn by growing up in language community, learning to speak.

Most people can't explain difference between voiced and unvoiced consonants, but we use the distinction all the time, both in speaking and in listening.

We all produce a puff of air with an initial P, but not in Spanish.

So we learn very complex set of rules without knowing we know them.

So culture may be seen as a kind of grammar, even more complex, for action and thought

From this perspective, a chair is not culture, but rules for making chairs are. Ditto ideas about how to sit in them, when to sit, when to stand, what are good chairs, how much a leather chair should cost, etc. etc.

When the Japanese first encountered the West, they were appalled by chairs. Thought they were uncomfortable and realigned internal organs in bad way

Notice that grammar does not determine what you say, just gives you rules for producing utterance that someone else can understand and respond to. If a couple parts in doorway:

Man can say: Goodnight, or I love you, or I hope your earache gets better.

Woman can respond: I love you too; Don't you think it's a little early to talk of love; I'm not attracted to men; Get lost, creep!

With a flag, we can't predict absolutely what one person will do, but if he burns it, we have good sense of how others will respond.

Also, culture like grammar in that can't just get someone to give you rules. You depend on them to help you find the rules, but it's not just a matter of telling you.

So culture is the total set of understandings---assumptions, recipes, values, procedures, ideas, etc. associated with a particular group of people. Very messy concept, we may have chance to see some of its inherent problems, but also very fruitful.

General assumption that cultures very complex, full of all sorts of stuff, packed full, and by no means consistent or all in agreement, but that there are areas of significant agreement.

Culture is ubiquitous

Everything we do is affected by cultural assumptions and understandings.

It affects how we hold our bodies, how close or far we keep from others, whether we can touch them or not.

We generally don't touch people we are not intimate with, but we have subtle rules about quick touches to e.g. say one is sorry for small fault.

One way we discover how much this is controlled by culture is thru encountering difference.

What one culture considers too far away, stand-offish, rude, cold, another thinks much too close, presumptuous. How much eye contact, how much breath on each other.

Other rules of interaction, what can talk about. One Korean immigrant noticed that Americans talked about the most amazingly intimate things with strangers on airplanes but took great offense if you asked them about how much money they earned.

Behavior in public bathrooms. One student in 1970s, Vince Stanton, wrote great paper on male bathroom behavior at MIT. Rules: don't look at others. At urinals, always leave empty one in between unless no choice. May talk with friends but look away. Rules concerned with modesty but also fears of homosexuality or being mistaken for gay.

Movie, "Star Man" alien doesn't know rules, gets punched out.

Every possible area of life is at least partly governed by cultural understandings. Ubiquitous.

Biological and Cultural Adaptation.

We are of course still animals, still biological creatures.

There are many ways we are biologically adapted to our environments.

Some are merely matters of acclimatization: When I return to tropics, takes about a week to adjust. Known precisely how many days takes normal lungs to adjust to high altitudes.

Some are lifelong and much more permanent than mere acclimatization. Dory fishermen had hands in Atlantic all day, much more inured to cold. But not permanent adaptation that could pass on biologically to children. Fisherman's hands like everyone else's.

But some adaptation permanently changes genetic composition of population. Most famous example sickle-cell disease. Incidence much higher in tropical Africa and around Mediterranean--hundreds of years of selective pressure, because people with one gene for sickle cell condition are much more resistant to malaria.

Adaptation most noticeable in extreme environments. Adaptations to cold of e.g. Inuit (Eskimo) and Australian aborigines probably include genetic component. Ditto ability of Inuit to survive on high-fat diets.

Undoubtedly less obvious selection in less extreme environments.

But even in most extreme environments, cultural adaptation is crucial.

Inuit diet: eat the seaweed in seal's stomachs to get missing vitamins. Inuit and cold: clothing marvelously adapted, crucial that it lets heat out when hot as well as holds in when cold.

Sweating in arctic can be fatal.

Australian aborigines and cold, traditionally no clothes. But fires of course and dogs. Old Rock Group, 3 Dog Night, was supposedly rating of how cold night was, one that took 3 dogs was really cold.

So we are completely dependent on culture.

Culture in human evolution

Likely to have been the case from very early in human evolution

First looked for tool use as key aspect of culture

Some non-human examples

Sea otters lie on backs, hit clams on rocks.

But rare.

Famous chimp named Sultan, learned to put two sticks together to reach banana, though he had lots of help.

Lab chimps also had some shared culture. Among other things, taught each other how to spit.

But then since 50s, many studies of primates in wild.

Studies of rhesus macaques on islands near Japan, fed every day

One young monkey learned to wash potatoes to get sand off. Others eventually learned on same island but not other islands. Later similar technique, throw grain on water, grit sinks, scoop up grain

Then famous studies of chimps in wild.

Found them making sticks to poke in holes to get termites. Also breaking off leaves to collect termites and ants

Undoubtedly our half-human ancestors were at least semi-cultural.

Symbolism and humanity

Along with tool use, theorists concerned with symbols as basis of culture.

Animals have communication systems, but it was thought that they were:

1. much much simpler than ours

2. completely controlled by biology (All robins call the same way), which also means can't be changed or modified

3. tied to immediate situation---called indexical. Can't signal about something far away or in past.

4. often modeled on what signal about, called iconic. Baboons show who is the boss by one briefly mounting other

All of these ideas have been modified though not overturned completely.

Many animal signaling systems amazingly complex.

When humans teach them, chimps, gorillas and others can learn language almost as well as humans, though no reason to think that do so on own.

We know that e.g. wolves signal about things that far away and out of sight

But human language still huge change.

Tremendous number of units (sounds, words, etc.), and relationship between sound and thing it represents is not fixed, not by biology, not by anything else.

So language and ability to symbolize crucial to complete humanity.

Do not at this point want to get into a lot of definitions, technical language.

Symbols are variously defined as things that seen as typifying or representing something or standing for it. Various ways of expressing it, but it is a relationship between two things in which one stands for or represents or calls to mind other.

Famous philosopher Whitehead said “The human mind is functioning symbolically when some components of its experience elicits consciousness, beliefs, emotions and usages respecting other components of its experience.”

Definition I like very much, from Clifford Geertz, says a symbols is a “vehicle for conception.” Still idea in Geertz’s definition of mental linkage: Geertz’s conception---ideas, emotions, values, etc.---are carried by the vehicle, the image or word or sound or whatever. One evokes the other. But in this broad sense, symbolism is a huge topic, much huger than we can tackle in this subject in one semester.

Would include everything in human language, which one monstrous elaboration of symbolism. This is not a class in linguistics.

We are going to be looking at symbols of a more restricted sort.

Set apart from mere words.

First by number of levels or dimensions. The relationship between sound or written word *goat* and idea of a goat is first-order symbolic. But if we say our friend Fred is a goat, more symbolic complexity, more levels. If we find culture where the deity is a goat, ditto.

Second differentiate the symbols we interested in by importance and emotion that symbol arouses. As famous linguist, Edward Sapir, put it, when “its actual significance is all out of proportion to the apparent triviality of its mere form.” With visual symbols, mere form of cross or swastika trivial, but meanings and emotion far from it.

So we are going to look at symbols where more complexity and layers and dimensions than just word and referent, and symbols that seem full of meaning and emotion and value. Seems very characteristic of humans that make this sort of symbolism as well as garden variety reference to one thing by another.

But these are not absolute distinctions by any means: they don’t offer us a clear dividing line, just point us in certain directions.

3. DISCUSSION OF SONTAG’S *ILLNESS AS METAPHOR*

Sontag’s essay is hurried and sometimes careless. In places she contradicts herself. But it provokes us to think about metaphor, and it encourages us to look for symbolic associations and meanings everywhere in life, not just in highly self-conscious symbols like the Christian cross or the hammer and sickle.

According to S, what are the similarities and differences between the images of cancer and TB? Why do the differences matter?

How is insanity like TB? Can you think of recent examples where insanity or psychological excess is glorified or romanticized?

According to S, what is wrong about attaching such ideas to a disease?

What is S’s attitude to metaphor in general? Is she consistent? What does she mean by metaphor?

Why is S angry?

Why does S think it significant which part of the body an illness attacks?

How does disease individuate people or lump them together?

Can you think of ways other than those mentioned by S that we moralize disease?

Do you think attitudes towards heart attack patients have changed since S wrote? towards cancer?

What other conditions do we deal today with by labeling them as illness?

Is there a way to avoid metaphorizing illness?

Are cancer metaphors necessarily authoritarian and repressive? What about metaphors of the body and society?

4. METAPHOR AND OTHER TROPES

Susan Sontag sometimes insists that we only think about things literally, without using metaphor, but it is not clear we can do that, because figurative language is so pervasive in all human languages

We need to make some basic distinctions, starting with the word **Trope**. Metaphor is one of several kinds of trope.

A trope is a figure of speech (though we will also see that can exist outside of language) in which one thing is linked symbolically with something else.

It is sometimes seen as a replacement or substitution, as putting one thing in the place of another: You're a chicken/ a turkey/ acting like a pig/ howling like a wolf.

He's a good egg/ a brick/ an angel/ pond scum.

The British comedian Terry Thomas used to say "Hard Cheese, old chap" meaning tough luck. A boat named the "Flying Cloud"; a town named "New York" or Turner's Falls---all are tropes.

It is sometimes said that a trope is calling a thing something it isn't: I can see that you're not really a dirty dog or an old goat.

Sometimes this point has been taken even further, to suggest that all tropes are lies. Sontag sometimes seems to pick up some of this attitude.

But we will see that this is a slippery distinction, because often tropes are not "just a figure of speech": to say that Jesus is a shepherd or God is a father is not merely metaphorical to a devout Christian.

Moreover, the essential nature of many thing is often unclear or inchoate. We sometimes define what something is by tropes.

No reason to see tropes as anything but good, also as inevitable. No way anyone can get by with just literal speech.

Metaphor. When people say "metaphor," they often mean tropes in general, but it's best to save this word for one variety of trope.

Namely one that links two separate things that are in some sense alike or equivalent or parallel or correspond with each other.

Hair of the dog that bit you/ Nixon as a used car salesman/ Elvis as teddy bear (not lion or tiger).

Any trope where two separate things are likened to each other, where they share attributes.

Notice that metaphor is often distinguished from simile, in that similes make overt comparisons, often using the word "like". Also distinguished from analogy, a term that tends to be used for more formal, abstract comparisons, or for complex metaphors.

We will ignore these distinctions. For us, all are varieties of metaphor: they have same structure and intent, whether one says he *is* a lion or is *like* a lion. The term allegory is used for especially self-conscious or elaborate or moralizing metaphors.

Metonymy. Another trope, which links two things that are somehow connected, physically or factually, or contiguous, but not necessarily alike.

One formal definition, from David Sapir (see supplementary readings), says metonym, “Rather than the relationship of two terms from separate domains that share overlapping features, it is the relationship of two terms that occupy a common domain but do not share common features” (1977:20).

Thus umbrellas can be metonyms for many things with which they are associated: rain (as in symbol in newspaper weather forecast table), Winnie the Pooh, British civil servants, appeasement of dictators (because of Neville Chamberlain in 1938).

Q. What are things for which cigars are used as metonyms?: for tough guys, men on their own, bad smells, politicians, childbirth, Fidel Castro, Winston Churchill, tongue cancer, etc. etc.

Anything that is associated with something or someone can be a metonym for it: Cowboys and guns, saddles, cows, prairies, chuck wagons, drinking, singing, fist fights, Dodge City, the streets of Laredo, body odor, etc.etc.

Geographical names are often metonymic: Cedar Rapids, Blue Hill, Turner’s Falls, Indian Lake.

Q. What about cars? What are the metonymical and metaphorical connections of cars as wholes, and parts of cars? Back seat or rumble seat with sex. The trunk with mob killings. Hubcaps and radios with theft. Ad infinitum. Often elaborated, as in Springsteen’s “Pink Cadillac.”

In all of these examples, metonym is constructed on the basis of *physical* contiguity or connection. Physically in same domain or joined. But, according to traditional definitions, which come down from Aristotle, it can also be *logical* contiguity or connection:

Cause for effect: “It’s the liquor talking” (about a belligerent drunk).

Effect for cause: “We laid a patch” (meaning we accelerated sharply).

Container for contained: “The Vatican issued a statement today.”

Instrument for agent: “You have gotten yourself a machete” (what is said to a new bride about her husband as worker among the Kuna).

Act for agent.

If we return to Sontag, we can see that when she says metaphor, she often means tropes in general and only sometimes metaphor in particular.

If TB is said to gallop, it is a metaphor *about* TB drawn from the domain of horses.

If the white race is called the cancer of the world, it is metaphor drawn *from* the domain of disease about a human population.

If TB is said to have been associated with travel, exotic places, or exile, these are all metonyms.

Seeing cancer as an invasion is metaphorical; claiming that it follows from sexual repression is metonymic, cause and effect.

Synecdoche. There is one more kind of trope to be noted. Synecdoche is a trope in which the relationship between the two things is one of part to whole. The most commonly cited example is use of sail to mean a whole ship.

Very frequent with hands: cowhands, deck hands, old hands, all hands on deck.

Kuna also say to bride, "You have gotten yourself a hand."

Like other two tropes, synecdoches are ubiquitous. Any kind of symbolic relationship where smaller represents larger or vice-versa. Macrocosm and microcosm: cities on same plan as universe, house within city on same plan.

Alternative therapy called reflexology: whole body is mapped out onto foot.

Journalists are addicted to synecdoche: they examine one family or school or army unit or hydroelectric project and then treat it as typical of all such things.

Famous documentary TV show from years ago about family named Loud: treated as if stood for all American families.

Same in literature, drama, where situation is seen as in some way typical of all Americans or all humans or all whatevers: Death of a Salesman, Archie Bunker, Everyman, Hamlet.

Some theorists treat synecdoche as just one kind of metonym. I think it is useful to distinguish them. (More on this later.)

Sapir (1977:13-19) distinguishes two varieties of synecdoche, *taxonomic* and *anatomical*.

Anatomical wherever it is a physical part/whole relationship: Just direct your feet to sunny side of the street. (No implication that you should leave the rest of your body behind.)

Almost any part of the human body: He is a brain/ an asshole/ a legman.

Caricatures depend on a kind of physical synecdoche. Nixon's stubble or Barbara Streisand nose or Jimmy Durante's nose stands for whole person.

Taxonomic where it is one *kind* of thing: where Columbine stands for all school violence or all schools. Where King Lear stands for all foolish or anguished old men.

So we have three basic kinds of trope.

It is important to remember that all three consist not of single things by themselves, but of relationships between two or more things.

Also, we will see that particular tropes may involve more than one kind of connection to something else. Something can be both contiguous and alike, thus both a metaphor and a metonym. If we say dogs are like owners, a point often made humorously, dogs are thus both connected with owners and resemble them.

Many discussions of tropes have gotten completely tangled up or off on a wrong track because of the assumption that a figure can only be one thing or another.

All three terms come from Greek rhetoric, which actually has many more figures. But these three enough for us. Fourth often recognized is irony.

I prefer to see irony as a way of framing tropes or descriptions or claims or whatever is seen as ironic. Involves negation---I don't really mean it---or some other twist on the statement or claim.

The sources of metaphor.

As soon as start paying attention to the three tropes, see that ubiquitous, pervasive.

Can't get away from them.

One approach is to look at the sources of metaphor, the subject areas drawn on to make metaphors about other things.

We will see later on some of the symbolic uses of foods, cooking, eating, etc.

Consider how (supposedly) characteristic foods are used to label national and ethnic groups:

Limeys, Frogs, Beaners, Greasers, Krauts, etc.

Any field, any domain of concern gets drawn on to make metaphors: weather, time of day, etc.

In some cases such metaphors hold on even after the field has changed: we still have hundreds of metaphors from the age of sailing ships, for some of which we have forgotten the logic.

About people: derelict, hulk, loose cannon, old hand, mate, etc.

Actions: launch program, fend off, jump ship, scuttle, salvage, to ship something, etc.

And especially concerning politics and government: ship of state, who's at the helm? drifting, figurehead, change course, etc.

Dangers, problems: uncharted waters, sail close to wind, on lee shore, devil to pay, any port in storm, etc. etc. etc.

Logic often unclear today: Back and fill (now often taken as parking metaphor) about state of ship when drifting under control, sail alternately backing and filling. Loose cannon trope is vivid if see effect of uncontrolled cannon on wheels rolling around deck. "Devil" was last, outermost, seam between boards of deck, "paying" was caulking, hardest with that seam. Full version of saying was: "The devil to pay and no pitch hot."

"Taken aback": probably not even aware that it is a nautical metaphor. Describes what happens when wind veers 180 degrees on square-rigged ship; suddenly driven straight backwards. Strong metaphor for being surprised or shocked by something.

Learning basic metaphors essential to participating in culture.

Clock as a resource for metaphor.

Sometimes new source of metaphors can transform thinking. Happened with invention of watches and clocks, most complex and impressive machine, people seized on them to talk about other things.

Descartes used to differentiate animals from humans: animals are like clock, essentially mechanical, no soul like humans.

Parts of natural world compared to parts of clock to argue for existence of God: if look at clock spring, can infer a clockmaker and a design for the whole; same true if look at an eye or a whale. Argument from design.

Could also be used to suggest purpose in universe, one we can't understand, like purpose in watch.

But some used in other ways: notion that world like clock, in that God sets it going in beginning and then leaves it to run on own. Clock-maker god, not intervening

capriciously in people's lives as things come up. Some loved idea, made world seem orderly; some hated it, made world too impersonal. Some romantics rebelled against "soulless" mechanistic ideas, attacked clock analogy.

Tropes as structure.

Study of tropes has revealed how crucially important they are in all sorts of areas: they provide structure or a model of how to think about something. True in science, religion, history, and just about everywhere else.

Dream Interpretation.

We have an article by Gregor on Mehinacu dream interpretation.

Some of their interpretations are outside our experience, but they all make perfect sense once they are explained.

Q. What does dream about an anaconda mean? Q. What do you need to know about Mehinacu life to understand? Q. What about heaps of tapir dung? or wasp stings? or flying ants?

The Kuna, who live far way to North and West in Central America, differ in the specifics of their dreams and interpretations, but the interpretive principles are exactly the same.

You are standing on another island, your pants are ripped: means they are talking about you at home.

You catch many fish: you will win the national lottery.

You see an American: you will hunt a white-lipped peccary (which goes in groups and trumpets like U.S. soldiers in the Canal Zone). You see a Panamanian: you will hunt a collared peccary (which goes singly or in small groups and is less noisy).

Very striking that Freudian dream interpretation uses same mechanisms.

His theory is very different. Concerned with unconscious mind, wishes/ideas/emotions which too dangerous or frightening or turbulent to express or think about consciously, so dream them in hidden form.

Analyst is trying to find out, not what the future will bring, but what locked inside unconscious mind.

Freud used different terms. But basically just treated the dream symbols as hidden, difficult metaphors and metonyms. Analyst's job to unlock those tropes.

Divination. Dream interpretation is just one variety of divination, meaning any technique to peer into the future or hidden realms of the present. Will I die soon? Does she love me? Who is bewitching me? What hidden forces killed my brother?

Basic structure is more often than not based on trope: what happens in whatever thing or whatever area of life used for divination parallels what will happen: put a shoulder bone, a scapula, in fire, the cracks on the bone are read as image of where will go on the land to find animals to hunt.

Often, the divination is based on a really obvious metaphor.

When a couple marries among Kuna, send someone to nearby coral reef, find pair of crabs in a hole: how the crabs act together predicts whether marriage will be happy or conflict-filled. Astrology, both western and Chinese, based on part on set of animals and reading of those animals as metaphors about individuals born under those signs: Scorpios are dangerous or sexual, Tauruses obstinate, Geminis two-faced or ambivalent.

Magic. Divination is one among many kinds of magic. Long ago, anthropologist James Frazer said were two kinds of magic, sympathetic and contagious, basically metaphor and metonym. Sympathetic magic, metaphorical, works through similarity: stick pins in a hex dolly, stands for victim

Contagious magic, metonymic, works through contact: stab footprint, or work on something the victim has touched or used. Or hide something magical near victim.

Also synecdoche, something from victim: hair, nail clippings.

Often all three at once: hex dolly with toenail clippings inside it hidden under bed.

Everywhere in world systems of magic depend on the three tropes.

1. In one African society: when want abundance of something, use bark from a tree with many small fruits; when want a lover, use a tree whose blossoms attract bees; when want a baby to be born, use a tree whose fruits draw animals out of the forest.

2. In a society near New Guinea, when one wants a storage house to be secure, to stay undamaged by storms: use wood from a tree with tenacious roots, another tree so hard it breaks axes, and wood from the wild ginger, which fiercely repels animals.

3. Among Kuna, if the patient has scaly shedding skin, it is caused by a snake spirit; to cure a cold, use bark from tree with white sap. Carved figures representing helpful spirits, each spirit has character of wood: thorny, with tough fruits, etc. Leader is of balsa wood, smartest, because soft head is one that lets learning in.

Magical spells,

from Guianas in Northern South America.

Spell to cure eye infection:

“Sun-child eyes are blocked up with clouds/fire/smoke that meets you
short-dry-season sun-child tries very hard meets screecher parrot”

Q. What is the metaphor? Comparing cloudiness of eye with infection to sun blocked by smoke. Need to know that in dry season, with slash-and-burn agriculture, huge clouds of smoke as burn off forest. Screecher parrot flying through and dispersing smoke is like desired cure of infection.

Another from same group, to cure whooping cough, called “howler monkey sickness”

Charm describes a tree, with monkeys and sloths and other animals holding onto it with claws.

Invokes a chicken hawk and eagle to come catch the animals. Q. What is comparison? Throat like tree trunk. Claws of animals like pain in throat. Also howler monkeys make huge noise, very deep, like deep bronchial cough.

Striking how much in all these examples the logic stays the same, despite differences in the specifics.

Taboo. Negative magic or taboo, avoidance of things that symbolically bad, taboo.

Kuna have many for pregnant women. Can eat little fish, not big—why? (Want small child, easy to give birth.) Must eat crackers not bread---why? (Bread expands, rises, fetus would be too big, no easily born.) Why don't eat cold rice? (Too sticky, want birth canal slippery, baby to emerge easily.) Why avoid jaguar pelts? (Don't want baby with spotted skin condition.)

Other side of world, birth taboos have exact same logic: No reef fish, because live in little caves in coral, hard to pry out. No rotten fruit, because rotting is like dead baby.

Riddles, proverbs. Also depend on tropes:

Examples from Kuna: Q. What animal is "Meat in a can"? (tortoise)

Q. What is "noisy silver"? (a river)

Q. What bird is "Head falls first"? (Riddling name of toucan, whose bill is so heavy that drops head first if shot---metonym or synecdoche)

Proverbs are based on tropes: Don't ask the fox to guard the chickens, etc. etc.

Humor

Huge subject, but can see that at least sometimes based on tropes. When, as in *The Far Side* and in many other comic strips, animals do human things, is playing with metaphor. Often what makes a joke funny is a displacement or movement from one domain to another.

Hilarious column by Maureen Dowd on Chinese snakefish, big scare in 2002, having great fun comparing in backwards way with businessmen, Monica Lewinsky, etc. (NYT 7/07/2002). Even heading, "coming on little fin feet" is play on famous trope of fog coming in on little cat feet, joke is that fish really does walk, literally.

Euphemism. Figures of speech that tone down or hide rough talk, unfortunate or filthy things.

Also depends on tropes.

Some obviously based on metaphors. Kuna refer to urination as bailing your canoe, defecation as sending a telegram.

Q. Can you think of examples? Any of you who are native speakers of languages other than English?

Often such figures don't seem so euphemistic, not hiding or playing down or minimizing something, but joking about it. Kicked the bucket, bought the farm.

Some metonymic. What examples come to mind? "Go to bathroom" is what do on way to urinate. "Bathroom" itself is metonymic, since we are most often concerned in such rooms with elimination, not bathing. Sleep with someone.

Kuna say "Look North" for urination and defecation, because outer, northern side of islands, is where go to do it.

Many are based on a funny kind of synecdoche. Taxonomic. Takes advantage of fact that one concrete thing can be part of many general classes of things. Choose general class that sounds mild. To say that handicapped person is “physically challenged” is certainly true---being blind is a challenge, as are many rough things like being attacked by a bull---but challenges also include many much milder problems, so the figure euphemizes the condition. Same with civilian dead called casualties or collateral damage or even adversely affected, or lying as mis-speaking. One problem with euphemisms is that when become standard, lose some of euphemistic power: “retarded” now not felt as euphemistic enough, so have “developmentally challenged.” Some euphemisms are not based on tropes, but on similarities in sound, though same kind of displacement as in tropes : Some English-speakers say sugar instead of shit, also cripes, Gee, Jeese Louise, Heck, etc. Latin Americans say chuleta (pork chop) or Chihuahua instead of chinga. British Cockneys had whole form of semi-secret speech based on substituting silly rhymes.

5. MORE TROPES

We can see that in a lot of different ways metaphor shapes how we think about something. If someone consciously uses a metaphor, it may be an attempt to influence our thinking. or it may be an attempt to understand something, to make sense of it through metaphor, or both. If some field of action has set of characteristic metaphors, when we learn and accept those metaphors, they may shape our understandings and actions without our even being aware of it. We have a reading by Carol Cohn on this point. About the tropes used by the people paid to think about strategic defense issues.

Q. What is the significance, according to C, of clean bombs and surgical strikes? euphemize, remove from reality.

Q. Do you see any similarity with Sontag's argument about cancer metaphors? Similar in that both arguing that figurative language is distorting understanding, but with Cohn, at least in first part of article, it is language's capacity to remove one from reality through euphemism and abstraction that is wrong, whereas for Sontag it is active intervention thru tropes, the ability to actively distort, that she laments.

Q. Do you buy C's argument about sexual metaphors, 'More bang for the buck'? Counter-argument would be that the trope is really secondary and trivial. She anticipates this, says the sexuality so overwhelming that cannot dismiss.

Q. What is the significance of "patting" the bombs? Works both ways, both homoerotic, sexual, and domesticating, minimizing.

Q. What about the father trope? C. says more truthful about US domination than formal claims, justifications. Hugh Gusterson in our program has carried further, argues that our rhetoric about proliferation infantilizes 3d world nations, treats as children and loonies.

Q. What about language of male birth---do you buy her argument? In another context, some have said this is just language of scientific production, not limited to bombs, but does seem very persistent.

Q. Why did C. yield to the power of the language? Seductive, let you into the club, but also, if you didn't use it, then shows you are naive or nuclear virgin. Well known essay by Freeman Dyson, on nuclear issues. He leaned over backwards to be sympathetic to the anti-nuke people, but ultimately he ran them down for not knowing about throw-weight etc. Excluding anyone who doesn't buy in from having influence.

Cohn suggests that nuclear experts convince others and selves that they are considering the subject completely, but she argues that in fact considering from very narrow

perspective. Not just matter of tropes, but overall ability to create a sense of totality, true of all sorts of experts. Closed circuit of information and ideas. Late in Cold War, was a book on Soviet Military by Andrew Cockburn called *The Threat* (1983) Cockburn interviewed Russian Jews in Brooklyn who had been in military service in Soviet Union: they said Soviet army, navy in terrible shape. Naval maneuvers used by US intelligence to prove threat actually required whole fleet to be manned by officers, couldn't work otherwise. Soon proved to be true, when Soviet Union collapsed, but didn't go back and say, whoops, we exaggerated, rather just gave credit to Reagan.

Q. What does Cohn mean when she says (p.716) "learning the language is a transformative, rather than an additive, process."

Another kind of metaphor, a single substance, but very complex and significant relationship with national identity. The author is arguing for same degree power in metaphor as Cohn. Q. In article on rice in Japan, how does a food symbol also evoke aspects of the landscape and seasons? Q. How did the choice of rice as a symbol influence shape Japanese nationalism? Q. How did the sensory qualities of rice become important? Q. What kind of trope is rice in this case?

To choose a metaphor for something, one looks for features shared by the two parts or sides. By choosing one metaphor, we are in effect highlighting what we see as the important features of whatever we are looking at.

In many cases it is a genuine attempt to understand something; other times it is an attempt to persuade someone else; and often it is both at once.

History. In our readings we have a selection from a book called *Analogies at War*, about metaphorical thinking mostly among people in government in 1965 about the war in Vietnam.

Q. So what was the great historical analogy in the minds of President Johnson and Secretary Rusk? Munich, the appeasement of Hitler. Q. What did the Munich analogy say about the stakes of the war and the nature of the enemy? Q. How did people outside the government counter the analogy? Q. Anyone remember what analogies were more likely to be on the minds of the Kennedys?

In chapters that you didn't read, Khong discusses the force of the example of the Korean War, especially that in both cases you had a conflict between North and South, and in Korea, the North had invaded massively, US forces had suffered terribly but ultimately had driven them out of S. Korea.

George Ball and other doves invoked the battle of Dien Ben Phu and the disastrous French experience in Vietnam to suggest caution, not getting sucked in.

Same kinds of things go on with every major historical issue. Two of major debates in recent years were over confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas to be Justice of Supreme Court and the debate before first Gulf War on how to deal with Iraq.

With **Gulf War debate**, hawks called Saddam a Hitler, and invoked Munich.

Doves mentioned Cuban Missile Crisis, in which Kennedy succeeded by choosing more moderate course instead of bombing and was successful; Kennedy imposed blockade, doves wanted to continue embargo of Iraq. Also we now know we came very close to nuclear war over Cuba, so comparison suggested hidden dangers of rash action.

Doves also mentioned World War I, because it was a supremely stupid war, killed millions and disrupted whole world, and many think we blundered into it.

Both sides invoked Vietnam, but then they had very different understandings of lessons of Vietnam.

With **Thomas confirmation hearings**:

Republicans remembered rejection of Robert Bork, didn't want Thomas "borked".

Thomas himself invoked analogy with lynchings.

Supporters sentimentalized his life history, analogy with other heroes up from poverty and obscurity.

Comparison with Ted Kennedy's scandalous past. Some thought the analogy kept Kennedy from speaking out as forcefully as might have.

Analogy with the phony issue of the prisoner furlough that had been used by the Republicans to defeat Dukakis.

Analogy with previous controversies about court appointments, especially recent attempts to get antiabortion judges or Roosevelt's attempt to pack the Supreme Court.

Also metonymical use of history, what sequence of events fit hearings into: history of Anita Hill's actions, her relationship with Thomas.

Thinking in Time

Thinking with historical analogies is so common and so hard to avoid that book, *Thinking in Time*, written by historian and political scientist, Neustadt and May (1986) is devoted to teaching government people how to either avoid historical analogies or else to rethink them self-consciously. They show that explicit or implicit analogies have shaped many decisions.

-At start of Jimmy Carter's presidency, he was angry that he didn't get a honeymoon with congress, i.e. a few months in which they treated him gently and passed his programs. He generalized from two episodes in the presidencies of Johnson and Roosevelt. The authors show (1986:68-74) that the specific circumstances then were very different, that the analogy did not hold.

-With flu epidemic during Ford administration, he overreacted, ended up looking foolish, because he was thinking of the great flu pandemic of 1918-1919, which killed millions of

people (1986:48-57). But they may be too hard on Ford, because flu researchers today constantly worry about a repeat of the pandemic, think it is coming sooner or later.

Neustadt and May don't say analogies can be avoided altogether. They just teach readers how to use them more carefully, and also to think historically in other ways.

Scientific Metaphors

Metaphor especially likely to be used in making sense of something that invisible or hidden, like the mind or the nature of the universe, or else something that apparent but hard to conceptualize or characterize, like history or wine.

Notorious that wine tasters use all sorts of metaphors to convey the character of a wine, some of which sound silly to others.

Recent studies show that metaphors crucial in religion, natural science, social science.

Evolution.

We know that in elaborating his theory of evolution, Darwin used a variety of tropes, some conscious, others possibly unconscious.

Darwin studied development of new strains of animals by breeders, said natural selection similar to artificial selection.

Darwin also compared nature and natural selection to the workings of the capitalist market.

Also, recent scientific studies of long-term change in other areas provided a model for long term evolution of species: geology, which greatly interested Darwin, had demonstrated tremendous and very long-term modifications of planet. Historical linguistics (philology) had shown long-term changes in language, also demonstrated that different modern languages all derived from an ancient ancestor language. Ideas easily transferred to biological evolution.

Darwin embraced idea of impersonal natural selection, but others found it very hard to accept, always looked for direction, purpose, or control. So many put guiding hand or movement toward a goal or end (teleology) back into evolution. Couldn't break implicit metaphor with purposeful human action.

Metaphor also moved back the other way: neo-Darwinians said biological evolution also worked among human groups. Misunderstood survival of fittest to mean killing and driving out others rather than reproducing faster. Also assumption that winners better in ways other than just reproducing, which doesn't follow. Used to justify conquest, oppression, theft, selfishness of all sorts.

The mind.

Perhaps the ultimate black box. Many metaphors used to conceptualize.

Freud used several.

Id, ego, superego. Like separate beings or individuals within the mind. Id, all animal impulses, hairy brute; superego moralistic, chiding in somewhat wimpy way.

Also hydraulic, like great forces that can be channeled or diverted or dammed but not ignored.

Repression, like political repression.

Recently, proliferation of computer metaphors. Sherry Turkle, in MIT STS Program, has studied. Lots in everyday language: programmed a certain way or even hard-wired.

Society, politics

Sontag pointed out ways society and body compared.

She seems to think that these tropes are necessarily pernicious, authoritarian. Actually they are open-ended, flexible, though easy to make them authoritarian.

If society like body, then most important thing may be that has a head: justifies leadership, control.

Could also be class difference: the elite think like head, while lower classes just do, like body. But there are other possibilities: Kuna make same comparison (word for chief also means head), but what they most emphasize is the multiplicity of body parts, compared to multiplicity of roles. They argue that all parts and all roles indispensable, even if some more important than others. Social scientists picked up the body=society metaphor.

In trying to understand institutions like magic or jokes or witchcraft, said that each had a function, just as each organ has a function. One 19th century theorist, Herbert Spencer, took to an extreme, said nerves were like telegraph wires, etc.

Also argued that societies were discrete wholes, with close interconnections between different groups and individuals and institutions, just like the body. Said that society in balance or homeostasis. Even something like witchcraft or war had positive function.

In contrast, many journalists and others who use the body metaphor suggest that a society or community can be sick, like a diseased body or organ. Very different implications found in metaphor. Not equilibrium but disequilibrium.

Metaphoric comparisons can go both ways. A number of *functionalists* in anthropology and sociology at Harvard were colleagues of a physiologist named Walter Cannon. They used his ideas on the body in analyzing society; he used social metaphors, such as “the wisdom of the body” borrowed from human action to study physiology.

Another common and often unrecognized metaphor is that nations are like individuals: they are said to plan, think, and have emotions just like individuals. This trope is so ingrained we don't even see it as a trope. Analyzed in book on the Cuban Missile Crisis by Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision* (1971)

Allison shows that most journalists and scholars studying the missile crisis tried to make sense of what Russia, Cuba, and the U.S. did as if the governments were strategizing individuals. This comparison can sometimes help make sense of things, especially if there is a close connection between, e.g. the first President Bush's reaction to insults by Noriega and his decision to invade Panama, or if a country's actions closely follow a President's understanding of situation.

But the trope can also mislead, if the outcome or result is actually the product of standard operating procedures, unthinking routines that guide action, or of political maneuvers *within* a government. In that case a nation or government is *not* like an individual.

E.g. historians and political scientists imputed complicated strategies on the part of the nations involved to explain why the Russians got missiles into Cuba without being detected but then set them up in a blatantly obvious way---assumption was that both moves were carefully planned: in fact, may have been simply because KGB got them into Cuba and the missile service set them up, both doing it in routine way they were used to.

Religion.

We understand ultimate questions in large part through metaphor

Q. Where do they see metaphor in, e.g. conception of deities? God as father, Jesus as shepherd. (Even if we feel that God really is the ultimate father, not just a figure of speech, we still understand him and his actions in part through analogies with human fathers---e.g. parable of prodigal son.)

Q. How do we understand what deities and other spirits do in terms of human intentions and plans and emotions? "I am a jealous God." "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." When misfortune strikes, Kuna half-jokingly say that God is irritated with you.

Kuna say spirits live in villages, attack and cause illness if irritated because humans felling trees have inadvertently brought down their invisible clotheslines. When many spirits threaten, go through ritual to get them drunk and gain control of them.

Great French social scientist, Emile Durkheim, in huge book called *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912), argued that society was the model for all deities, in effect, that God was just an image, an unrecognized metaphor, for society.

Very few follow him all the way on this idea, but once you have it in mind, hard not to see that way we conceptualize heaven, spirits, etc. often mimics organization of society.

E.g. often noted that traditional Chinese spirit world sounds like a heavenly imperial bureaucracy.

In Catholicism, there is a multiplication of saints. Very often a person deals with saints rather than directly with God. In medieval society, this was like feudal hierarchy: serf doesn't deal with king but with lord of manor, who deals with his overlord, etc., all the way up to king. In more recent times, in many Mediterranean and Latin American countries, feudalism long gone but many things organized through patron-client relations, large number of bosses or godfathers or caciques. If you need something done, go to the boss. Saints similar: you ask favors from them, promise them candles etc.

Many spirits, like saints, are dealt with as one would a human, through gifts. 'If you cure my daughter, I will light candles/ build a chapel/ give up sin.'

Also saints tied to territorial divisions. Patron saint of town. Even Virgin is often Virgin of particular place.

Religious metaphors are not static, rather used creatively. Sermons are simply way of pointing out analogies: We are all doubters like Thomas. Women are/ should be like Virgin Mary/ Eve/ Lot's wife/ Rachel/ Mary Magdalene.

6. INTERPRETING METAPHOR

We will cover two main topics today, the use of tropes in rhetoric and persuasion, and how we go about deciphering tropes.

Last time we mostly looked at tropes as ways to understand something, but also used for persuasion. Especially noticeable concerning historical metaphors. Analogies like Munich or Korea were used not just to understand the Vietnam War but to sway others, get them on board.

Rhetoric and influence.

Tropes are such a staple of oratory and persuasion, the association is so strong, one of reasons why tropes are associated with deception, with describing things as what they are not.

But there is nothing inherently wrong with persuading through tropes. Just like language in general, they can lie or tell truth.

In many cultures persuasion often a matter of finding just the right trope.

At one regional political meeting among the Kuna, with about three hundred delegates, speakers used all sorts of tropes from nature, daily life, and Kuna mythology. I recorded the following:

-Men appointed to a special commission to deal with a problem complained they were denied the resources needed to carry out the job: compared to a man sent by his wife to work in the forest without the proper refreshing drink.

-A chief trying to explain that a certain situation had both good and bad features: compared to drinking cane beer at puberty ceremonies, which established by God and basically a good thing, but which brings lots of trouble.

-A speaker criticizing Kuna representatives on a national assembly compared them to the ungrateful wayward sons of a hero named Piler.

-Encouraging people to expel peasants who had invaded Indian lands: compared to a snakebite, occurs at one spot on body but then spreads throughout.

-In criticizing outside mining interests, pointed out that the earth was the body of the Great Mother, mining was like incest or rape.

-In warning against educated men, alluded to chant by famous chief in which had said that such men would bring a devil into the meeting house---depends on equation between non-Indians and evil spirits. Going to the city routinely referred to as traveling to the stronghold of the evil spirits.

-To justify cooperating with outsiders on a project, mentioned great hero who briefly married the daughters of evil spirits to learn their secrets.

-Any sort of struggle or effort or confrontation inevitably compared to their great rebellion against the government of 1925.

Such rhetoric of course plays crucial role in many struggles in rallying people. One of Churchill's greatest contributions to survival of Britain during World War II was rhetoric he used to encourage fortitude and resistance.

Kuna had their own dark years during 1910s and 1920s, in which missionaries tried to suppress their religion, and then national government tried to dominate them and to eradicate native culture.

Chiefs sing to their followers several nights a week. Chief sings for hour or so, semi-intelligible to listeners, and then sub-chief interprets speaking, explains histories or metaphors, draws out lesson and relevance for today.

-Would sing about great hero Tat Ibe, who expelled the demons and pacified the world, would say must fight like him. Or must emulate another hero, Twiren, who taught wimpy ancestors to stand up to blood-sucking enemies, defeated them in great battle.

Also sing elaborate metaphorical tableaux. Set pieces. One of things most remembered for today. Compare police to sharks, invading turtle-fishermen to diving cormorants. Story of brother-in-law who marries into family but turns out to be a cannibal monster: criticizes young men who favored change as well as outsiders.

One chief famous for singing: "Foot-tip clothes; I am your father. The outsider says he will make himself my father"---was an attack on Catholic missionaries, who wore long robes down to their toe-tips, and who insisted on being called Father.

Most famously, the greatest leader of time, named Cimral Colman, sang long series of verses representing the dangers facing Kuna and their inexorable advance. (See hand-out.)

According to the Kuna themselves, these metaphors helped galvanize opinion and prepare people for the great rebellion

We now turn to our second question. Less concerned with how *they* (whoever *they* are) use tropes than how *we* try to figure them out.

Reading and deciphering tropes.

We have seen that many of the ways people use metaphors are remarkably similar all over world. Kuna choose certain wood for curing figure because it is extremely hard.

On other side of world, islander chooses another wood for his yam house because it is extremely hard.

The structure and the thought processes are remarkably similar, but the content can be quite variable.

Many interpreters of symbols, e.g. Freudians and Jungians, look for universal symbols. But anthropologists want to see what symbols mean locally first, in a particular culture or event or place, only later look for universals.

Most things used for tropes have multiple attributes. Even if we assume that people will notice many of the same ones, it cannot be established ahead of time which ones they will foreground in a metaphor. Same animal or thing can be interpreted in great variety of ways.

e.g. **Bees.**

In our culture, mostly very positive metaphors: sweetness of honey; industriousness.

Woman who center of attention, Queen bee.

Might call lazy person a drone. Metaphors of stinging, aggression, though for those often switch to hornets or wasps.

Anthropologist, Napoleon Chagnon, who studied famous Venezuelan group, the Yanomami.

They called him "Bee" because his name sounded like word for bee in their language. Was negative metaphor, suggesting he was persistent, buzzing, irritating, like bees swarming around something.

Native North Americans saw honey bees as sign of advancing frontier, arrival of whites, because honey bees came from Europe, arrived a few years before settlers. Metonym and metaphor at same time.

In one African culture, men who get together to drink beer from pot compared to bees around flower.

In the blues, very sexual: man's stinger; honey as female sexuality or genitals; buzzing around, like bees around flower.

e.g. **Wild pigs.**

Richard the III, King of England, had boar as emblem: tough animal, fought hard, formidable foe. Had hardened skin at shoulders, which spears bounced off, called a shield.

New Guinea society, men say they are like wild pigs, but opposite meaning. When wild pigs encounter people, crash off through brush to get away, describes how this people feel when encroached on by colonialism.

Kuna interpretation of two different kinds of pigs in dream symbolism already mentioned.

e.g. Trees whose fruit attracts animals.

Mentioned society in Africa where in magic metaphor of fruiting tree helps bring child out of mother.

In head-hunting society of New Guinea, fruit equals a human head, tree the victim's body, and a parrot or squirrel the headhunting man.

Kuna compare two kinds of tree to two kinds of chief: one with soft fruit that all animals can eat is like generous, good leader; one with hard shell that only big animals can crack is like chief who show favoritism. In another context, animal who come to tree compared to enemy who is drawn into ambush.

So, the big question, is: how do we decide which attributes and which meanings are the salient ones in any particular case?

Sometimes *they* will explain, or some clue will indicate. 'It means this, stupid.' Kuna chief I worked with could explain most of metaphors he used. But sometimes not: at end of four-day ritual, they kill a rooster with a bow and arrow. When I asked why, they said it had always been done that way, no other explanation.

Part of answer is to pay attention to what they know about the world, what they see in it. What goes on with pigs or fruiting trees? e.g. Kuna, hunters often set up a stand near fruiting trees, shoot animals that come.

Turns out that indigenous peoples often have very detailed knowledge of natural world: thousands of species of plants, all the habits of the animals. May not be scientific in sense of setting up experiments or testing hypotheses, but yes, scientific in sense of very careful observation of natural world.

One of my favorite examples: Eskimo (properly called Inuit) notice that huge polar bears can move across thin ice by lying out flat. (Can see in zoos how flexible polar bears are.) The Inuit sometimes move across micro-thin ice in same way.

Paying attention and respecting local knowledge can make huge difference. Scandinavian explorers of the Arctic and Antarctic patterned their clothes on Inuit---very important that clothes can vent heat as well as retain it. Scandinavians mastered dog-sledding. Already very good on skis. Thus very successful. Amundsen in race with Scott got to South Pole first.

British were too arrogant to pay attention to what the natives did or learn their skills. Scott tried ponies and motor vehicles, really inappropriate in polar regions, useless, never mastered dogs or skis. Ended up with men hauling sledges. Lost race, and whole team died on way back from Pole.

Similarly, in 19th century in Arctic, Franklin expedition, famous disaster, ended up all dead, some cannibalism, while nearby Inuit doing fine.

So one answer, for us as well as Arctic explorers, is to pay close attention. I got a Kuna metaphor that described birds called *giblu*, said to fly around sky in formation fighting invisible battles with spirits. In September of that year I saw them, were migratory hawks, red-tailed hawks and others, same as in U.S. Hawks and buzzards migrating through area circle around in huge vortices in sky, like bird tornado, turns out they are circling on thermals to get altitude before peel off and move on. Explains metaphor.

Problem for us is that we are too detached from natural world. Even simple farmyard metaphors may get past us because of ignorance. David Sapir has wonderful discussion of why dirty old men are compared to goats.

Same with allusions to classics and Bible. In past people had read Bible, often knew intimately. One could make metaphor simply by mentioning a character in Old or New Testament, or even by citing a verse.

Still, this is only part of answer, because goats and flowers and hawks and figures in the Bible have many attributes. How do we know which are relevant in particular case?

Must remember that every trope has two parts, the two things that linked together. We get at meanings by comparing the two parts, deciding what features they share. Often have to look at context of metaphor---what have been talking about, where you are, etc.---in order to decide which of shared features are relevant right now.

e.g. Bears. many attributes. depending on context and who or what compared to, salient feature could be love of blueberries, skill as fishermen, interest in garbage or in grubs in rotten logs, hibernation, etc. etc. But if talk about Russian bear, standard political metaphor, then comparison of two parts suggests shared attributes. [In class, these are indicated by two large overlapping circles, with shared attributes written in the intersection of the two circles.]

In this metaphor probably have in mind: bears' danger, temper, ferocity, formidable as enemy or adversary, reclusive, burly, hairy, lives in cold climate, may be emerging from isolation. The trope comments on Russians and Soviet government.

Has been suggested by theorists that metaphor actually consists of two linked synecdoches. Each side is concrete thing (bear/Russian) and classes of things of which it is an example (burliness, isolation), thus a synecdoche. One doesn't have to accept this idea, but underlines fact that we are comparing two things, looking for the attributes they share, as they are seen within a particular context.

Famous example of decoding. Men of a tribe in central Brazil, the Bororo, say "We are red macaws." (Macaws are a kind of parrot.) recorded by a 19th century explorer, this statement was used by Lucien Levy-Bruhl, a theorist who wrote about "primitive mentality" as a prime example proving that "primitive" tribal peoples were either too stupid or too controlled by group thinking to see that they really weren't parrots. Levy-Bruhl had lots of other examples supposedly showing that primitive man couldn't draw boundaries between himself and other things.

More recently, anthropologist named Christopher Crocker worked with the Bororo, wanted to solve famous mystery. Turns out it is crucial that only men say they are like macaws: it is about being a Bororo *man*. To decode, he had to learn all about macaws, and about men. (In Sapir & Crocker 1977, in supplementary readings.)

Macaws are associated with spirit world for several reasons: places where they are caught, mostly by robbing nests, is a lair of spirits. Dead souls pass through transformations, one as macaw. And men wearing macaw feathers are possessed by spirits in ritual. But macaws are also kept on little perches by house doors, fed banana by women, periodically plucked of feathers. Men see selves as spiritual, women as material; men are the ones who manage ritual. In this way they see selves as superior to women. But men when marry move into wife's house, are never more than provisional member of household. Spend most of day with other men, go home briefly to be fed by wife.

So men are like macaws in that associated with spirit world, but also dependent on women, who keep them as kind of pet, feed them as do the parrots. Instead of a mindless claim showing primitive mentality, it is really a very subtle statement about the paradoxes of gender roles in Bororo society.

7. METAPHORICAL IMPERIALISM

The study of metaphor brings up a number of perennial problems in the study of cultures. One is the search for the core of culture: Is there something that is most fundamental, that determines other things or prior to them? Many answers have been offered. Basic personality type---Ruth Benedict, famous book, *Patterns of Culture*, culture as personality writ large. Other answers: a set of values, core elements of economy or social organization, adaptation to the physical environment---all suggested at one time or another. Marx, divided society into base, structure, and superstructure, but latter-day Marxians have often changed priorities.

Related question: how different are cultures? What is the range of possible variation? Is each culture truly unique? Put another way, how plastic, how changeable, are human beings? What are the possibilities?

Famous study, Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, argued that adolescent turmoil was peculiar to western culture. Said Samoan adolescents very free in sexuality, and so had no hang-ups or turmoil. Since strongly criticized, suggested that very biased, found results that wanted. Huge controversy.

As general rule, anthropologists see lots of variation, cultural variability, but some see limited possibilities in whatever area they study.

E.g. study of color terms: great variability in how different cultures cut up color spectrum, but then study said there was in fact considerable regularity.

Third related question: How much does culture determine thought and action? Are cultures straight-jackets or recipe books allowing one to cook up a lot of dishes and even create new ones?

One major approach to these questions is through language. Naive version of linguistic determinism very common: people are like their languages. Germans are harsh and rigid like their consonants, Italians fluid and not rigid enough. English much better than other languages because has huge vocabulary.

-A German told me the Kuna language had no fixed rules, i.e. no real grammar, which nonsense. A friend said Spanish speakers lacked sense of personal responsibility because they used an impersonal form to describe accidents: "It fell on me" rather than "I dropped it."

Translation and its difficulties suggest how different languages and worldviews may be. In book by JH, I used word "mixer" about dances to suggest they were sponsored by policemen in order to meet local women. Excellent translator into Spanish, but we never found a way to translate mixer satisfactorily. (Now also strange in English, because no longer have mixers.) Title of book,

A People Who Would Not Kneel, implied both that they refused to kneel and habitually didn't do it, untranslatable. Also, title in Spanish put in imperfect tense, Kuna friends said, "Oh, and now we do kneel?" which not an issue in English.

Most famous linguistic determinism in anthropology and linguistics, by amateur linguist, Benjamin Whorf, studied esp. Southwestern Indian languages. Said language strongly determined thought. Nouns in language determine how world seen. Most famous example, Eskimo (Inuit) words for snow, much finer gradations than we have---many people have heard of this example.

Even more so in grammar. W. said language of Hopi had radically different conception of time from ours. Few or no constructions that refer primarily to time, to past, future, enduring or lasting states.

Much more recently, Hopi linguist named Malotki says is complete bull: he wrote down 600 pages of temporal expressions. (Ekkehart Malotki 1983, *Hopi Time: A linguistic analysis of the temporal concepts in the Hopi language*. Mouton).

Similarly, we can learn distinctions in snow that unknown before: skiers have elaborate vocabulary.

No agreement on issue, but rough consensus that language does strongly shape how people understand world but probably not radically determine it in way Whorf suggested in his strongest claims.

If we return to metaphor, can see that the article by Cohn is concerned with some of these issues. She suggests that to talk about strategic defense issues, she had to adopt the tropes used by specialists, got her thinking and talking in certain way, very hard to break out of trap.

Most systematic and important development of such ideas by Mark Johnson and George Lakoff, philosopher and linguist. We have an excerpt from their first book on subject. Argument very similar to Whorf, though I have never found place where they acknowledge connection.

Lakoff and Johnson suggesting that metaphor much more pervasive in our language than we usually recognize. Not decoration but foundational, part of structure, basic. No self-conscious or consciously elaborated but imbedded in language, often so fundamental and pervasive that we don't recognize. Systematic: hide some things, highlight others. These are important points, they are correct. They argue that core ideas and assumptions of a culture imbedded in metaphor.

Q. What do you think of their example, Time is money? Seems very apt, though question of how much of the equation follows from the metaphors. Historians show how time discipline was imposed with growth of capitalist economy: does metaphor merely reflect or actively shape?

Q. What about suggestion that linguistic expressions are containers? or that our field of vision is a container? May not be so intuitively obvious as time is money, but the linguistic expressions we use seem to depend on that metaphor.

Q. What do L&J mean by orientation metaphors? Q. by ontological metaphors?

Q. What do L&J mean by metaphorical coherence? What is their position on how coherent sets of metaphors are? They stress how metaphors fit and work together, how coherent they are, but they also take pains to point out that coherence is partial, and that metaphors and ideas may be contradictory.

One of the key questions that has come up is whether and how much values and ideas etc. are imbedded in metaphors, how much the assumptions and values are *in* the metaphors, as opposed to the values and ideas being there in the culture, and the metaphors are chosen to represent them.

Article by Naomi Quinn, (in *Beyond Metaphor*, supplementary reading list), deals with these issues concerning American conceptions of marriage.

As Quinn sees it, Americans have a set of core ideas about marriage and how it should be. (Not everyone would agree---another might see less agreement or deny that something as big as the U.S. could have a common culture.)

Qualities: shared, lasting, mutual benefit, compatibility, difficulty, effort, success/failure, risk (p.66)

esp. shared, mutually beneficial, lasting. Mapping cultural understandings of love onto marriage. These ideas are often communicated through metaphor, but she argues that the ideas are not embedded in any single metaphor.

e.g. Lastingness represented by well-made manufactured product, on-going journey, two inseparable objects, permanent location, indestructible natural objects, secure possessions, covenant with God. No one metaphor is central—the idea is central.

Metaphors are used to convey notions that exist outside of any particular metaphor.

Lakoff shrugged off this critique, perhaps because doesn't catch its full force.

Q. If we go back to L&J's very first example in the book---argument is war (pp. 3-6)---does Quinn's argument apply? They argue that we think of arguments in a certain way, and that that conception is embedded in metaphor.

Now we can certainly think of other metaphors for arguments: a duel (“touché!”) or a game with points. But L&J would shrug that off, see those metaphors as secondary to argument=war.

What they miss is that, *regardless of metaphor*, antagonism and contestation are part of the *very definition* of argument. If we see people talking without disagreeing, without antagonism, without trying to win, then we don't call it an argument. Instead it's a chat, an interchange of ideas, a dialogue, or billing and cooing.

Furthermore, arguments are not a natural thing out there in the world like a chair. Verbal interchanges are what we experience, and if we judge them a certain way, we call them arguments.

L&J go on to suggest we imagine a culture in which arguments are not seen as war. “In such a culture, people would view arguments differently, experience them differently, carry them out differently, and talk about them differently” (p.5)---a strong claim. How we represent arguments would influence our behavior and experience as well as our concepts.

This form of claim is typical of philosophers, who often think up hypothetical, imaginary examples. “Thought experiments”. This example seems typical of two researchers who just work in English.

Q. What’s wrong with argument-as-dance in some other culture?

If we think seriously about that imaginary other culture, it won’t have any word *argument*. It will have word X, *gzornenplatz*, which labels certain verbal interactions. If it labels antagonistic, contested interactions, we might translate *gzornenplatz* as ‘argument’. If *gzornenplatz* labels interactions that are nice or like a dance, or if it invokes a metaphor comparing dialogue with dance, we wouldn’t even consider translating it as ‘argument’. We would translate it as dialogue or conversation or verbal interaction, or if no English word corresponded closely and it was important to the point we were making, we’d use *gzornenplatz* itself and then explain it at length. A word that both translates as argument and yet implies lack of antagonism or contestation is *logically* impossible. So the imaginary example is in its essence *bogus*.

L&J actually pretty ambivalent about cultural variability. Make much of grounding of metaphors in bodily experience, sounds pretty universalistic.

Q. What about their idea that the words or the metaphor necessarily constrain experience and action? If we compare verbal interaction to dance, does that mean we have to be nice?

Among the Kuna, they have many metaphors for discussions in the meeting hall. Quite a few are based on equation of cases or issue or matter with a trail or path or way (*igar*). “Hear the way,” “find the way,” “clear the path,” “resolve the way,” “give each other the way.” Other expressions: “call to each other, first one and then the other.” Nice friendly metaphors.

But those discussions once in a while get heated, even harsh and antagonistic, sometimes downright nasty. They regret the unpleasantness: “Why do we have to fight and criticize and talk tough when we are hearing the way?”

So the metaphors indicate the desired behavior but not what actually happens.

As with the original Whorfian hypothesis, this conclusions about metaphorical determinism leaves us in middle: metaphor influences and guides but seldom absolutely determines.

Tropical dualism

There is another, even more famous attempt to extend the idea of tropes, to use it to explain different domains of life.

Comes from Roman Jakobson, famous linguist, ended up at MIT

Jakobson developed the duality of metaphor/metonym, said they represented two opposed cognitive tendencies that could be recognized in many areas

(Roman Jakobson, 1956, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Aspects of Aphasic Disturbances" in *Fundamentals of Language*, R. Jakobson & M. Halle, eds., Mouton.)

To the extent that he paid attention to synecdoche, J saw it as just one variety of metonym

In all his work, J was very fond of two part, binary distinctions

(oversimplifying) J said there were two basic operations in grammars

Substitution, what could go in place of something: thus, if the subject of sentence was tree, there was a large set of nouns that could be substituted for it to go in that place in the sentence structure.

Sequence: what could go before and after in the structure of sentence.

In music, would be harmony versus melody.

Metaphor, J said, is based on substitution, metonym on sequence

Sometimes phrased as paradigmatic relations versus syntagmatic relations

J said this basic distinction characterized many domains

In literature, he said Romanticism was essentially metaphorical, naturalism metonymical

Said also found in problems with language. Aphasia, inability to correctly process or generate spoken or written language.

J said were two basic kinds of aphasia, two different linguistic failures, corresponded to metaphor and metonym

Even claimed that when one writer developed aphasia, it was the kind of aphasia that corresponded to the style of writing he had written before.

Very appealing and persuasive argument, what sometimes called sexy or cute. Clever, seems to explain a lot. Others have carried it further.

Anthro named Paine, suggested that in political rhetoric, metaphor was essentially liberal, metonym conservative

Claude Lévi-Strauss, one of most famous living anthros, his name will come up repeatedly.

During WWII, was in NYC with Jakobson and other refugees from Nazism. Levi-Strauss was strongly influence by J, tried to find similar deep structures in culture.

In *The Savage Mind*, L-S analyzed the relationship of animals and their names to human society.

Some animals seen as essentially analogous to humans, metaphorical, while others matter of association with humans, thus contiguity, metonym. Said in once case that relationship of animals themselves to humans was metonymical but relationship of their names, metaphorical.

Appealing, widely adopted, but lots of problems

Studies of aphasia don't seem to have followed J's suggestion since then
Does literature really divide into two clear types corresponding to metaphor and metonym? Not very likely, very hard to apply when get down to cases. Certainly, concerning political rhetoric, there are lots of conservative metaphors and liberal metonyms.

The grand schemes have been abandoned, but one frequently sees offhand, passing references to things as metonyms or metaphors. Very widespread, often-used distinction.

More fundamental problems with this dualism include the following.

First, J offers no good reason to forget about synecdoche. In practice, with a particular trope, it may be hard to say whether it's synecdoche or metonym, but it is in general useful to distinguish the two

In particular, taxonomic synecdoches are quite distinct from metonyms

So no particular reason to insist on a dualism

Second, and even more important, J (and many others) assume that tropes are always essentially one thing or another.

In the readings, Ohnuki-Tierry introduces the concept of *polytropes*, tropes that are two things at once.

She introduces a lot of technical points, sometimes confusing, her usage for synecdoche is different from what we are using here---disregard all that. What is crucial is the idea of polytrope.

Many many tropes are both metaphorical and metonymic. The Kuna constantly compare villages to rivers. Each village must be near a river for fresh water, so metonymic, but they also develop instructive comparisons, so metaphorical. Effective political action like flood in river that washes away debris and snags, sweeps clean.

Previously, in discussing magic, we mentioned hex-dollies that metaphorical, metonymical, and synecdochal all at same time

Third, tropes have a way of decomposing into each other.

Synecdoches, part/whole relationship, but some are felt as more or less arbitrary than others.

Sapir calls them "apt" synecdoches. What is aptness?---it is when the part is felt to resemble or epitomize the whole. Thus metaphor lurks inside synecdoche, appears any time there is a resemblance between part and whole.

Metonym similar. a metonym is felt to be good or strong according to the strength of the physical or logical connection between its parts and/or according to its aptness, i.e. its similarity. If a cigar is associated with a person only because he smokes them all day long, the relationship is purely metonymical, but if in some implicit way, however vague, the cigar's qualities resemble the smoker's, then the connection is also metaphorical. Look at L&J's discussion of metonym, esp. of dove as Christian metonym (p.40)---obvious that it is also a metaphor.

So both metonym and synecdoche have a tendency to leak into metaphor, just as soon as two things not just linked in fact but also in shared features.

Jakobson served a useful function, got people looking for tropes outside of literature, poetry, just as L&J have. But rigid distinction doesn't hold up.

8, 9, 10. ANIMALS

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 20th 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.

* * *

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 19th 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, 19th 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 20th 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 forbad 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 18th 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

11, 12. THE HUMAN BODY

Move today to new domain of symbolism, human body. As before, approaching from two directions, how body used to talk about other things, and how meanings imposed on the body. Very trendy topic in recent years. Some elements of faddism, but is genuinely important topic. We have of course already seen with Sontag. Much of work in recent years concerned with way things, esp. power relations, are imposed or "inscribed" on body. Grows out of work of Michel Foucault and others. But this only part of huge subject. We will cover several different aspects of body. As with animals, space, colors, and other things, bodies seem to be unambiguously real and natural. Part of the strength of all these things. Does not seem to be constructed or imposed or in any way artificial. But of course we have already seen with animals that in fact cultures shape how we perceive, react to, feel about the natural world. All this true of body as well. What could be more physical, just *there*, than the body? Nature at its closest to us---the part of nature we have to live inside. But in fact our experience and understanding of bodies is culturally shaped in any number of ways.

Body image

One of the most given aspects of our bodies would seem to be their size and shape, their displacement in the world: there it is. In fact, many studies suggesting that our image of our bodies is constructed, put together out of different sensory inputs, concepts, etc. Also fragile.

Cases of trauma or assault on body image esp. revealing.

Phantom limbs well known phenomenon. Because nerves still there, they can be stimulated even though the arm or leg they led to has gone. Feels like it is still there, can itch like crazy; some patients even see it.

Opposite also revealing. Oliver Sacks, well known writer and all sorts of medical, cognitive issues. Movie from one of his books, opera based on another. Wonderful, fascinating. He has book, *A Leg to Stand on*. Tells how was chased down a mountain by bull, terrible fall and damage to leg. During long hospitalization, convinced that leg was not there, only very gradually learned to perceive it and feel it again.

Similar phenomena with more “normal”, everyday changes, e.g. as fall asleep. Sense of one’s size, shape, extension can change.

In experiments, people have trouble specifying color of own skin. Skin in fact is esp. indistinct. We conceptualize it as a distinct envelope, but our perception of own skin is much mushier

Becomes clear that our image of own bodies constructed out of several elements together: sight as well as touch, other people's perceptions.

Gesture

This is one area where many people are aware of cultural differences, though sometimes striking just how radically different can be: thumbs up gesture highly obscene or other wise negative in a number of cultures. Q. Do you have examples from your own experience?

Movement

This less often recognized. How people move, how they hold their bodies, strikingly variable. There are of course basic human constants: we all walk upright. Studies using film have shown pan-human constants in expressions: smiling, weeping, eyebrow flash. Fundamental importance of eye contact.

But cultural variation also important. Marcel Mauss, Durkheim's colleague, struck by variation in how European soldiers marched. How swung legs etc. Wrote essay on use of body, variation. One example: British regiment that adopted French marching band, some historical reason, but British found it impossible to march to French military music, had to go back to British band. (Marcel Mauss, "Les Techniques du Corps" in: 1966, *Marcel Mauss, Sociologie et Anthropologie* (Presses Universitaires), pp. 365-386; also translated by Ben Brewster, *Economy & Society* 2 (1973).

Another place where variation obvious, or used to be, is with martial arts from different parts of world. (With wide western adoption of eastern arts, differences blurred.) Differences in where center of body is, where action begins in body. N. American culture emphasizes chest, arms, shoulders, some Asian societies more from abdomen.

V striking differences in how run, e.g. in movie "Seven Samurai". Even more in punching. We say someone "swings" or "throws" punch; in martial arts, more contained, from inside.

Conceptions of the body

Wide variation in how invisible interior of body understood, issue raised by Sontag. Jonathan Miller, in book, *The Body in Question* (1978), shows how understanding of body and its parts changed over centuries. Things we assume are obvious may not be. Chapter on the heart (pp. 176-212), Miller argues that Harvey grasped how heart circulated blood in part because of recent invention of mechanical pumps. Needed industrial objects as analogy before could be understood.

All sorts of interesting questions: when my son was in hospital for back operation, surgeon complained that the condition of his disk was clearer in the MRI than when he actually cut.

One important question is how things are mapped onto the body. We put emotions in heart. Everyone aware that not really seat of emotions, is a pump of blood, but we use the idea so consistently that it is more or less as if we did literally believe. Other cultures, wouldn't occur to map emotion onto heart.

Buddhism, statues, emphasis on abdomen.

Some years ago idea from neurological research that certain functions localized on right or left side of brain. became widespread metaphor for all sorts of oppositions, esp. creativity, intuition vs. cold rationality. In letter of recommendation from famous anthro years ago, he went into rant against left-brain people.

French localize many conditions in liver. Every disease has something to do with liver. We seldom think about it. Recent work shows surprising cultural variation in medicine just within Europe. Famous study of witchcraft, Azande of Sudan, showed that localized in liver. Maybe they are French.

Doubt that there is free variation in how body is experienced. Certain bodily experiences physiologically controlled, constants. But how they are interpreted in different cultures wide variation. The Japanese posit two states called ki and kokoro, culturally salient in all sorts of areas, incl. martial arts.

Extreme in systematic mapping of things onto body, 19th century pseudo-science, phrenology. Head divided up into regions, each with cognitive and emotional functions (discussed below and in later class, see diagram on cover page for this OCW listing).

So, there are many answers possible to question: What's going on in there?

The body linked to other things

As always, we are less concerned than any things or things by itself than how linked to other things: hearts as pumps; dogs, rabies, and class; invasion metaphors for the body

Often whole domains, great elaboration of bodily tropes. In effect, understanding thru body, though not purely natural body, cultural body

Religions offer great example. Consider the pervasiveness of body tropes in Christianity:

Jesus' bodily suffering (recently in notorious movie by Mel Gibson). Each feature becomes elaborated: nail holes (stigmata), blood, spear wound, etc.

Skull as embodiment of death, in many religious paintings.

Saints' suffering, in art, some horrible. Hundreds of depictions of St. Sebastian as pin cushion, full of arrows. Again, tremendous elaboration in stories, art. Often close attention to pain, wounds.

Pieces of saints' bones etc. as relics.

Thinness of female saints.

Renunciation of body by religious: hair shirts, self-flagellation. Carried to extreme by medieval flagellants, penitentes of American SW

Importance of physical reconstitution of bodies at last judgment.

Miracle cures: Lourdes, Fatima.
Heart of Jesus; heart of virgin.
Body and blood of Christ in host.
Virgin birth.
etc. etc.

Same true for Buddhism, Hinduism.

In previous classes we talked about “the body politic”, body metaphors of society, social metaphors of body. Question of whether is inevitable political slant or message to such tropes. Sontag, in 2d essay in book (optional reading), asserts that body metaphors for society always repressive or authoritarian (p.94)

Whether not is inevitable, no doubt that body metaphors for society can be elaborated to make point.

It has been argued by Steven Shapin that when phrenology adopted by some in 19th century Edinburgh, was at least in part a social statement about nature of society and their place in it. (Shapin, S., 'Homo Phrenologicus: Anthropological Perspectives on an Historical Problem,' in Barnes, B.S., & Shapin, S., eds., *Natural order: Historical Studies of Scientific Culture*. London, 1979, pp. 41-71. Shapin, S., 'Phrenological Knowledge and the Social Structure of Early Nineteenth-Century Edinburgh', *Annals of Science*, 32, 1975, pp. 219-243.)

According to S., by pushing phrenology, members of rising commercial class were suggesting a strong connection between innate abilities and one's place in society. Were arguing against hereditary aristocracy, for a meritocracy. Relevant to MIT.

Reading by Emily Martin on “scientific” images of body, esp. of women's bodies

Q. What is basic metaphor? What derived from? factory, modern capitalism.

Q. What implications, according to M, for view of menstruation? Seen as failed production, failure in general, very negative image.

Q. Do you think this characterization of menstruation follows inevitably from the root metaphor? Not necessarily. Factories have many waste processes that are normal parts of industrial production, routine, not failure. Don't see why couldn't have metaphorized menstruation as normal, expectable, harmless, if bias ran that way. (Wonder whether we might find it in texts if we looked further.)

Q. is the loss metaphor inevitably completely negative? Might there be some hint of the positive in the idea that menstruation is not just random but devoted to a valued purpose?

Q. Does analogy between producing babies and producing goods mean that reproduction has become mechanized or capitalized? arguable.

Q. If metaphor as failure and loss really is dominant and really is negative, does the negative judgment follow the metaphor or the other way around? Given that males in many many societies have hang-ups, taboos about menstruation (in some societies isolate

women until done), isn't it just as plausible that the prejudice came first, and the negative trope was devised to express it?

Q. What is M's argument about social class? That middle class women more indoctrinated, have bought metaphors, ideology more.

Q. What is the difference between the way working and middle class women talk about the subject? Middle class all purposive models, production. Working class resist, talk in terms of immediate experience.

M has developed all of this more fully in other works, this very quick article, but there is a lot to discuss, lots of questions: Q. If the difference in discourse is real, is this a matter of differences specific to reproduction etc., or is it a matter of styles of discourse by social class? M doesn't seem to recognize that there are social penalties for working class people who talk in fancy ways, who seem over-fancy and pretentious, who seem to others to be above themselves. Their listeners are sensitive to the slightest whiff of pretension.

There is also a tendency among Left-leaning social scientists to sometimes romanticize or prefer working class people. May or may not be relevant here.

Q. Could you say the two classes lean towards different tropes? Could say middle class metaphorical, working class metonymical and synecdochal. Again, there are dangers here. Rhetoric of valuing experience over theory. Also, hang-ups about tropes and rhetoric generally. (Remember Sontag's ambivalence). Idea that reality should not be mediated (and inevitably distorted) by tropes. Also one variety of feminist theory some years ago, said women spoke and wrote literally, men through tropes. An "essentialist" theory, attributing eternal, essential characteristics to genders. Martin not an essentialist at all, but there is danger in attributing directness and experience to working class, theory and ideology to middle class. For one thing, fits enduring cultural stereotypes.

In all sorts of areas, claims about illness and health can also be hidden social claims.

Doesn't have to be just ideology by ruling powers. Those who resisting domination often elaborate own theories, claims about body.

Rejection of doctors as experts, claims one can cure oneself. Is a political statement. Many fears and political claims now expressed in do-it-yourself epidemiology, find out why "everyone" on your street is getting cancer.

Book, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France*, by noted historian Robert Darnton (1968), famous quack Mesmer, was great sensation in pre-revolutionary France. Shows how mesmerism had implicit social and political critique, grew stronger over time. We see with many varieties of alternative medicine today. I don't need those bastards and their fancy training. I can do it myself.

Doctors and professors are two classes of experts who push one around, where expertise is turned into immediately experienced control: Pull your pants down and cough! No,

that paper is not worth an A. Done with professors in 4 years but lifelong with doctors. So reaction against authority etc., doctors apt target.

Reading variation and difference

Subject of variation in bodily form often symbolically important.

Variation in external bodily between populations, what we call race.

Typically the ones that considered are color and form of skin & hair, then form of body, e.g. so-called cephalic index, ratio of two dimensions of head.

The measures used to assign people to races are biologically pretty trivial on whole, the biological importance of skin color certainly trivial.

Moreover, though there are statistical biological differences from one population to next, they do not sort themselves into neat groups called races

Some of the characteristics used to sort races and assign individuals to races trivial, some even imaginary. Look around room: are Asian Americans here really yellow?---imaginary characteristic.

Nonetheless, in 19th and 20th century tremendous political and social importance of race: an obsession.

We have reading on reading of physical form, fascinating book by Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (1991), chapter on foot. Jews are physically highly heterogeneous, but anti-Semites insist on not just typical nose but typical voice, in effect, social differences are mapped onto the body. Q. Why are feet so important, according to Gilman? What social implications were read out of feet?

In 19th century, anti-Semitic notion that Jews had flat feet, if not invariably, much more often than other Europeans.

Associations between feet and either what a category does (used to call cops flat-foot; now shoes and feet preoccupation of professional chefs) or what capable of doing, here idea that couldn't serve in army. In this era universal armed service tied to growth of modern nationalist state. citizenship and service in army connected. Thus flat feet signaled supposed inability of Jews to be citizens, justified their exclusion

Q. What were implications of different explanations for alleged flat feet? Some said that it was not a genetically controlled trait. Rather, product of city living, lack of sports, athletics. But this was hardly better, because city symbol of decadence, athletics symbol of vigor, manliness. Said Jews decadent, effete, weak.

Q. How to counter this claim? Jewish doctors, according to Gilman, didn't challenge bogus, pseudoscientific studies. Instead, argued either that answer was athletics for Jews, reinvigorate, or else that not true of western European Jews, was eastern Polish and Russian Jews. So body symbolism was tied to spatial, and all sorts of social issues in consideration of something as seemingly neutral as fallen arches.

Q. What kind of supposed differences between races prominent today, concerning e.g. sports, music, dancing?

Another kind of variation, between the sexes rather than between populations. All sorts of male/female differences, real/imaginary, halfway in between; specific to one society or allegedly universal, are explained by and mapped onto the body.

Q. What do we explain in terms of chemistry of male or female body?---hormones. Said that women can't be president because of raging hormonal storms. True, women do go thru hormonal cycles, affects their moods. But why don't ever say men can't be president because too much testosterone? Is there no danger that 3d world war could be started by macho men? Look at 1989 invasion of Panama: only happened after Noriega started attacking Bush's manhood.

Victorian notion that women tended to madness. Madness was a bodily condition, thought to be disease or physically caused condition. Organic cause, in womb. Illness of hysteria goes back to classical root for womb, caused by womb. Doctors thus had right to treat hysterical women, in extreme cases pack them off to asylums. In some instances these women not mentally unbalanced at all, merely rebellious, unwilling to submit. Medical, bodily diagnosis was a form of control. Interesting literature on subject. See Elaine Showalter, *Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (1985) and other works since.

Even theorized that women not knowing place, not submitting, either was symptom of specific disease, or else that such misbehavior could provoke organic illness

Modification of bodies and reading of modifications

Body of course not just there, we do things to it, then react to what have done

Reading by Firth on hair.

Functionally trivial to organism, but v apparent and safely modified

Symbolically salient in many societies

Firth writing early 1970s, chapter marked by era, much ado about long hair, even musical "Hair"

Evoked powerful reaction: friend of mine dragged out of car on Commonwealth Ave in 1960s, beaten, hauled off to jail, just because cop didn't like his long hair.

F shows how both social norms, and then individuals and groupings working against

Close attention to hair, reading

May have biological basis

Kuna, contrary to what F shows for Europe, cut women's hair short; conflict with police in 1920s because forbidden to cut short

Often great intensity of concern with mere symbols: currently in France whether girls can wear headscarf to school

Can be crucial to control: Manchus imposing topknots on Chinese male population

Almost every part of body modified: hair, skin, feet, nose, ears, lips, genitals

Almost anything you can think of, someone somewhere has done it.

Also impossible to avoid: in 1970s and 1980s some feminists insisted that obsession with appearance was a defect of corrupt capitalist society. Refused to play game, esp. not shaving legs. Only result was that unshaved legs became a symbol. Ditto not wearing bras.

Changes in body often mark crucial changes in life.

Question of modification of genitals esp. tricky.

Whether circumcised or not very salient re Jewish identity, anti-Semitism, anti-Semitic jokes. But also nationalism: many non-Jewish American males circumcised. British find appalling, claim unnecessary suffering for child. remarkable vehemence of attack.

More recently, great international controversy about cutting female genitals in Africa and Arab world. Is it an outrage or matter for local decisions? Raging controversies. Even in episode of "Law and Order". One of most balanced and thoughtful takes by Chris Walley in our program (1997, "Searching for 'Voices': Feminism, Anthropology, and the Global Debates over Female Genital Operations." *Cultural Anthropology* 12(3):405-438. Also *Genital Cutting and Transnational Sisterhood : Disputing U.S. Polemics*, edited by Stanley M. James and Claire C. Robertson, University of Illinois Press.)

Q. What does article by Turner show? Complexity and systematic nature of system in one "simple" society.

Similar complexity and cultural variability in how body is to be covered, modesty, immodesty, etc. (but we will not discuss today).

Inscription and Power

Another perspective on body is how things are imposed on it, how power is imposed thru restrictions or "inscriptions" on body.

There is an element of coercion in almost everything that happens to body. If have long hair or green hair or whatever hair when everyone else is different, at most extreme, may drag you in and cut it off. If not, may ostracize you. If not, may tease and criticize. If not, will probably stare in rude way.

Hertz big on how right/left hand polarity is obligatory, imposed. Ask any Leftie.

And of course impositions not equal for everyone:

Slaves had to walk certain way.

In Islamic countries, women have to cover everything.

In US, at church when I was young, women expected to wear hat, keep it on during service, men to take hat off

Difference doesn't even have to be visible mark. Concerning monarch:

-Don't turn back on her.

-Don't touch in familiar way. Australian leader caused huge scandal by putting arm around queen.

Highly arbitrary:" in some societies, must always stay lower than social superior, in others must stay standing when superior sits

May be elaborate graded code. One anthro, Goodenough showed scaled in clear way in a Pacific society: for those slightly above, had to do X; for those more above, X and Y; all the way to people at top, had to do XYZABC. (1965, "Rethinking Status and Role" in *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*).

The excerpts from *Discipline and Punish* by Foucault are a small taste of a much larger body of work that has been extremely influential. Looking at the body as the site on which power does its thing.

Q. Why does F want us to see the "exemplary" and horrible punishments of the pre-modern era as a contrast with the modern era? F looking at non-coercive, non-obvious ways the body is controlled and "disciplined". Later works on all sorts of other areas, clinics, madness, sexuality. F turning upside down our assumptions about freedom and control. Absolutely correct in that there are many ways we are subtly or not so subtly disciplined. e.g. with industrial revolution, millions of people had to learn to run lives by the clock.

Q. How is F's attitude towards theory and ideas and ideology like Martin's? F seeing forms of knowledge and theories as intimately tied up with power. Not objective, not standing apart, but inevitably tied to power. However, in much of his work, he spends more time looking at theories than at concrete actions. Also, in French tradition, his idea of knowledge and theory greatly influenced by French grand theories, which explain everything.

With, e.g. works on penology, theories about how to administer prisons effectively and humanely, one can see a close connection between knowledge and power; ditto works on public health; but ways in which and extent to which *all* forms of knowledge and theory can be reduced to power remains to be seen.

This is the rhetorical device of the exemplary synecdoche, the example that makes your point about the whole; danger is that carefully chosen parts may be only partly representative of the whole.

Q. Why is the panopticon crucial to F's argument? Because the embodiment of theorizing, and because it was supposed to be more humane. Because, F argues, it is matter of arranging space, of ability to see rather than hurt. F very big on the importance of the gaze, who can see who, when and how. The panopticon works by making it possible for those in center to control rest by observing them.

Q. Is this the way modern prisons really work? There can be no doubt that authorities try to maximize their ability to observe prisoners. But all prisons also continue to depend on force and violence. Prison is ultimately brutally violent coercive institution.

More generally, most countries in world use more violence to control than we care to admit.

Torture much more widespread than we believe. It's just that we don't do it so much in public.

The fact that they used "exemplary" horrible punishments in past is just as likely to have been a function of the fact that premodern states were terribly inefficient. In making example, couldn't demonstrate consistency and catching majority of criminals (still can't today) so made punishments did inflict horrifying.

Back to prisons, do they work as designed? of course not. Inmates regularly escape gaze. In many prisons, except that they can't get out, inmates control as much as guards. The panopticon has never been more than an ideal. The super-max prisons that have complete control over inmates do it by radically confining them individually, severely restricting time out of cells, and tremendous violent power.

Foucault has raised all sorts of interesting ideas, extremely provocative and fruitful. Has extraordinary run of success, even after death. Some question, argue, but has not suffered kind of reaction Lévi-Strauss and other past figures have

13. CLASSIFICATION AND COSMOLOGY

Starting point today is famous work from 1902 by Emile Durkheim (already mentioned) and Marcel Mauss: we have excerpts in reading

Q. What is the root problem D&M address?

Origin of ability to categorize, to divide up the world mentally into different kinds of things.

Basic issue, basic problem in philosophy

Two basic tendencies, to find origin of perception and classification in world itself, i.e. we soak it up from what is out there, or to see categories in some way as already implanted within us

Perennial issue in Greek and European philosophy, in modern psychology

Q. What is their answer? It is neither, rather found in society. This answer fits Durkheim, who was sociological imperialist, explained everything through society

Q. What is the logic of their argument?

1. They assume that world was originally a blur, indistinct

2. assume that categorizing is not a natural ability

3. first categories that presented to primitive people are groups in society

4. changes in society lead to increasingly complex categories

5. we can trace evolutionary changes in society through study of living primitives, who represent different stages in evolution. (Few anthros today believe this.)

They begin with Australian aborigines, who then thought to be simplest society (actually very complex classifications and kinship system); division of society into just two parts. Classification of everything else follows, division of everything in world into two groups, like two human groups

(True that there are societies divided into two sides, typically one must marry person from other side, but not true that they are necessarily simple societies.)

-Then more complex tribal societies (Zuni, Sioux), where more than two groups, and categories also anchored to landscape

-then complex premodern civilization, China, same kind of classification, but no longer tied to particular groups

-and then to modern classifying, where detached from both concrete groups and from religion
Whole argument bogus. Original indistinction in premodern thought or at stage of life is a myth.
Some perceptual abilities we are born with.

Also, before one can perceive and categorize groups as distinct, one must be able to perceive and categorize in general. How could one discern that there are two separate groups unless one could already perceive difference and number? D&M partially concede this, say 'Well, maybe there was a little practical categorizing,' but once you make that concession, whole argument implodes.

-And the evolutionary sequence is imaginary.

-Introduction to translation of volume by Rodney Needham shows that their scholarship was generally shoddy

But paradox: they were wrong and slipshod but still very fertile source of ideas and theories

Didn't explain cognition or categorizing in general, but did start study of what came to be called **symbolic classification**, i.e. complex arrangements of symbols into wholes

We have already had a taste, with hummingbird example and others

Often, as D&M show, divisions in one domain are replicated in another: divisions of color correspond to divisions of birds and divisions of seasons and quarters of universe and sections of town and parts of house and parts of body and parts of universe and so forth.

Varies between societies just how relentlessly consistent they are, and how much build into complex structures.

We have reading from Hertz, who was member of D&M's group

Q. What does Hertz add to argument? ---recognition of almost universal differentiation between right and left, favoring of right hand.

Differentiation in treatment of the hands and what is done with them

And in all orientations of all sorts

Q. In what ways do we favor the right side in our society.

Details vary from society to society: one tribe in Sudan sometimes tie left hand for while to discourage use. But preference for right, opposition between sides universal

Q. How does Hertz explain this? As follower of Durkheim, he insists on primacy of *social* elaboration of this difference, even if its ultimate origin might be in physiology.

Hertz also points us towards importance of *opposition* as one symbolic structure, whether or not it is found in an elaborate classification: opposition is often what going on between two elements in symbolism: not likeness or association but being set against each other.

As fundamental as metaphor, metonym or liminality.

Nature of opposition may also vary:

May simply be contrast, set off against each other

But may also be more fundamental logical or social contradiction (we will explore later)

Examples of symbolic classification in preindustrial "tribal" societies

Complex symbolic classifications are found in many tribal societies. One example from Northwest Amazon, group called Cubeo, described by anthro named Irving Goldman (1963, *The Cubeo*).

Live up and down rivers, in longhouses in clearings on riverbanks, whole community lives in one house

Men marry women from another community

Basic opposition is men versus women, us vs. them, but tied to other oppositions in complex ways

Jungle vs. river, river is more us rather than them.

Gardens vs. river. Gardens where raise manioc, they belong to women, so gardens associated with women. esp. rapids in river, rocks, said to be home of ancestors.

Agriculture (in gardens) vs. fishing and hunting---hunting associated with river because men go in canoes, hunt near river.

Adultery vs. licit sex. Adultery takes place in gardens, marital sex near river.

In-laws, affines vs. us---resident in-laws are the women in garden

Jaguar vs. ancestors---one from forest, dangerous, other from rocks in river

So the oppositions are *lived*, they are keyed to the environment and they make sense in people's lives

Another tropical forest group but in Guianas of northern S. America, called Trio (Peter Riviere, 1969, *Marriage among the Trio*)

Similar concern with us/them, inside/outside. Also tied to environment, but in different way. Not river people.

Wary of outsiders but also drawn to visit them

Basic divisions in Trio system are:

inside/outside

us/others

our river/far river

village/forest

house/clearing

Connected to seasons, in part because how they interact with outsiders depends on seasons:

wet season (when rivers flooded, people stay at home, no travel) / dry seasons (travel, contact)

softness (ground soft, people act "soft") / hard (ground hard, act "hard" with outsiders)

still / active

wood / stone

home fire (limited, controlled, warmth in rainy season) / burning fields (uncontrolled, big, do burning in dry season)

Similar elements used in Trio classification as in Cubeo, but arranged in quite different way

Like Cubeo, makes sense in terms of environment, lived as well as thought

Obviously, in a desert environment or place with no dry season, would have to be different

In complex premodern and modern societies

D&M were correct, symbolic classifications also found in complex societies

In fact, in preindustrial states like Aztec, Maya, traditional China, premodern Europe, there is often a small literate elite, priests or clerks, who have the time and interest to make increasingly elaborate systems

Very typical of such societies

Traditional Chinese symbolic classification, with four quarters, yin/yang, pervasive through Chinese culture: in medicine; in divination (I Ching); layout of towns and houses (Feng Shue)

Has persisted through huge changes in politics and other aspects of culture, tenacious

In Europe, doctrine of humors, basis of medicine, from Greek physician Galen

Four-part classification

The different humors had all sorts of correspondences in different domains:

blood / cholera / melancholy / phlegm

understanding / opinion / perception / intellect

air / fire / earth / water

moist / hot / dry / cold

child / youth / maturity / age

fevers / vomiting / consumption / pneumonia

optimistic / ambitious / pessimistic / apathetic

Curing consisted in large part of counteracting imbalances between the humors

Mostly been supplanted in western culture, but remnants remain: for one kind of private school with own mystique and methods, a booklet told teachers they could figure out students' personalities according to humors.

Many other European examples:

pre-Socratic philosophers of Greece, before Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle

Explained nature of world, changes, thru combinations of qualities like warm & hot etc.

Astrology, still strong today, and alchemy both completely wrapped up in symbolic

classifications. Ditto modern "reflexology", correlates parts of foot with parts of rest of body

Medieval and renaissance magic too, esp. form of Renaissance magic called natural or platonic.

Inspired by revival of interest in Plato.

Also dominant mode of scholarly thought of medieval period, scholasticism, what Nicolás Wey Gómez here at MIT called transcendental semiotics.

Famous analysis of the 16th century encounter between Cortes and Aztec King Moctezuma by theorist Tzvetan Todorov, saw as clash between traditional, oral, religious worldview (symbolic classification) and modern, pragmatic, literate one. (1982, *The Conquest of America*)

Wrong in two ways: early literacy often promoted rather than discouraged scholastic thinking, and 16th century Spaniards often still medieval mindset. Wey Gómez shows that Columbus completely caught up in what we would see as mysticism, scholasticism. Also at much more humble level. Peasants and townspeople in both Mediterranean world and Latin America often ascribe to a classification of foods into hot and cold, treatment for illnesses by balancing and counteracting food and disease temperatures.

Symbolic hot and cold, often doesn't correspond to our ideas of temperature. One version:

Hot foods include: tortillas, toast, crackers, eggs, rice, lard, ice (sic)

Cold foods: beef, sweet potatoes, squash, oranges, watermelon

Also depends on whether cooked in pot or on griddle vs. cooked in oven

Variety of things other than food divided up this way in hot/cold dichotomy:

envy / fear

high fever / respiratory illness

money / needles

sun / moon

black animals / frogs, toads

Phrenology, 19th century "science". tried to localize different aspects of thinking and feeling in different parts of brain, much like modern brain science, except it had no basis in fact or experiment. Term paper by student many years ago in this class (Cynthia Willey) showed that phrenology based on symbolic classification

Different regions grouped by oppositions and divisions and locations:

Instincts, passions, impulses were lower in head; moral/religious sentiments higher

Back and low, occipital lobe, location for selfishness

frontal lobe, intellect, sentiment

Moral organs bunched together "like a band of brothers"

In many areas can see a transition from symbolic, scholastic thinking to modern science and philosophy. One helps lead to other. To this extent D&M correct.

Some figures transitional. Isaac Newton, persistent claims that he wrote a secret astrological treatise turn out to be a myth, but he was "into" alchemy and theological questions like the dimensions of King Solomon's temple and Biblical chronology

In effect, we can see that some features of modern science can be found in premodern thought. One is close observation of nature. Many examples, e.g. Hummingbird poem, great knowledge of planets, sun's path, habits of animals.

Other is system-building, theorizing. Large, complex classifications, maps of the universe.

Only thing that not there skeptical attitude, rigorous hypothesis testing

But in some ways Maya priest not that different from modern cosmologist or theoretical physicist.

Also symbolic classifications can be very satisfying: feeling of completion, structure, stability, wholeness

Probably why so persistent

After all, there was absolutely no factual basis for Galenic medicine, none at all, but it lasted for a couple of thousand years

Levi-Straussian Structuralism

In decades after WWII, French social anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss (now very senior), elaborated Durkheimian ideas

His system known as structuralism, though there are other varieties of structuralism

L-S looked for something like a symbolic classification, but at much deeper level, unconscious: person in culture might not even recognize or be able to talk about

L-S inspired by many things besides Durkheim & Mauss, esp. by linguist Jakobson, who we discussed above

J. and L-S were together in NYC during WWII

L-S inspired by depth and rigor of linguistic analysis, specifically borrowed J's emphasis on binary, dual oppositions

At first L-S made very close, somewhat naive analogies with linguistics

But then moved away on own

L-S said there were underlying structures, but likely to be abstract, more like mathematical formula, with many possible transformations, than an obvious symbolic classification

These structures at deep level in all sorts of things, explored by L-S in different works:

Systems of alliance through marriage exchanges; "totemic" classifications of animals; ritual; cosmology; and especially mythology. Produced series of books exploring deep structures in S. and N. American mythologies

Was very trendy for some years, among intelligentsia in general as well as anthros in particular--though few actually understood very well. Douglas and Tambiah articles among those partially inspired by L-S.

L-S was inconsistent. In several places said such structures more typical of pre-industrial societies. "Cold" societies, vs. "hot" modern ones. Other places he stated or implied that universal.

Structuralism since passed out of fashion. But I think has much to offer, if one is careful and skeptical. We will try our hand at structural myth analysis.

Testing Structuralism

Problem with L-S's structuralism, also with lot of symbolic anthropology, is how do we test, make sure?

In literature, notorious how many different interpretations are imposed on a single work. If we want to move past assertion, how do we test our own conclusions?

Q. What is answer offered by James Fox in reading? First, find relatively mechanical way to establish connections between symbols.

Q. How does he establish connection for Indonesian culture he studied? Through parallelism, arrangement of ritual verses into pairs. Was discovered by Biblical scholar in 18th century, found that much of Old Testament written in verse, and that those verses were arranged in pairs, synonymous or semi-synonymous: spears into pruning hooks, swords into plowshares. Since then found to be important structure in religious poetry of many societies. So Fox used computer to find most frequent pairings, and then arranged the pairs into a structure. One of most satisfying aspects of work was that confirmed previous, more intuitive analysis. This option not always open, but encourages us not to take issue of validation for granted.

14. RITUAL

Today we move to new subject, ritual

We have problem of defining what we mean, identifying our subject

Not the most fascinating part of study but essential

True if make up fancy new jargon term such as schismogenesis

But even more so if the word comes from everyday vocabulary. Often everyday meanings are messy, even contradictory.

Words like power and justice turn out to be extraordinarily difficult

Whole books just trying to figure out

Sometimes, we may decide that a concept is bogus, as with totemism. Really nothing real thing there, artificial construct. (Fortunately useful things can come out of study of even bogus concept.)

Other times have strong feeling that something real out there, but very hard to get verbal handle on it. True of word ritual.

We have intuitive sense that some kind of actions that humans do different from others, more significant, have greater import.

Standard dictionary definitions of ritual:

“relating to, or of the nature of rites.” Like a lot of dictionary definitions, begs the question or passes it on: so what are rites? Endless definitional regress.

“the manner of performing divine service, or a book containing it”---i.e. religious action.

“a body or code of ceremonies”---then what are ceremonies?

“an often repeated series of actions”

So, except when the dictionaries just substitute one word for another (rites or ceremonies for ritual), there seem to be 2 primary criteria for defining ritual as a certain kind of action:

-actions in religion. That definition creates two problems: first, religion supremely hard to define, so have only exacerbated definitional problem. second, many non-religious actions seem like ritual, feel like ritual, probably should be included, but this definition excludes them.

-or action as that highly repetitive or stylized. Using this sense of word, psychologists sometimes call individual compulsive actions ritual. But lots of compulsive actions---beating head against wall---don't intuitively feel like rituals

-Definition I proposed (though not perfect) is: culturally standardized and in some way highlighted or foregrounded communicative, expressive action

Almost all action has an instrumental dimension: pound nail, herd cows, write paper.
And just about all action has an expressive, communicative aspect: how you pound nail says a lot about feelings or task.

What gets called ritual are those actions that seem most completely communicative and expressive.

There are various ways we have of setting them apart, indicating that they are ritual:

-exaggerated, elaborate, dramatized: a mass but not sight-seers strolling in church.

-stereotyped, patterned, invariable: a prayer but not man shouting obscenities.

-repetitive, redundant: 5000 bows in Japanese ritual vs. a political speech

But none of these things by themselves define ritual, and none of them set it aside from ordinary action. Can have action that do a million times (pound one million nails) but doesn't seem to be ritual. Or can have very casual low-key action that is ritual. These are instead various ways that ritual is marked off from ordinary action, ways of saying, "Hey, pay attention!"

Even further, ultimately to call something ritual is really not identifying something truly distinct like a chair or a car but rather identifying those actions that can most usefully be studied as communicative action. The same approach can be extended to *all* action., treat the obscenities or political speech in same framework.

Prehuman and human ritual

One of interesting things about ritual is that seems to have roots in animal world.

Many animals have exaggerated, repetitive, stereotyped behavior that is used to make key communication:

.e.g. among baboons, dominant animal bares fangs, adopts aggressive posture. Lesser animal signals that acquiesces by adopting submissive posture, often turning around, presenting rear end. Dominant animal mounts briefly, though no real sex. Ritual of dominance and submission.

Much more economical than having animals fight it out every day to see who is top baboon.

Classic example, mating rituals, often very elaborate and dramatic.

So communication about very important things. Stands out from ordinary behavior.

Zoologists who study animal behavior (ethologists) call ritualization

Develop evolutionary models of how developed out of ordinary behaviors

Now we as humans have communicative possibilities with spoken language that animals do not (though learning that animals often have very complicated communication system)

We can say in words, "Well, of course you're the big man; please don't hit me."

But often we have to communicate things in ways that stronger and more persuasive than a simple declarative statement. If want to tell someone color of car that passed by, just say “green”. But if want to convince someone that madly in love, it is notorious that words by self may not be enough (Say it with flowers.) More so if want to persuade someone that you are the chief or the king. Even more so if want to persuade that God is in his heavens, and all is right in the world, when in fact world seems a mess.

So there are many ways that we humans express things in action as well as words

Some examples

Give one example from savage group, my family.

For WASP Anglo-Saxons we are unusually cohesive. We feel as close to our second cousins as most people are to first cousins. Summer cottages near each other. Had family newsletter during World War II.

And we have own marriage ritual. Night before church wedding, at bridal dinner, couple jumps over a broom.

Custom found among African-Americans and in past among rural Irish. But we are neither. Started in 1880s, with great grandmother, who decided to do. And have been doing ever since. All the couples who jumped broom at own weddings line up, jump in order, last is new couple. Then tie on ribbon embroidered with initials and date on broom. By now ribbons extend down most of broom, oldest encased in plastic. Can find ribbon for parents and grandparents. Broom is kept in box, shipped around country for weddings.

Very jolly occasion. People enjoy. Read horrible doggerel poetry. But also making serious points:

1. The family is concerned with every marriage. No couple just getting married for self.
2. Asserts solidarity of family. We are a group, we are important. Sometime behind laughter, other family finds a little intimidating.
3. Tells couple their marriage is not isolated. Shows them that they are in long line of couples: see it in the lining up and in ribbons.
4. tells in the in-law that they are being taken into family.
5. And until recently always mentioned that there was some sort of magic in broom, had never been a divorce. Implicitly tells couple that whatever happens in rest of society, not Ok in this family to ever divorce. Some years ago magic broken by a few divorces, but rate of divorce still very low.

So jolly fun ritual making serious points.

Another marriage ritual, from Kuna of Panama, who worked with:

Live in large extended family households, young man goes to live with wife's family, works with wife's father, follows his orders for next 15-20 years.

In marriage ritual:

Young man is unsuspecting, perhaps on street, group of friends grab him, carry him off. Today done in jest, but in past really did catch him. Marriage ritual called "dragging".

They take him to girl's house. he is thrown in hammock, she on top. Swing hammock. He may be allowed to run out, then caught again.

Next day he goes to forest with father-in-law, cuts prescribed number of logs, paddle back to island village. Young man leaves canoe, returns to own home. Wife comes to fetch him, while father-in-law unloads logs.

So ritual dramatizes fact that girls' parents make choice, that boy is going to be married to in-laws as well as wife; that his father-in-law will be in control; but also that it will not be slavery, will cooperate with father-in-law.

Other marriage ritual makes different points, depending on society where appears:

Ethnography of shepherds in Greece. Bride brought by kin towards groom's home. Daughter weeps to leave family. The families say hostile things, sometimes degenerates into brawl. Strong messages about relations between families etc.

Archaic European marriage ritual, esp. among upper classes. During wedding feast, couple led off, often up stairs to room on balcony, with lots of obscene comments, songs, etc. Sometimes huge noise made outside window. They "consummate" marriage. She was supposed to be virgin. Said that immediately afterwards bloody napkin was produced to prove her virginity. Says very clear things about all sorts of values and customs.

Ritual involves a paradox. Is expressive/communicative action, but often gets things done through that action. Communicating can be a kind of doing.

15. PASSAGE AND PERSUASION

So what do we try to accomplish thru ritual?

What does ritual do?

One of the most goals of ritual most commonly claimed or assumed is to **create order and control**.

The world has its own inherent order, but also has great deal of mess, flux, chaos.

Entropy, things fall apart.

We struggle to keep things together

This is perhaps what symbolic forms and systems of all sorts do most generally: to assert that things make sense, there is some coherence and regularity.

We have certainly seen this with other symbolic forms, esp. symbolic classifications

Ritual seems to do this a lot. In effect, it is an esp. consistent and systematic attempt to impose order on universe

Whatever else ritual does, it usually imposes some kind of order

Simply by repetition and regularity.

Here there seems to be a link with private rituals, which are often attempts, driven by psychological compulsion, to impose order. Most clear with obsessive/compulsive.

Rituals also wrestle with the irregular and messy and disorderly: death, sickness, loss, destruction

But paradoxically, some rituals impose disorder. Turn everything upside down and backwards.

Not necessarily contradictory. has been suggested that by giving disorder its due, keeping it within special boundaries, that ultimately imposing order.

Creating community

The other goal most often mentioned.

Building or maintaining or celebrating the unity and coherence of a group

Both local community and wider ones. Groups of any size.

Q. What examples from your own experience?

Often this is a goal or the primary goal even of rituals that ostensibly about other things

University graduations as much about the university community as about saying goodbye to graduates.

Among Kuna, ritual lasting about an hour for young girl who just had first menstruation: supposedly for her, but she is inside a little tiny teepee, they build an enclosure around her. Each man brings bundle of huge leaves to cover, do all together. As much about the unity of men as about girl.

For Durkheim, the solidarity of the social group was *the* big question

After the short essay on classification written with Mauss, D wrote immensely long *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912)

Found origin of religion in sense of awe and exaltation in social group in collective functions

Conjures image of horde dancing around, getting worked up, collective sense of group perhaps like rave or Pentacostalist church service
Durkheim had mixed message: on one hand, saw solidarity as *following from* group experience; but also wrote that groups had needs like body or machine; rituals helps maintain group.
He was followed by so-called functionalists, sociologists and British anthropologists, who emphasized the functional needs of group, ritual fulfilling function, rather than other way---less complex than D.

In some cases ritual may have goal of marking or enforcing the *boundaries* of group as much as its internal solidarity---who is in and who is out.

Even though the classic functionalists are long gone, much of thinking even today about ritual and community is overtly or implicitly functional---assumes that groups need the ritual to maintain themselves.

But there are dangers in such analysis.

One is tendency to assume that a ritual is for the whole community, that it serves needs of the whole group, universally beneficial

But ritual can be lopsided, benefit esp. one party: Kuna marriage ritual most enforces the rights and privileges of parents, not the son-in-law

Other danger is assumption that societies by themselves somehow create rituals and other things.

But this is open question: often seems that individual actors, whether consciously or semi-consciously, recognize what ritual does, create or add to rituals, as my great-grandmother did.

Just because we don't know who author of a ritual or song or anything else was doesn't mean there wasn't an author.

Reinforcing values and expectations

Groups and whole societies depend on participants having shared values and mutual expectations of each other. We should avoid functionalist assumption that sharing is total, but there must be at least minimum agreement on basic points

We create or reinforce shared assumptions constantly in daily life, with uniforms, speech codes and many other ways to indicate who is who and what is what. Difficult in store if can't tell the salespeople from customers, or in mental hospital, if can't tell attendants from patients.

But also need to do recurrently in more dramatic ways

If it is an egalitarian society, will be many ways that everyone must understand and act in egalitarian ways. Marvelous non-ritual example: anthropologist Richard Lee, who worked with foragers in Kalahari Desert, so-called Bushmen. He gave them a huge steer as gift, they belittled it, because crucial in their band organization that no one get too powerful or too pushy.

Kuna pretty egalitarian, though not as much as "Bushman". In the puberty rituals mentioned above, after they have built the enclosure for girl, all the younger men go out

of house to place where women have drinks, bring them and serve to senior men. But then senior men go out, bring back drinks and serve younger men. Fact that two groups serve each other underlines their (partial) equality.

Conversely, hierarchical societies spend a great deal of time reinforcing hierarchy. 'Don't forget there is a king, and it's me, dammit!'

But also underline more specific features of system. My family marriage ritual says no divorce. Kuna marriage ritual: your father-in-law is in charge.

Often not just mechanics of system but *values*: what is important, what are good and bad things, what is right way to act.

Prime example, in the military, dying for your country does not come automatically. There are ways to get conformity, esp. thru coercion. Flogging in British navy, etc. Lot more coercion and punishment in military than we imagine. Also drilling, repeat until automatic.

But what about officers? Usually can't flog officers, less drilling, but expect more: officers are ones who lead, ones who stand up and walk around during shelling, pretend they're not scared. Can't flog them into being leaders. So militaries use symbolic means to instill values in officers, esp. ritual. Notorious how much ritual involved, instill loyalty, initiative, honor, etc.

Famous example, Samurai in Japan, code of Bushido

Rites of passage.

One of most important approaches to ritual developed by Flemish scholar (ostracized by Durkheim's group), Arnold Van Gennep

Hit on v basic idea, that many rituals changed an individual or group's social state, transition between one role or state and another

He used metaphor of spatial movement to discuss social movement: compared to rituals that move in space, thru threshold

Rites de passage (1909)

It was one of those very basic ideas that seems incredibly obvious once one has it

But no one had said it before. Wasn't obvious until he made it so.

Tremendous variety of rituals in all societies that fit this mold:

Q. What are examples from our society?

At every stage of life: birth, puberty, marriage, death. For every group, every important state like religious maturity.

V-G said 2 basic functions of ritual were to separate one from previous state and to incorporate into new one

Slightly confusingly, he also used those words to label stages in ritual: first separation stage, then incorporation stage. It is intuitively obvious that need to detach from previous state first, then move to new state.

Though in fact in some rituals it gets mixed up, may be doing functions in the same stage

Idea of transition as a middle stage in ritual, though that is also what whole rite does

Perfect example of importance of not getting bogged down in terminology

Later a scholar named Junod structured a whole ethnography of a S. African group in terms of rites of passage and progression thru life stages

We have an article from Victor Turner that elaborates one aspect of rites of passage

Turner was very prominent symbolic anthropologist.

Studied African group Ndembu, series of very influential articles, esp. on rituals of kinship.

T Concerned with the middle, transitional stage and function.

Back to term liminal. Comes from limen or threshold: spatial metaphor again

T saying such rituals typical of simple societies, trying to avoid saying tribal or primitive

Q. How is T's idea of liminality (p.97) diff from Douglas's? For D, much more threatening, unsettling, polluting. Liminal anomalous animal.

Q. How does T explain this difference? Says D's liminality consist of ambiguous or contradictory states, defectively defined or ordered, while liminality he studying matter of openness, freedom from structure, positive

May be real difference or may be rationalization for what he wants to do

Also D's liminality is at one moment or permanent, "synchronic" T's is thru time, "diachronic"

Q. So according to T, how is transition, liminality symbolized? Filth, dirt. Gestation, being new born. Neither male nor female. Absence of anything, no possessions.

Q. What does T mean by sacra? How are neophytes introduced to sacra?

Q. How are cultural principles are presented? Distorted, exaggerated, mixed-up

Q. What kinds of social relations does he find typical among those initiated? Equality among neophytes. Complete obedience to initiator, absolute, but only because he represents whole.

(Shows room for subjectivity: T intellectually counters idea of hierarchy; another person studying might see that hierarchy as crucial).

Q. Do you think T thinks liminal period a good thing? Why? What is his attitude towards structure and its lack, towards roles and categories? He sees structures inevitable, but dissolving them as cool. Marked by era in which T was writing, ferment of period, belief in creativity of breaking structures.

T later carried elaboration of ideas further (see list of supplementary readings). Said there was a state he called *comunitas* characteristic of liminal period. Super-cool, creative period, structures dissolved.

Even claimed there were whole periods and movements in society that liminal. Really pushing idea. was very influential, though in retrospect some of it seems forced.

He studied religious pilgrimage as extended liminality

He wrote lots on classic Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem, claimed that hierarchy neutralized, even during medieval period. A student in our program, Bill Zajac, wrote thesis on topic, said hierarchy strong during pilgrimage

Dangers of idealization.

Performance and persuasion

Another insight related to rites of passage

British philosopher, J. L. Austin, pointed out that we assume language is about naming things or referring to things, but actually much about doing things with language

Identified class of speech acts in which doing is saying:

I pronounce you man and wife---if words said by right person, really does marry them.

I name this ship the Flying Cloud.

You are no longer my child: I disinherit you and renounce all ties.

Rites de passage are perfect example of performative act: you were a student, now a graduate; you were ordinary person, now member of fraternity / member of secret society / religiously complete.

You were child, now an adult.

Underlines just how much of the social order is ultimately arbitrary, matter of social agreement or social compulsion. There is no inherent logical reason why four-legged canines should be called dog/hund/chien/perro/etc. Simply the way it is. Much of culture and social life is ultimately arbitrary.

But also, ironically, highlights the part that is *not* performative, where doing is *not* saying.

Much of what ritual does is to persuade or try to persuade

Where agreement is not automatic.

'I am now the king, and you better obey (even if I just killed the old king and usurped the throne).' Maybe also: being ruled by a king is the only possible/good form of government---whatever you do, don't think about republics.

May even be nonsensical things, ideas contradicted by experience or otherwise hard to accept:

Dying for your country is a very good thing. Bad things that happen in the world are part of God's plan for us.

Clear that ritual has its work cut out for it.

16. RITUAL AND POWER (4/05)

Often there is an assumption that whatever ritual does, it is for the good of society as a whole.

Goes with functionalism as form of analysis. Often ritual romanticized. For many New Agers, is spoken of in hushed tones: anything ritual is good.

But we should be ready to see ritual that benefits one party more than others: Kuna marriage ritual enjoyed by everyone, but reinforcing status quo, which most benefits senior generation, part of way they dominate junior generation

Often relatively obvious with political rituals: Elizabethan monarchy great spectacles of power 19th and 20th century, House of Windsor, masters of staging rituals, full-time specialists, adapted to film and television Nazis were masters. Filmed, got great but unscrupulous filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl, to film. very persuasive.

An example of an (unrecognized) contemporary ritual

We have reading from Erving Goffman, on procedures used to bring people into closed institutions like prisons, monasteries, concentration camps etc. Part of great book, *Asylums* (1961).

Q. Why include this here? Why relevant? The procedures G analyzes are really a form of ritual, very close to traditional rites of passage, even though those administering the procedures (except perhaps for religious orders) would probably deny that were a ritual.

Q. What actions strip you of previous identity? Take away clothes, in many cases name. Cut hair, important marker of your individuality.

Q. If as Turner says, in middle period one is stripped of all identity, how do we see that in these procedures? Leave you naked. Do things that reduced you to lump of generic humanity: depersonalizing photos, disinfect, weigh, fingerprint.

Q. Then how do they build up a new identity? New name, clothes, etc.

Q. Why is all this so important for those who control total institutions? Because living in them is such a change, so demanding; challenge to socialize and control inmates. Have to do it fast and very forcefully. Obviously not to benefit the inmates but those in control.

Suggests that rites of passage may be more necessary in some situations than others, for different reasons. Studies trying to show that male initiation most needed in societies where infants spend long time with mother in first years, father excluded, so initiation has to break strong identification with mother to make men out of boys.

Q. What about fraternities, why rites of passage emphasized? surely not for same reason as prisons. Perhaps because their members are there for only a few years. rapid

changeover. Challenge for universities in general in building and keeping continuity. Also, not everything in rites of passage always about passage, also displaying symbols etc. of fraternity, building solidarity among those already in.

Bombs and ritual

We have another example in readings of unrecognized ritual, from Hugh Gusterson, in our Program studied nuclear physicists at Livermore Labs, bomb scientists This article on atomic testing Not overtly recognized as ritual. In Book, published comments from informants and others in appendix, one of them took great exception to idea that ritual, said was straightforward way to test bomb (Hugh Gusterson, *Nuclear Rites*, 1996)

Q. So if it is a ritual, what does it do? Rite of passage, makes them fully adult bomb-makers.

Q. But what else does it do? Complex combination. Convinces them they have control. What actually tested in explosion is only tiny part of all the things people are concerned with regarding the dangers of nuclear weapons. But by proving they have control over this part, convince self of more general control

So ritual may deal with plaguing questions in society Or impossible demands or questions Anthony Wallace, classic study of Iroquois, suggested that were great demands on men, to be independent, hard, fierce, autonomous warrior. Not dependent in any way. But this very hard to live up to. Had rituals involving masked spirits, false faces, often very infantile. Also had complex in which one got whatever one dreamed about---some object, someone's wife, etc. If dreamed, could not be denied. W. suggests that particular things men asked for were much less important than chance to regress, to be childish, wheedling So W's analysis is psychological Ritual escape valve, dealing with institutionalized strains

In 19th century middle-class America, tremendous number of lodges and orders, like Masons, Shriners, etc. many others. Men would have meetings with arcane secret rituals, dress up in robes, lots of mumbo-jumbo. Hard to avoid suspicion that men compensating for something--- perhaps cult of domesticity at home, highly developed in 19th century. Men too respectable just to go off to bar every night and get blasted. Difficult transition for young men to adult manhood. (Mark Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, 1989).

Can even be fundamental contradictions in society Concerning symbolic classifications, said some oppositions may be more fundamental than others

Hegel and Marx both advance (in different ways) the notion of contradiction, either logical contradiction or social contradiction: two beliefs or tendencies or rules or practices that clash in some fundamental way.

Society full of them: Our political system: legislator supposed to represent district, voters, but also own conscience. John Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage* about men who went with own conscience. But if completely ignore voters, wrong too. Can be reconciled partially, something patched together, but still at root contradictory We believe in strong leaders and in collective action Common good vs. individual rights

Ritual often in some way about fundamental contradictions or problems or issues Not just positively affirming community or order but trying to deal with mess and furor and inconsistency of life.

Fox-hunting, power, and contradiction

Reading on fox hunting, treating it as a ritual Britain has been convulsed over issue Majority of voters in country want it banned But September 2002, I was in London during huge march in favor hundreds of thousands of people, supporting fox hunting as symbol of rural values, many participants who didn't hunt themselves There were also counter-protestors. News media showed animal rights women screaming and spitting at marchers, calling them scum

The article predates current controversy.

Point of departure was article by Leach, attempt to analyze British weirdness about animals in an analysis like Douglas's of Leviticus and Tambiah: treats fox and rabbit esp. as liminal animals. very amusing, provocative. (Edmund Leach, "Animal Categories and Verbal Taboo" in *New Directions in the Study of Language*, Eric Lenneberg, ed., 1964) But ultimately forced. Rabbits said to be liminal, sexy; foxes liminal and taboo because both animals on border between two domains defined in terms of location. Weak explanation. Rabbits sexy for obvious reason, great fecundity. Foxes more complex.

Q. So how does ritual work in terms of terminology; participation; leadership; actions; use of space; animals?

Q. What kinds of social divisions is ritual papering over? Different classes, esp. crucial one between farmers (renters who work the land) and gentry, aristocracy who own it. And also between new people and old established people.

Q. What kinds of contradictions, tensions, issues?-assumption of social fixity, stability, everyone in place, but in fact social mobility, striving

-tension between ascription, assigned place, and achievement, excellence: try to make the same but not always so. -mess, complications, in use kinship and genealogies for social status. Inconsistent, messy. -local, rural vs. national. Supposedly apotheosis of rural, but great development when people could come by train and car. -Model of great magnate who can support by self; in fact, almost no one can, so approximate by doing collectively -individual rights, esp. in land, vs. collective power -democracy vs. hierarchy.
Q. So what is place of fox? Leach right, is liminal, ambivalent. But not because on borderline between field and game. Rather because is substitute for deer. Two other varieties of chase, after rabbits with beagles, and after otters, but neither offers opportunity to gallop on horseback. Just as with nuclear scientists, some participants insist it is a sport, not ritual. Participate for pleasure. But not inconsistent that both personal pleasure and collective ritual. And when have huge rally to support hunting, it's not "just a sport". For that matter, much more going on with modern sports than just a game.

17. MAGIC AND RITUAL CURING

Magic as ritual

One class of ritual has gotten great attention over years, i.e. magic, any form of ritual where some concrete, instrumental goal is intended: ritual to make someone love you, to make crops grow, to kill someone

Much confusion caused in past by trying to discuss magic and religion as completely separate and antithetical categories, when in fact overlap. If church congregation prays for rain, then magical as well as religious

Not a neutral, quiet subject; rather has heated intellectual history. In renaissance and early modern Europe, magic wasn't OK, prohibited by church, considered that ultimately depended on demons. But many practiced magic With Reformation, one of most common Protestant accusations against Catholic church was that involved magic With colonialism, colonizers often said natives superstitious, prone to magical thinking In studies of "primitive mentality", magic often cited as proof

Number of 19th and early 20th century anthros saw magic as logical failure Frazer said primitive man thought he was omnipotent; to say something was to make it happen: this was stage of magic. Then awful realization that not omnipotent, in fact powerless, so power must be elsewhere: start of religion And then finally, science, complete rationality Completely imaginary sequence, Frazer actually had no idea what people in pre-industrial societies were thinking Bronislaw Malinowski, came after Frazer, studied magic in Trobriand Islands off N. Guinea. Modified Frazer. Said magic not instead of technology but as supplement. Said there is always gap between what technology will do and what one wants, esp. in premodern societies with simple technology Said that magic was way to deal with uncertainty and anxiety Predicted that magic would be where greatest gap

His example was fishing magic in Trobriands. 3 varieties. Inside reef safe, low returns. Outside reef more dangerous, could be greater returns, but also could be skunked. Way offshore, greatest danger and uncertainty but also greatest payoff sometimes. M said magic varied directly with uncertainty and danger. (B. Malinowski, 1948, *Magic, Science, and Religion*.)

Several studies since then replicate M's results. Richard Price studied fishing magic on Martinique. Thought there was no fishing magic until left bailer, calabash, upside down,

panicked crew, metaphor for canoe. Found there was magic and varied with danger and uncertainty.

George Gmelch, studied personal magic in baseball. Nomar Garciaparra the most extreme example but such personal magic pervasive in baseball. Found that most magic for pitching and hitting, most uncertainty, also where most likely to get into extended good or bad runs of luck. Base-running and fielding more predictable, less magic. (Gmelch, "Baseball Magic," *Human Nature* 1, 1978)

Vogt & Hyman, anthro and psychologist, studied dowsing or water-witching in U.S., magical searching for water. Found strong statistical correlation with counties where finding water most uncertain, not where find water every time or almost never. (*Water Witching USA*, 1953).

But not universally accepted. Pointed out that even in Trobriands, much more magic for gardening, yet gardening not uncertain at all. However, estimates of reliability of agriculture often wrong if only see short run---droughts come once in great while, not regularly. More important, clear that exchanges of produce very important in Trobriand kinship and politics, could be argued that great uncertainty in uses of agriculture.

But doubt that M's theory universally applicable. Kuna avid fishermen, lots of uncertainty, yet no fishing magic at all. Hunting minor part of diet, yet hunters often use magic.

Douglas, who we read on animals, went even further, said mistake to think magic really for instrumental ends. Rather it is symbolizing desires and intentions. Example from Dinka of Sudan, who when late getting home, tie up tuft of grass, to help them get home on time. (*Purity and Danger* 1966, pp. 58-72). Also societies that have rain magic just when dry season ending. Similar point made by Tambiah ("Form and Meaning of Magical Acts," in *Culture, Thought, and Social Action*, 1985).

D.'s point is very important. When ritual has instrumental end, shouldn't jump to assumption that nothing else important. Important to treat like any other ritual. But consensus that she overstates case. My experience and many other anthros that in many cases people care a lot about curing sick, etc. D. doesn't really know what in head of man tying grass, just assuming. But certainly much still up in air. M's theory in particular should probably be treated as partial. I don't think that explains everything, but does seem to account in rough way for distribution of magic in certain domains.

Q. Can you think of areas of anxiety or uncertainty in your life at MIT or in American society where magic proliferates? May not always be called magic. Exams, lots of personal magic. Gambling, whether lottery or at casino. Personal appearance, looks. Cosmetics promise tremendous amount, only small part true.

Curing

Illness and health certainly fit Malinowski's paradigm: area of great anxiety, where wide gap between what want and what can do

History of medicine suggests that physicians could do relatively little until recently Most of the great advances of modern medicine are recent, oldest couple hundred years old

Many claims have been made for what now called "alternative" medicine, for curing systems of pre-industrial cultures. Also, in recent years, search for herbal medicines known to non-western societies. Great hope of finding new medicines within those known to non-western curers.

Certainly there are such medicines: quinine, from bark of cinchona tree, known to indigenous Peruvians before discovered by West Native South and Central Americans had discovered wide variety of hallucinogens, used in ritual, must have experimented a lot No doubt many ways that traditional systems efficacious in physical way

But dangers in such claims. Dangers in our romanticizing. Image of "tribal wisdom". Dangers in defending against ethnocentrism. Also dangers because the issue of curing is politically salient in many cases: whether someone uses traditional therapies or modern medicine highly politicized issue Also very little real info on efficacy of various remedies---lot of what we have is just assertion Often assumed that people living in simple societies avoided all sorts of bad conditions of modern world, essentially much healthier than we in our polluted world But recent archaeological studies have found widespread chronic conditions, short lives Romanticization is as big a danger as ethnocentric scorn

Safe to say that there is gap between what desired and what achieved in almost all medical systems. And it turns out that one of the ways gap is spanned is by persuasion thru ritual

Effects of mind on body

A lot of different kinds of evidence for effects of mind on body. Most famous perhaps is negative effect, called "voodoo death" Most famously studied by physiologist at Harvard (already mentioned previous lecture), Walter Cannon (1957, "Voodoo" Death. *Psychosomatic Medicine* 19(3): 182-190. Sternberg, 2002, "Walter B. Cannon and 'Voodoo' Death: A Perspective from 60 years on." *Am. J. of Public Health* 92:1564-1566).

Still controversial, because built on case histories, many unreliable. Suggested that in many cases could have been poisoning.

But many think real, that people in various cultures can be convinced to die if sure that being bewitched

Cannon said death caused by shock resulting from continuous outpouring of adrenalin, heart beat faster and faster. Other mechanisms since been suggested.

One relevant study, would be impossible today Put rats in tank, had to keep swimming until drowned. Often as much as 60 hours, 1 ½ days. Incredibly tenacious animals. But if held in hand first, or if cut whiskers, then gave up very fast, demoralized. On other hand, if did several times, they got accustomed, then no effect.

Another tack, case: WWII field hospitals, for schistomiasis. One with low morale, lots of info on dangers of disease; other very upbeat, had much higher cure rate. Opposite observed in hospital, patients giving up, dying Though recent study mentioned in NYT disagreed, implication that we moralize dying, ready to see as partly effort of will by patient one way or other

Another: actuarial tables, insurance statistics. One on "life shocks" and effect on heart attacks etc. Rated shocks: worst death of spouse, then divorce, then death of parent, then loss of job.

Other direction, large statistical study by psychologist at Penn some years ago. Many variables, to see whether any correlated statistically with surviving. Only one significant had been put in almost by accident, whether had pet. Since then many other studies. To extent that today have dogs esp. trained to visit nursing homes, give attention and love. Drop in blood pressure when stroke. May be to do with unconditional affection by animal.

Many other studies, e.g. linking certain personality types with illness. Relaxation. Prayer.

Q. Why does such talk upset Sontag? Because can end up blaming the victim. In example she looked at, said cancer patients sexually repressed. Where not blaming victim, often seems to be asserting more control over our bodies and health than we actually have. Many of claims for effect of mind on body hotly contested. E.g. most famous effect is "placebo effect" dummy medicines encouraging recovery. Recent study cast doubt.

So question is open, but in balance, suggestion that room for some curing thru persuasion.

How does ritual curing work? Turner's answer.

Victor Turner again. Classic case history.

Q. What is mechanism causing patient's illness? Tooth of dead hunter, intrusive object, ultimately is ancestor. Also witchcraft. Notice that diagnosis implies a cure. Idiom by which illness is understood:

If illness caused by soul loss, then get soul back. If illness caused by imbalance of humors or hot/cold or yin/yang, then get back in balance. If caused by intrusive object, then get it out. Shamans in many societies masters at creating illusion of pulling out. In contemporary world grand masters are Philippine “psychic surgeons”

Q. How does patient’s condition connect with his personal problems? problems with marriage, with residence, connections with kin, general ineffectiveness. Also unpopular.

Q. How connected with wider social problems? factionalism in village and kin group.

Q. So apart from particulars of cure, what model of ritual curing does T offer? What are the essentials?-personal tied up with social. We separate but they don’t. -have to purge hostility, resolve conflicted relations. -mechanism is a masterful social drama, in which everyone drawn in.

Of course depends on his problem being malaise rather than organic illness. Hard to see how this could cure worms or TB.

What about Esalen example discussed in reading by Holloman? Esalen was very big several decades ago, notorious because participants sometimes nude. I noticed change in author, a friend, before I read article, so I ready to be convinced. But again, this is a personal, psychological or social change, not curing organic illness.

Q. So what is the mechanism in this case? The retreat like a rite of passage, with separation, liminality, reintegration. What do to old identity? No names, no status differences. How do they work you over to help effect change? massage, Rolfing, nudity, touch, meditation Comunitas in way Turner predicted

How does ritual persuasion work? Lévi-Strauss answers

One of most famous cases, not in our readings, from L-S, and happens to be from Kuna L-S never worked with them. Got from publication of a curing chant. Collected by indigenous anthro, Guillermo Hayans, who mailed to Sweden, where published. *Muu igala* “grandmother’s way”, for difficult, protracted childbirth

L-S had just text and some ethnographic background on Kuna Made sense of it thru close reading Chanter sends army of shaman spirits to spirit world Describes spiritual journey up surreal, bloody rivers to home of spirit named Muu, who has the soul of the child The shamans get soul away from Muu and bring it back then baby can be born

L-S compared the process to psychoanalysis

In therapy, the therapist and patient work for long time to understand history of patient's hang-ups, then cured thru understanding L-S says doesn't matter if the story the two create together is true, they building a narrative together which works because persuades patient. Says Kuna curing like that: chanter presents story, patient identifies her trials with story, and then resolves problem giving birth. Most generally, curing by presenting persuasive symbols for patient to identify with. In his close reading of text, L-S said the bloody rivers etc. are really a metaphor for the womb: the good spirits are really traveling up birth canal to the womb to free the child so it can be born. Ingenious interpretation. Various details in text to corroborate interpretation: mentioned thing called *nusupane*: L-S consulted Kuna dictionaries, said *nusu* meant worm and could mean penis; *pane* also could mean penis. So this was really penis.

Then friend of mine, Mac Chapin, did more thoroughly study of Kuna curing than had been done before. In some ways L-S mostly right. *Muu*, which means both grandmother and midwife, is spirit in realm above where fetuses formed. She sends them to earth when ready. But sometimes can't bear to give them up, must force her.

Chanters told Chapin that yes, was a metaphor for woman's reproductive system, but also really was journey thru spirit world. Some of details wrong: *nusupane* nothing to do with penises, rather 'worm that moves back and forth', i.e. butterfly.

The problem was that the patient not following along with chant. Chanter always at least outside birth hut and often in another place altogether. Even when chanting close by, using secret spirit language of chants. Most non-chanters don't know, or don't know much also unlikely that woman in great pain is listening closely to chant. So cure cannot work as L-S said.

More than that, we have no evidence that it ever did cure. L-S worked purely from text. He had no case histories at all, just presumption that it cured. His analysis very influential, cited over and over, but few people face fact that L-S had no idea at all whether or not chant was efficacious. Seems very likely that the chant helps woman, probably does so by giving her confidence that something is being done, which helps her wait it out. The difficult birth will eventually work itself out, and what is needed is something to help her with pain and torment in the meanwhile. L-S's model assumes that somehow the woman's body is the problem, is holding the baby back, just needs to let go, very unlikely.

("The Effectiveness of Symbols," in *Structural Anthropology*, 1963, pp. 186-205; Mac Chapin, "Muu Ikala, Kuna Birth Ceremony" in *Ritual and Symbol in Native Central America*, P. Young & J. Howe, eds., 1976, University of Oregon Anthropological Papers 9, pp. 57-66.)

Paradox that L-S incorrect about birth ritual, but his model may still be useable in many cases. Persuasive set of symbols that move us through, get us to believe in cure.

I found true even among Kuna themselves. They have a crisis ritual in which exorcise oppressing spirits Epidemic, or drowning, or other traumatic accidents Then see spirits, talk to them World heated up Seer consults spirits, finds out they are agitated: sometimes because men have accidentally chopped down tree to which spirits have fastened invisible clothesline.

So prepare for mass exorcism. Close village for 8 days, patrol boundaries. No one can have sex.

Carve dozens of balsawood figures, represent good spirits. also boxes of such spirits, small carvings, from every house Plus lots of medicines burnt in braziers And everyone smokes. get all the cigarettes and pipe tobacco, every available brand

Every night village assembles in evening, smoke for several hours while chanter chants If someone farts, they have to smoke huge pipe very fast I couldn't get anyone to explain for long time Finally found out that smoke is being converted spiritually into cane beer for spirits Good spirits are brewing it up using tobacco smoke

On 8th night good spirits throw party, get evil spirits drunk, then drop a net on them Banish most of them away, though a few may bargain with seer and chanter, get to stay if behave well

Everyone participating knows the story, and the seer reports on developments

And according to testimony, really does work. Epidemic may be mostly over; if recurs, then another exorcism But real effect is to re-establish morale of community. Very similar to Turner's case. Like Holloman's case, may involve physically working over participants---effects of all that smoking. People say they know it works because people no longer have encounters with spirits.

At same time does other things, ritual multipurpose, multiple layers. Kuna have been in coastal and island environment only since mid-19th century; they say they had many exorcisms as moved into new environment, exorcise all the spirits that lived there. Also seems to be way of making claim to territory---do exorcism for village

and for lands around it claimed by village. Seems to have been way of staking claim, also way of establishing and integrating new community in the new environment.

Here L-S's model works very well. As people sit there smoking, only some of them understand all the ritual language of the chant, but everyone knows the basic story, stages of what happening with the spirits.

18. NARRATIVE AND LIFE

19. NARRATIVE AND CONTROL

20. FOLKTALE AND MYTH

We are moving from narrative in general to kinds of narrative more often considered by anthropologists. Tales and myths. We by no means have a monopoly. Folklorists first among professionals. But also amateurs of all sorts have had a go at them, even more psychologists, literary critics, etc.

Great deal of energy expended on typology. How do we tell fairy tales from legends from myths etc? Much of the problem is that we are imposing categories from our culture on the world, words in English like myth and tale, expect all cultures to fit. Folklorists have expended great energy on typology. Some of it is useful. But we are largely going to ignore it in favor of other questions.

We will be most concerned with myth, but not drawing firm lines, if we can learn something interesting from analysis of something that gets labeled a tale or legend, then so be it.

Myth is a very complicated notion. And the study of myth far from dispassionate. Bound up in the romantic revival of 18th and 19th centuries; with discovery of sacred epics of Asia; with nationalist search for roots and essence of nation, folklore studies an important adjunct to nationalism. Very useful study by Von Hendy (in supplementary reading list).

Q. What do we mean by myth? (even if we are inconsistent)

Q. What about myth of silent majority, or myth that the so-and-sos are all like that? key feature is falsity. -One kind of falsity, or at least difference: actions not same as mundane world today.

Gods, talking animals, transformations, etc. But complicated, because in many usages, it is false on one level and true on another. Very often but not always, is oral, part of oral tradition. - assumption that there is a body of such stories -and that in some way fundamental for society -Very ethnocentric, imposing our definitions and assumptions on other culture. But does appear that many societies do have narratives about ancient times, beginning of world, when many things now differentiated were then still mixed, e.g. animals, spirits, and people and in some way those narratives are more basic and fundamental than, e.g. a little tale about three little pigs So we are probably safe at having a crack at analyzing those sorts of narratives, whether a particular one strikes us as a folktale or a myth

-How do we go about making sense of mythology? It turns out that we are coming in very late. Just about everyone you can think of has had a crack at it. Esp. in 19th and 20th centuries, myth became a prominent topic, and just like totemism, every theorist felt that his or her theory should explain it. (Von Hentig book is excellent on this.)

1. One very obvious tack is to insist either that myths are literally true, or else that they are true but confused or garbled, and we need to clear away the brush to show the truth. Literalist historical interpretation. -Keep looking for Noah's ark stuck on a mountain. Figure out where and how Moses parted the seas. Explain the flood thru a great release of water from Black Sea. Trace Odysseus' voyage thru Aegean.

One version, euhemerists, said that true but distorted: Gods and heroes just ordinary humans, got magnified with telling. Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, feathered serpent, suggested was originally king or other leader.

May be true, but also way to explain discrepancies, mess in myths.

Sometimes motivated by religious belief or nationalism. Generations of archaeology to prove literal truth of Bible.

Can be useful. Narrative can preserve traces of past: Kuna talk of great shamans of past. description very similar to shamans in many Amazonian societies. Probably correct. Jan Vansina, careful studies of how to sift out truth.

But many dangers. Anthro on Pacific island, told political epic about heroes named Nof and Souf, turned out to be garbled version of US Civil War, as islanders had heard from some

American. Among Kuna, anthro told story of early Kuna, who dealt with French pirates in 17th century. Grandfather Fransoa. But definitely a recent creation. French tyranny almost identical to what Panamanian policemen did a few years before.

2. One very prominent school, identified with 19th century German who worked in England.

Mueller: very prudish, upset by bad behavior in myths. Anti-Darwinist, believed in degeneration rather than evolutionary progress. Very impressed by philology, historical linguistics, very strong and impressive in 19th century.

So said original myths were observations of sun, moon, stars. Then was linguistic degeneration, the planets and stars became personified, became heroes and gods. So what was originally e.g. a non-narrative observation of eclipse became a myth about cannibal Titans.

Completely ridiculous, but had many believers. Also typical of much theorizing, imposing a set of axioms and preconceptions, forcing onto material.

3. 19th century evolutionists, said myths were survivals from past state of society, would give clues about path of human evolution.

Myths of Amazons or of distant past when women in charge, before men gained control, proof that had been matriarchal stage.

many varieties.

Among most influential, James Frazer, late 19th and early 20th. *Golden Bough*, probably most widely read and influential anthropology book ever. Though total crap. Built up idea of past stage with divine kings, their periodic sacrifice tied with nature, regeneration, nature rituals. Very romantic, tied in with ideas already circling among British romantics.

Extremely influential. Impact on T. S. Eliot, Yeats, many others. Still many believers, their idea of anthro. "Lord of the Dance" In Cambridge, Christmas Revels.

Won't go over all schools. Can see that start with grand theory, then pick and choose narratives and pieces of narratives to fit theory. Recent influential interpreters like Campbell have own ideas, but methods much the same.

4. Foundational anthro method comes from Bronislaw Malinowski. He had very straightforward, unromantic notion. Said myth is not really about the past but about the present. Said it is a charter, a text that justifies the present.

e.g. a myth about how our ancestors came out of a hole in the ground justifies our possession of land.

M is undoubtedly correct, *within limits*. Many narratives about past are also about present. I see this with Kuna: they say this land is ours, no one else's, because God gave it to us, literally, at the beginning of time. A mythological charter for holding their land. We can see this charter in all sorts of narratives that we call history rather than myth. Another virtue of M's approach: it's much closer to the actual texts, narratives.

But M oversimplified (something he did a lot). He never took on all Trobriand myths, just a few he could show as charters. Hard to see what many myths are charters for.

Even when relationship to present is obvious, it may not be simple justification.

Kuna have myths about early leaders, shows how necessary chiefs are. But those leaders went bad. They use their example to urge people to watch their chiefs like hawks, not to let them get away with anything.

Very often myth is about problematic things, conflicts, contradictions Chewing on something that ultimately indigestible, wrestling with irresolvable problem

So we can follow M in seeing myth as very often being about the present as well as the past, look for implications But look to more complex connections And more than M or any of the other theorists, look closely at the actual narratives, texts Show some respect to them and their creators. Finally, unlike many theorists, try to relate narratives to the particular cultures that created them, even if, as folklorists insist, they are variants of narratives found all over world.

Vladimir Propp and the analysis of tale form

Propp, a folklorist, wrestled with the problem of classifying folk narratives

Q. of how to tell one kind of narrative from another, related q. of what all different kinds of events that take place in stories As Propp noted, such classification of themes and motifs and types can get very messy Vast multiplication of motifs and themes. Endlessly dividing and subdividing. If one theme is “tests”, then can have tests of cleverness, tests of prowess, tests. of etc. Then tests of prowess can be divided into tests consisting of tasks, tests consisting of quests, etc. Another problem is that one tale may include several motifs or themes. Such classifications can be useful in rough and ready way. Folklorists like Dundes very good at recognizing a tale as one variant of a story found all over the world. But the classifications are inconsistent and unwieldy. They are also imposed from outside. Cookie-cutter kind of typologizing. Don't get inside any tales. By trying to take on whole world, they don't help that much in analyzing any particular corpus of tales

Propp's approach was to start with a given corpus of tales And then see if can break it down into a number of elements---in his case was actions by key character. he called them functions. If begin with the initial situation at start of story, a number of different ones are possible. But P said they are all variants on a basic situation---a lack, a threat, some difficulty that must be resolved.

Then more specific actions are treated as sub-types. A villain causes harm or injury to a member of family can consist of: abduction; pillaging crops; plundering; injury; disappearance; a murder, etc. etc. All are variants on villainy.

Propp shows that his classification can successfully analyze any tale in the corpus, reduce it to a formula.

It would have been even more convincing if he had randomly divided the tales into two groups, based the typology on one half, and then tested it to see if it worked on the other half.

Propp's analysis works whenever a body of narratives closely follows a basic pattern: it is highly predictable and stereotyped, or "formulaic." It has the advantage of getting inside the genre better than classifications imposed from outside, and of being testable. It also holds out the hope that it may approximate the knowledge of the people who actually perform the tales: in theory, one could write a new tale and see whether it was accepted. If someone says that's not our kind of story, then failure. But if they say, well, I never heard that one, but it sounds like a good story, then success.

The article by Colby is a more recent attempt to try to refine and systematize Propp's method. Developed on the analogy of a grammar for generating sentences. This is a grammar for generating narratives.

The basic approach widely applicable. Not just to folktales but other stereotyped genres: television and films and detective novels and romance novels, etc. You all will do a similar kind of analysis to some genre you pick. In our reading from Mattingly about occupational therapists, she emphasizes flexibility in the way OT professionals impose narrative on life, but it seemed to me that there were really just a few basic stories they were using, and that one can analyze them as Propp does. Can also work for written material, so long as it is highly formulaic.

Propp was not the only one to wrestle with this problem. Two folklorists, Milman Parry and Albert Bates Lord, looked at Greek Homeric poetry and at performances of oral epics in the Balkans. Insight was to suggest that one might understand the Iliad and Odyssey by seeing them as having been performed orally like the Balkan epics. The written versions we have, assumed to be first-generation written, according to P and L, show the imprint of their oral form. This aspect of the problem is of lesser concern to us today. It generated lots of controversy. What is of more interest is that P and L showed that both genres were highly formulaic, and that one could see the formulas as part of their composition and performance. On micro level, there were stereotyped verbal formulas that performers used. Found over and over in Homeric poems. In extreme cases can be seen as fillers, way to take space while performer thinks what to say next. We can see in African American and Pentacostal preaching: frequent exclamations of "Thank you, Jesus!" Also part of the rhythm developed by performer. On macro level, P and L identified stereotyped story elements, actions that occurred in many different tales. Very like Propp's function. Balkan epics are performed extempore: not memorized, and stand up and start performing the poetry. Are also to do so in part because of formulaic elements.

So if singing about certain hero, can plug in element about conference of heroes, or pursuit, or killing, or whatever. So whatever the controversies such work has generated, we can see convergence of methods for not only accounting for corpus of tales but also for how they are generated and performed. (A.B.Lord 1960, *The Singer of Tales*; John Miles Foley, 1988, *The Theory of Oral Composition*)

Although the method is about form, structure, it can also lead on to questions of meaning and import.

21. LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD AND THE FREUDIAN WOLF

We have two readings on "Little Red Riding Hood" (LRRH), which are very revealing on the issues raised by interpretation of folk tales and other narratives. The first is from a famous book interpreting European folk tales for children, by a famous psychologist, Bruno Bettelheim. B very controversial, esp. since his death. He ran a famous resident school and clinic associated with the University of Chicago. He claimed to have cured quite a few cases of autism, a condition devastating for families as well as for the patients. Among the accusations since B's death, alleged that: invaded his patients' privacy by writing about them; he mistreated patients; his case histories sometimes distorted the facts; and in particular, that the young patients he claimed to have cured did not all/any suffer from full-blown autism. Debate still rages.

He also wrote study of prisoners in Nazi concentration camps, where he had been himself, early on, when some prisoners still made it out alive. Some very angry at his conclusions, also claims that he distorted and exaggerated his research.

Fairy Tale book came out in 1970s. Eventually charged that he had plagiarized parts from an earlier and more obscure work. Still, no doubt that vehement conclusions represented B's point of view, which is what we are concerned with here.

Q. What is B's take on what tales do in general? Help child grow up; to work thru existential dilemmas; to learn that evil real; to develop psychologically in healthy way.

Q. What position on morality in the tales, esp. given many seem at first glance amoral? Most are really moral, have outcome that reinforces morality. Even those that more thoroughly amoral help child develop, thus ultimately moral. B was really quite bourgeois, moralistic.

He was a fairly conventional Freudian: used three stages of development, anal/oral/oedipal.

Q. What does B say happens with LRRH specifically? Story is located past stage or oral fixation. Here dealing with adolescence resurgence of oedipal urges. p.172. Wolf and animalistic tendencies in all of us. p.173, LRRH's unconscious is working overtime, giving grandma away. Red in her name is color of violent emotions, including sexual emotions. Issue of passing wolf onto grandma.

Alan Dundes, very prominent folklorist, we saw in controversy with Geertz, edited reader on LRRH, surveys many analyses, takes on tale. His chapter in the reader, just by running thru all the many interpretations, shows many of difficulties. How to read elements in tale? Each analysis assumes that the meanings of the symbols is obvious, but when the different versions are examined together show large elements of subjectivity.

Q. Does D agree with B on anything? Would probably agree on primacy of oral versions of the tales as opposed to published. (B very big on having tales read out loud). Both fully committed Freudians. Otherwise they disagree completely.

Q. What are D's big points? Must take all variants into account. Including even Asian variants. I myself thought inclusion of Asian versions was probably a bit forced until I saw specific resemblances. (This demand is from point of view of professional folklorist; leading from discipline's strength. Non-professionals are always going to be much weaker than they are on this point.)

D says one must know past interpretations, otherwise one is doomed to repeat past errors and ideas, reinventing the wheel.

Most writing on LRRH has been based on versions published by Grimms and Perrault. Even those like B who snotty about depending on Perrault are guilty of using bastard version in Grimms' collection.

Q. What does D say about the Grimm version? It is a combination of several variants that the Gs had collected, thus inauthentic and a major step away from oral.

Q. What is D's own take on LRRH and issues raised? Story is very infantile, is childish not adolescent. Emphasizes all the different urges involved. D is also a pretty orthodox Freudian. Today few people who write about such issues accept Freud so complacently. He has come in for tremendous criticism, concerning validity of his theories, of his cases histories, etc. Even those who defend F unlikely to take his theories for granted. E.g. confidence that a tale can be related to a particular stage of psycho-sexual development. On other hand, after reading LRRH and all variants, esp. some of Asian ones, hard not to think that has something to do with sexuality, violence, defecation etc.

Q. Where is D on issue of universal interpretations vs. those specific to one culture/moment. Very universalistic. But then, in different way, so is B. D scornful of theorist Zipes, who relates LRRH to particular period in European history.

Q. So what issues does this debate raise concerning the difficulties of interpretation? Problems concerning the text and version use. What is authentic? What is representative? Does it matter? Fundamental problems reading the elements in the story: Is the wolf Daddy? Or is the Woodsman daddy? or both? How do we decide with any degree of confidence? Is grandma to be read as a disguised form of mother?

Problems of reading import of elements and situations, esp. because the story is not in itself realistic (wolves don't talk), but at another level almost all analysts assume that it relates to or is about real issues. Does it matter that LRRH is naive, that she so gullible with wolf? Is that just incidental to the story, or is crucial element, or maybe we should

assume she *not* naive, she knows what wolf up to whole time. ?? D is scornful of Eric Berne (was a well known pop psychologist), but Berne's questions seem relevant from one point of view.

Issues of universal vs. particular. D wants a meaning that attaches to all variants. But why can't meaning change with variants? Why assume there is one true core, almost like a Platonic ideal? Why not relate a variant, as Zipes does, to one time or place? Many literary theorists see, e.g. figure of Cleopatra or Jesus changing with times. But then if embrace local, particular interpretations, why is the tale so widespread? Can one really keep one's sights restricted to local?

Next time we will probably use two other books on LRRH: Catherine Orenstein, *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked* (2002, Basic Books); Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (1993, Taylor & Francis).

22. GOLDBLOCKS MEETS OEDIPUS

Goldilocks

Useful to work thru analysis of one myth. In this case not really myth in strict sense but published tale, "Goldilocks." Amusing and provocative analysis by Eugene Hammel, meant to show what L-S's structural myth analysis like, its utility. Really just one variant, one take on L-S, but useful place to begin.

H offers 2 kinds of analysis, one sequential thru story, other relations between elements in story regardless of sequence. The first really more like Propp, the latter like L-S. H says that story highly patterned, more like a fugue than a messy narrative. If one reads out loud, this is evident. H says this is much of the appeal of story, appeals to our aesthetic sense.

In fact, one of the innovations in analysis is H's insistence that at some level we appreciate structure. It is not myths thinking themselves in us but we thinking myths, structuring them even if we are not consciously aware of it. In very interesting way, H examines changes in the story to show that it becomes more structured over time.,

So in the "syntagmatic structure," we get three major episodes, with bears only, Goldie only, and the two together. The second and third episodes are broken down into sub-episodes with porridge, chairs, and beds respectively. And all three episodes have divisions between Papa, Mama, and Baby Bear. Q. How persuasive do you find this? For most people, seems intuitively good, but not really L-S's kind of analysis, more Proppian.

The paradigmatic structure, more like L-S. Says elements in story divide into objects and beings, natural and cultural. For cultural beings and natural objects, there is only one, Goldie and Honey. For natural beings and cultural objects, they are divided into threes. Natural beings are differentiated according to size, cultural objects according to levels of activity. These entities are then arranged into diagrams of relationships between them.

Q. This is ingenious, but do we buy it? You all are "natives", who know the story from your own experience, most of you from your own childhoods---does it fit with your ideas as natives?

Q. Do you agree with how he reads the elements? Specifically, is the honey as important as H suggests? Most students say it is not that crucial, not even in a lot of versions we have heard as children. H sees honey as completing structure, but even when it is there, it may not necessarily be an important part of structure.

Q. How about the objects being differentiated by activity? not very persuasive. seems forced.

Kind of disappointing that the supposed point of the story is “people are not animals, that Culture is not Nature” (p.25-14). Not very exciting. If story is supposed to appeal to listener, why so boring?

What would Bettelheim say? He would at least make it about something gripping. Not surprising that B sees it about sibling rivalry, about the Oedipal situation, about facing towards adulthood. In trying out Poppa, Momma’s, Baby’s stuff, Goldie is identifying with them psychologically. B thinks this is very healthy. But then he strongly disapproves of Goldie jumping out window and running away. Goldie is wimping out, not facing up to psychological tasks. B says parents like this story because it holds out hope that children will stay children forever, But B says this is bad bad bad.

B says if Poppa Bear is called poppa, psychologically he is father, is Goldie’s father too, whatever the story says.

No agreement at all with Hammel.

Intuitively I think we can agree with B to the extent that Goldie’s story seems to be about basic stuff, existential dilemmas for kids.

So what alternatives? When I first read H’s analysis, I had small kids. One of issues they dealt with all the time was possession. What is my stuff? What is other kids’ stuff? When can I have it? Endless encounters, adults making kids give back stuff they have grabbed away. ‘No Johnny, this is Suzie’s toy.’ Every kid spends a lot of time both as the aggressor, who takes, and as the victim, who loses. Half of kindergarten consists of getting kids to share or to let others use their stuff.

H also misses the reversal in the story. One of the things that makes it juicy is that the bears are cultural---it is they who live in a house, eat porridge, sleep in beds. Goldie is wild---she comes out of the forest, she invades, and at end she jumps out window. Part of the appeal is that reversal. (We are all a little jaded now, since Disney etc have endlessly multiplied anthropomorphic animals, who even talk like Eddie Murphy.)

What differentiates the three steps in Goldie’s invasion is not degree of activity but degree of invasion or molestation: from having sat in chair and breaking it but now gone; to consuming porridge; to taking over bed, very personal, my bed, and still being there!— breakage to consumption to displacement. So Goldilocks is about this intense situation for children, though concerned not with sex or defecation but possession. “Mine!” And in story the child-listener identifies both with Baby Bear, the victim, and with Goldie, the aggressor.

Assumption of shrinks like B is that if the situation in a tale is from childhood, then it has to be about the immediate nuclear family. But kids struggle about possessions with non-relatives in day care, nursery school, etc. as much as they do with siblings.

So Hammel's analysis is interesting and on some points persuasive, but it shows the difficulties of analysis. One of the most difficult is how one reads the elements in story: Is Poppa Bear to be read as "Daddy"? or as alien bear? or as nursery school teacher? Almost always, how one sees the arrangement of the overall structure depends on how one has already read the pieces, the elements.

One of the things that makes reading the elements so tricky and subjective is that, even though L-S and many others talk of metaphors in myth, they are really synecdoches. If you think back to our discussion of deciphering metaphor, often it is the comparison between the two sides that gives us the clues. What you get in such a case is 2 concrete elements, here bears and Russians, and then the more abstract qualities found in each, and then joining up the sides by the qualities they share.

But with a myth, there is no other side, or you're not sure what it is. All you have is the element (a person, a thing, a name, a situation), and then you try to read out the abstract qualities.

Hammel says Goldie is to be seen as representing culture; we saw it as nature or nature hiding in culture. Sometimes the element is easily readable, sometimes not.

Famous case with L-S himself of trickiness of interpretation of elements:

Clam necks and horns

In one myth from North American Northwest Coast, an owl shaman is frightened by a boy who puts mountain goat horns on his fingers to look like claws. In a neighboring society's myth, a female ogre is frightened away when the victim puts clam necks or siphons on his fingers.

L-S says the second myth is a transformation of the first, which explains why the ogre would be scared away by something so insignificant as clam necks. Marvin Harris, a contentious anthro who hated structuralism gleefully showed that L-S had erroneous idea of clam necks, L-S was thinking of little east coast steamers with little tiny necks. The clams in the myth were West Coast goeey duck clams, with necks huge, rigid. Not the opposite of the horns at all but analogous. (Marvin Harris, 1979, *Cultural Materialism*, pp. 202-210).

L-S mistakes shows the hazards of myth analysis

Oedipus

Let's look at his first and most famous example, Oedipus story. After this first sketch, LS moved to native Americas, never went back to Greek myth. We have summary by Leach, pp. 64-65.

L-S takes certain actions in the cycle, reads them all as examples of over-rating blood relations: Kadmos searches for his sister; Oedipus marries his mother; Antigone buries her brothers. It is hard for us to contradict his reading, because the strange language of myth makes it unclear what are the crucial dimensions of each element, but reading them all as overrating kin doesn't seem all that plausible when scrutinized. Kadmos was in fact ordered to find sister. Oedipus marrying mother is more mixing up blood and marriage relationships. Antigone was doing duty by burying---maybe unwise, but not over-rating blood.

The next set are supposedly examples of *under*-rating: this more plausible, though no guarantee that really what significant in myth.

Then particularly implausible set: 3 actions glossed as denying man's autochthonous origin, i.e. man's having sprung from earth here, man the super-native. Kadmos kills dragon, Oedipus kills Sphinx---these according to L-S are autochthonous monsters. But is killing them absolutely to be read as "denial of man's autochthonous origin"? They are monsters, not man. Why is destruction = denial of origin?

Then "affirmation of man's autochthonous origin" Mostly examples of lameness. Lame hero, L-S says indicates that autochthonous. He cites mythology of Pueblo Indians, probably correct for Pueblos, where ancestors were lame when first emerged onto earth from hole in ground, but does that mean it's also right for Greeks?

Element of lameness does seem to be important in Greek mythology. What does it mean? More plausible that indicates a person marked by gods. Achilles, Jason, others. Here esp. Oedipus.

Nailed to mountain. Name glossed as swollen-foot.

Another feature of L-S analysis: synchrony vs. diachrony. Says that myth neutralizes time element in story. Fakery about reading elements in myth up and down, between lines, also left to right on line, different relations. But this is silly. It is an artifact of our writing system, fact that we break up flow left to right as convenience to fit on page.

So what can we salvage from L-S on Oedipus? Leach offers us a complicated reinterpretation. I am more impressed by reinterpretation by Terry Turner. Too long and complicated for us to read, but very interesting ideas. ("Oedipus: Time and Structure in Narrative Form" *American Ethnological Society*, 1969, pp. 26-68.).

Interestingly, Turner really salvages a number of things from L-S. T thinks that the myth is in fact partly about kinship. T says not really over or under-valuing kin, but about balancing out relations with kin vs. non-kin. Says story came from an era in Greek history in which they were moving from kinship-based political structures to city-states. So the subject matter of the story was not merely abstract relations, but a real gut-wrenching conflict: who gets my loyalty, my clan or the state? Relevant today in places like Somalia and Afghanistan.

Also about growing up, T says, about maturation. Much of myth is about someone being held back or blocked in progress thru life. O is nailed down, kept from maturing, because of prediction that will kill parents O is blocked on road by stranger, who turns out to be father, kills him. The blocked sphinx, whose riddle is about maturation, movement thru cycle of life. So initial denial sets off a long chain of episodes about same problem.

T says time progression in myth *is* important, divides it into episodes, looks at bundles of relationships in those episodes. We can't take on T's whole analysis here. Point here is to see how one gets a reading of the myth, an alternative to L-S's interpretation. More plausible than L-S in part because makes better sense of more elements in story. partly because makes sense in terms of salient issues in society at time.

23. HYENAS AND DEMON BRIDES

Myth analysis is something that can't be learned in the abstract. Essential to work thru texts, to practice doing it We have two examples, from Beidelman and Hymes, gives us some hints as to how to read myths

Hyenas and witchcraft

Q. In the story of hyena and rabbit, what kinds of information does Beidelman give us from outside the story itself that helps us understand it? Kaguru ideas about the two animals. Kaguru ideas about witchcraft, association of hyena with witchcraft The organization of society, specifically matrilineal kin groups. Not only why hyena is so much more culpable, but also why rabbit may be crafty and selfish too, because death of senior woman of lineage breaks it up, releases rabbit from authority Hard to see how one could adequately analyze the tale without this information not found in the text itself.

In effect, the synecdoche of myth is turned back into metaphor by showing that characters in story have counterparts in daily life. B makes sense of events and characters in story in part by reading them against those counterparts.

Shows how something can be quite different from daily life and yet have a lot to say about daily life.

The woman who pees like a man

Hymes considers a myth from the Northwest Coast Much less info from society than with Beidelman

Q. What does Hymes use instead of that info to find structure and meaning in the text? Why does he reject the previous analysis by Jacobs? First and most important, close attention to the actual language of the text. Nothing in words to support Jacob's inference about horror of homosexuals etc.

Hymes' emphasis on wording suggests one of great problem with myth analysis, namely that so many of the texts we have are poor, can't get at words as H does H is a professional linguist, tape recording texts, then transcribing and translating them with great care and detail But many myth texts collected in much more mechanical, perfunctory way: Someone doing brief fieldwork sits down with informant and translator, asks to tell tales.

Collects myths not only because expected, because long history of interest in myths---also that one of the easier things to collect in field. Doesn't take much initiative or care on part of researcher.

Then, in process of collecting, the informant has to tell the story very slowly, while the translator converts it from one language to another and collector writes it down.

Dragged-out process. Can imagine that often informant gets bored or doesn't want to prolong session, so tells somewhat truncated version, leaves details, even whole episodes out.

Then have to think about translator. Often member of group with a little schooling, in many cases speaks only basic version of the contact language. So translation can be simplified or even distorted.

So version of myths that collected in this way are seldom optimum, and often really crude or garbled or mistranslated. In cases I have examined where I know the story or know the language, I can see how much cruder the published version is than the one I heard among the people themselves.

Even more, this method of collecting, even when done with great care and text tape-recorded, still divorces the text utterly from its use and context. Doesn't tell us when performed, by who, for what reasons, how completely, etc. etc. Is in totally unnatural situation, dictating story.

So myth analysis may require recording, transcribing, and translating yourself.

Q. So what does Hymes get out of story thru close reading? That girl not culpable. That not foregrounding theme of homosexuality, etc.

Q. Beside close reading of text, what other method does Hymes use? Comparison within the corpus of myths, finds others that similar in many ways but with significant difference. Thus finds several stories where are questions of following moral dictates and following common sense. Shows that this one is story of someone, seal, who so concerned with propriety that she doesn't sufficiently heed common sense.

Hymes is inspired by L-S, but his results not really that close to kind of thing that L-S does. Often the case: scholars inspired by method but change it around, make new versions. I don't know of anyone who did exactly the same as L-S himself.

Hymes analysis persuasive but not necessarily the complete story. Beidelman might ask about ideas in culture about seals. Dundes might point out similarity with Asian LRRH variants in which identity is revealed by bodily processes. This might be significant theme. Might have to consider more thoroughly the fact the crucial indicator is pissing. I also wonder about how mythology in this society might be about marriage. Many myths about marrying animals or stars or deities---may have something to say about marriage in their society.

Also, might wonder if monster spouse might represent certain kind of danger. Kuna have story about man who turns up, says he has been away from society as migrant laborer, marries woman in family. Eventually turns out he is a cannibal monster, has been killing and cutting up his brother-in-law, bringing meat back to serve family. Is a metaphor about the dangers of outside world, outsiders who want to harm and exploit Kuna. Also

about sexual dangers those outsiders present, want to take Indian women. So with Hymes' example, might be particular kind of danger

24. JAGUARS, STARLETS, AND VAMPIRES

Lévi-Straussian myth analysis is often highly abstract: when set of myths analyzed, comes out to be structured by set of very basic and very abstract oppositions: raw/cooked. But L-S not entirely consistent: in some places says these are fundamental contradictions, discrepancies, problems, and myth is a way that society tries to bridge or mediate those contradictions: ultimately it cannot be done, but myth keeps trying.

Many anthros who followed L-S, tried to use his methods, attempted to show how formal structures of myth related to particular society. One of L-S's most famous early examples was analysis of myth from Tsimshian of Northwest Coast of North America, story of a hero named

Asdiwal. Complicated story of his travels and marriages, to spirits as well as humans. L-S says to be understood in terms of local social structure, but often not as reflection or justification, but rather in opposition or distinction to it. L-S tries to classify different kinds of post-marital residence Asdiwal lives in. Critics have shown that his information was poor and his analysis forced. He says there is a series of oppositions, and though myth cannot resolve them, the scope or amplitude of the oppositions diminishes thru the myth: the oppositions get weaker and weaker. From water vs. land, to sea hunting vs. mountain hunting, to valley vs. peak. Many problems with analysis. Those oppositions don't strike me as getting smaller. Been shown that L-S very arbitrary and careless in his use of myths. But interesting because raises issue of how the story is to be understood in terms of society. One interesting re-analysis by a local specialist, John Adams, says that the story really doesn't seem the *opposite* of daily life in this society but remarkably similar: often a dynamic outsider will marry into a local group. he isn't a member of the hereditary power structure but he assumes de facto leadership, like Asdiwal. Asdiwal's career is a possible one.

(L-S, "The Story of Asdiwal" in *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism*, Edmund Leach, ed., 1967; L. Thomas et al. 1976, "Asdiwal Crumbles: A Critique of Lévi-Straussian Myth Analysis." *American Anthropologist* 3:147-173; John Adams, "Dialectics and Contingency in 'The Story of Asdiwal'" in *The Unconscious in Culture*, Ino Rossi, ed., 1974.)

The Legitimacy of Solomon

Edmund Leach has very useful example of a myth analysis that related myths to contradictions in society, from Old Testament L points out that in the OT there are a long series of strange marriages, in which people marry just the people they are not supposed to. These marriages form part of a series of episodes that seem to echo each other, in which action in one episode seems similar to another episode but turned around or shifted or

slightly changed: e.g., as a boy and young man, David is persecuted by Saul, but when David comes to power, he repeats some of the same actions

Extremely complicated dynastic history, with usurpers, coups, counter-coups, esp. complicated because two kingdoms develop, not just one

Story complicated by presence of numerous ethnic groups; in many cases indicated that they are the descendants of different characters in the Bible, and that they are ranked by social distance.

E.g. descendants of Leah closer than descendants of Zilpha.

There are a series of strange forbidden marriages. Some of these wrong marriages are even rewarded.

King Solomon himself has a very dubious, messy ancestry, also marries several foreigners (To oversimplify a bit), L says that the Israelites took much by conquest, but by law they should have inherited the land. L says that the wrong marriages with foreigners mediate or fudge this issue, in effect asserting that they hold land by inheritance as well as conquest, even though shouldn't marry such people.

Also very controversial. But suggests how myth may relate, not just to abstraction but to gut issue, fundamental problem or issue.

Matrilocality and singing

The analysis that Hirschfeld and I did of a Kuna myth follows after some of the ones we have been looking at: we look for contradictions and dilemmas in society; we analyze bundles of relations episode by episode like Turner; we pay attention to exact wording, like Hymes; we assume that story resonates for hearers, and like Hammel, that their creativity shapes the structure and content; and we look for symbolic associations outside the narrative, like Beidelman. We also paid attention to what the Kuna said *about* the story. We also assume that there are multiple dimensions on which the story is structured, decided to examine each one separately.

Kuna myths presented in sacred village meetings: chief sings story, then another leader stands and interprets, makes lesson out of text. Useful, but didn't go as far into story as we wanted, not doing our work for us. But themes in myth basic in Kuna discourse, nothing alien to them.

The fundamental contradiction or problem was right up front: because young married men go live with their wives and work for wife's father, they must leave home, and their own family must give up their labor. Give up sons to get sons-in-law. Mother in story won't play by rules. Man who first told me the story had sons but no daughters, so he screwed by system.

In daily life, the dilemma is mediated by marrying locally, within village: son may live with wife but he goes home to see his mother almost every day, and once in a while he works with father and brothers. But in myth, with extreme moves, not possible.

Far from daily life, in which no one marries people from the stars, but in other ways very close: narrator took me out and showed me the medicine the mother used, which medicine men give divorced people so they won't yearn for old spouse.

Q. So how do the episodes in myth play off the normal household system? succession of skewed residence and marriage arrangements. esp. striking that boys ambushing girls etc. is reverse of what happens in real marriage. Goal of production met but not reproduction.

Q. How about hunting? odor?

Q. How does the dimension of union vs. separation subsume other dimensions? Q. How is anticipation relevant? Why does the myth link women's singing and separation?

When article reviewed for publication, one outside reader said we were wrong to make too much of women and emotion, we were stereotyping women; another, equally feminist reader said we weren't making enough of women and emotion.

One could also do a Propopian analysis. In many episodes in Kuna mythology, culture heroes come down to earth on golden platters to teach and civilize. In others, a hero is born from strange circumstances on earth. This myth is variant, though different from others, in that the other heroes are often rejected by people, who don't want to be reformed; here instead, it is that the boys try to capture girls.

This myth one of the most popular among Kuna themselves today. One of my friends named his daughter Nadili.

Vampires and stars

One of L-S's claims is that one myth can be seen as an inversion of another, whether from the same or neighboring cultures. Similarly, Leach, both in the article on biblical marriages and in our assigned readings, not only says one myth can be an inversion of another, but that one must study a whole corpus of myths together, because a single myth is meaningless. In the case of Asdiwal, L-S's claim has been challenged, and it is a tricky one to verify. I was drawn to try by a Kuna myth that in some ways seems very like the one we have just considered and is also a very prominent myth today, but which in other ways is quite different. It has star-people and children born of union with a star-person, flights to the headwaters of rivers, etc.

A couple worry for their granddaughter, because she will soon reach puberty, and they fear she will be taken by nearby vampire-people, who carry off people to drain them of their blood. The proto-Kuna don't know how to resist. So the couple and their granddaughter flee to the headwaters of a river.

Living there, the couple go off each day leaving the girl alone. They tell her that despite hearing forest noises, no one is there. She is visited by a star-man. She deceives her grandparents, telling them to go to another river where they can catch crayfish, while she is with the starman. She gets pregnant, and when the baby is born, grandfather takes it to the river to let it be carried away on a log. But star-women convince him to keep the child for them for a while, and then they become attached and keep it.

The child, a boy named Twiren, grows up rapidly to manhood. He asks if there is anyone else in the world: his grandparents say no, but he contradicts them, and they return to the village downstream. There he teaches the people how to fight. They invite the vampires to a drinking party, and while they are drunk, they kidnap their children. Eventually, the vampires attack the people in a great final battle, and Twiren and the people destroy them all.

We can see a whole series of parallels: Worry about losing sons/granddaughter. Flight to headwaters. Agricultural work. Boys/couple leave for work. Stargirls/man on golden platter. Signs recognized of girls' visit/granddaughter's pregnancy. Boys try to capture girls/ grandfather tries to get rid of child. Return to village. Star girl/Twiren instructs people.

The other myth was about kinship and domestic relations. This one about foreign policy, how to deal with foreigners. Description of vampires very like traditional enemies of Kuna, Indians called Emberá or Chocó. But also parallel to rebellion against Panama Kuna staged in 1925. Notice defeat enemies in story by getting drunk. In exorcism ritual get spirits drunk. Also in 1925, attacked policemen when drinking in carnival, Mardi Gras.

So story about how one might deal with oppressive foreigners: fleeing, negotiating, and eventually, attacking and killing. How is this connected with domestic issues of first myth? Because both in myth and in 1920s, point of vulnerability was young women, lustful interest of outsiders. In domestic relations, women of household secluded, eventually let in one or two men as sons-in-law. Same vis-à-vis foreigners, except never let them in if possible.

There are other dimensions. Much concerned with union and separation, as in first myth. Even to extent that in Inanatili story, star girl tells young men about star villages and people there, expanding their knowledge of world. Opposite with second story: grandparents deny there is anyone else in the world, try to shut things down socially.

Both stories about unions with star people. In second story they may partially represent helpful foreigners with whom Kuna have allied themselves against their enemies. The illicit pregnancy and bastard birth awfully like the skewed marriages discussed by Leach. There is something wrong, grandparents upset, but ultimately it is the product of this mess who saves the people from their enemies.

We can try out method in last class with some different myths, see what we can make of them tentatively right on spot.

Assignments

Below are all assignments from the course, along with links to a number of student samples.

Assignment 1

Response Essay: On "Illness as Metaphor"

Write a brief essay of about two pages discussing some aspect of Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*. It should not be hard to find something to agree or disagree with or to otherwise discuss, since Sontag takes strong positions on a number of issues. In the very limited space available to you, try to make a fairly coherent argument about Sontag's claims.

Due in class on Lecture 2, no exceptions.

Assignment 2

Trope Quick-pick

Collect a set of tropes concerned with one or two subjects. Give five examples each of metaphor, metonym, and synecdoche. (1 page)

Due on Lecture 6.

Assignment 3

Essay With Rewrite

Write an essay (approximately 4 pages, maximum of 5, double-spaced, normal font) on some aspect of the anthropological study of symbolism. In the essay, you can encompass a large topic or focus in on one narrow but significant point. Use examples from the readings to illustrate your argument. You may zero in on one or a few of the readings, but only if you use them to illustrate some larger discussion of a theoretical issue.

The two major areas from readings and class discussions so far available are of course tropes and the raw materials of symbolism. You can do a general essay on the importance of tropes, but you may find it more stimulating to take one question or a couple of questions in the theory of tropes. Similarly, you could contrast two or more domains of symbolism or examine one of them, or you could consider some question that was raised in discussions of animals and the human body. I am glad to consult on possible topics.

Whichever subject you choose, strive to write an essay that mixes generalities and particulars/examples, without letting your paper become either too abstract or too caught up in messy detail. Cite readings and other class material explicitly, and as much as possible discuss them critically. We will go over your essays in individual meetings, and then you will rewrite them. Do not, however, treat the first version as merely a draft.

Due before Lecture 14.

Consultations will be individually scheduled.
Rewrite due by end of term.

Student Sample ([PDF](#)) (Courtesy of Shen Qu. Used with permission.)

Assignment 4

Tropes Field Assignment

Take some field of symbolism in our own society and explore its content and structure. What metaphors/metonyms/synecdoches/symbols of other kinds do you find? How are they related to each other? How do they influence people, if they do? How do they make sense of something, if they do? How do they structure thought, if they do? What kinds of themes/ideas/emotions do they convey?

There are thousands of possibilities, some suggested by our readings:

- tropes about disease and illness, or pain, or medical treatment—Sontag by no means exhausted the subject.
- tropes in a branch of science, or in the laboratory.
- tropes in one religion.
- advertising—beer ads, car ads, etc. etc.
- children's books (with animals acting like humans etc.).
- movies.
- different kinds of divination (astrology, the I Ching, feng shui, etc. etc.).
- hunting, animal rights, Disney movies with animal characters, other animal tropes.
- tropes about or based on Native Americans or other ethnic groups.
- historical analogies other than the ones we discussed in class.
- political rhetoric.
- euphemisms.

The ethnic groups are almost always a good place to look. If you grew up speaking another language or if you come from a foreign nationality or an ethnic with a distinct culture, feel free to draw on your experiences. The tropes you discuss may be recognized by their users or they may be hidden or unconscious. If you are unsure how suitable or revealing a topic is, feel free to check in with me. The only areas to avoid are myth and ritual, since we will have assignments focusing on those forms later in the term.

Obviously, you will need to show work and energy in gathering material, but the most important aspects of the paper will be creativity, perceptive analysis, and clear, persuasive argument. As much as possible, use ideas from the course in your analysis. Write three to four pages (no less, not much more), double-spaced, normal margins and font size.

Due on Lecture 17.

Assignment 5

Second Field Assignment

Find and analyze an example from your own society or another you know well of either a ritual; a symbolic classification; or another symbolic complex (e.g. concerning food, animals, color, or

the human body). Choose your subject to maximize your ability to analyze it in terms of approaches and ideas from the course as well as its inherent interest. If in doubt about a topic or analytical approach, check with me. Write three to four double-spaced pages.

Due on Lecture 20.

Student Sample ([PDF](#)) (Courtesy of Orlando Jaquez (MIT student). Used with permission.)

Assignment 6

Essay on Narrative

Write a brief essay on an issue or issues concerning narrative and life based on readings, class sessions, and your own ideas. Three pages.

Due on Lecture 22.

Assignment 7

Proppian Analysis Of Narrative

The form of analysis developed by Vladimir Propp and modified in the assigned reading by Benjamin Colby is applicable to any genre of narratives that follow a repetitive pattern or patterns. Take some genre of narrative you know in which it intuitively feels as if there is a pattern even if you aren't sure what it is. Possibilities include television sitcoms or weekly dramas, the soaps, murder mysteries, fantasy, science fiction, comics, Anime. Take a small corpus of stories and try to analyze them according to standard plots in the general approach set out in the readings by Propp and Colby. Show how two or more story plots fit the structure you set out. I prefer that you chose a kind of narrative other than folktales, but if you are drawn to folktales, the Humanities Library has a number of good collections. Write approximately three pages.

Due on Lecture 24.

Student Sample 1 ([PDF](#)) (Courtesy of Corinne Packard (student). Used with permission.)

Student Sample 2 ([PDF](#)) (Courtesy of Orlando Jaquez (MIT student). Used with permission.)

Assignment 8

Structural Myth Analysis Sketch

Do a short sketch of a structural analysis of a myth, either one of the myths in the class handout or another of your choosing. Space will not allow you to do anything like a complete analysis, so take one or two dimensions or episodes of the myth and indicate what seem to be a few of the key relations in them. You do not of course have information on the cultures from which the

myths derive to do anything like a definitive analysis — the point is to show your understanding of the method and its application to one example. Two pages, including a chart or diagram if you wish to use one.

Due on Lecture 26.

Student Sample

Boundary of Metaphors-Rewrite

21A.212

Shen Qu

5/1/2004

A recurring issue in anthropology is the lack of clear definition on the subject matter under discussion: it is difficult to make a definitive argument about rituals if no one really know what the term “ritual” means? Other subjects such as “society” and “culture” face the same problem. People generally have a sense of what culture is; but if asked to define the term, most would have trouble and few could come up with answers that seem complete even to themselves let alone those around them. However, because these definitions are controversial, scholars are usually aware of the limitations and can construct their work accordingly (if they wish). Metaphors are slightly different. Most (educated) people “know” what a metaphor is: it is, plainly put, one thing used to represent another, similar thing. Therefore, people make liberal use of the term without giving it much thought. But in practice, metaphor is not clearly defined; or rather the “clear” definition leaves a large gray area open to interpretation.

The *Webster’s Dictionary* defines metaphor as “a figure of speech containing an implied comparison, in which a word or phrase ordinarily and primarily used for one thing is applied to another.” This seems relatively straightforward, especially for a dictionary definition. Take for example the two sentences “he is tall” and “she is fuming.” The former is a statement of height where as the latter is a metaphor drawing a comparison between anger and fire. The difference seems clear cut, but what if I tell you that the “tall” guy has a height of five feet and four inches. Suddenly, you may realize that “tall” is actually used to implicitly express a sense of greatness and strength; he is tall not physically but metaphorically. In a similar way, if a girl is smoking a cigarette than

she may be literally “fuming” not metaphorically. But what if the girl is angry and smoking at the same time? The meaning of the sentence gets more complicated. This shows that metaphor is not always easy to identify. An “implied comparison” means that the reader or listener have to draw the connection. And the gap between the original intention and receiver’s understanding is not always easy to fill.

One may argue that the above example only deals with the recognition of metaphor, not its definition. But the two is tightly linked. Lets look into the idea that “the heart is a pump.”^{*} Prior to the development of the mechanical pump people found it very difficulty to describe how the heart functions. Thereafter, the heart is mostly described in association with the pump. The question is, is the heart a pump in the metaphorical sense? We can argue that the heart is by definition a pump made of flesh and blood or that a pump is by definition something which maneuvers the flow of liquid and the heart and the mechanical pump are only specific types of the generic pump. There are certainly many comparisons that could be implied between heart and pump, but does that mean it is a metaphor? Man and the generic primate can also be described in much the same way, but saying that “man is a primate” is not a metaphor since man is type of primate.

So perhaps the metaphor lies in the comparison between the heart and the mechanical pump much like one would compare man to another primate like the monkey? But even this approach has its problems. Consider the possibility that the inventor of the first mechanical pump based his design on a heart. (This is very probable since humans derive knowledge from what already exists in nature.) In this case, the mechanical pump would be nothing more than a simplified heart made of nuts and bolts. This idea only

^{*} This is taken from MIT course 21A.212 Spring 2004 lectures.

gets more and more confusing and goes to show just how difficult the classification of metaphor can be.

In *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson further extended the complexity of metaphors by suggesting that sometimes, “it is far more difficult to see that there is anything hidden by the metaphor or even to see that there is a metaphor here at all” (11). But if we are using a metaphor without realizing then is it still a metaphor? Lets consider a hypothetical situation. Long ago there lived a king named Hexar who had six toes on one of his foot. Ever since, people started to refer to a six-toed foot as a hexar. Now years have passed, and people have long forgotten about King Hexar. The dictionary defines hexar as a foot with six toes. In this case is hexar a metaphor? Historically, yes. But people in the present do not mean to imply a comparison when using the word; they are simply using vocabulary by definition; and the word is no longer used in association with King Hexar and always in association with six toes. So then are the people using a metaphor unconsciously or are they using metaphor at all? Can something be called a metaphor if the users never meant to imply a comparison and the receiver never perceived a comparison?

Lakoff and Johnson also provided examples of imbedded metaphors such as argument is war, time is money, ideas are objects, etc. The detail analysis of these examples often walk a thin line between metaphor and the fundamental structure of language and thought, which is not surprising since they believe “our conceptual system is largely metaphorical” (3). This adds yet another layer of complexity to metaphor since it is no longer just a form of expression but a form of conception as well. For instance, they defended the “argument is war” example by pointing out that war related terms such

as defense, weakness, target, win, lose, and strategy are used to describe argument. First notice that, much like the case of pump and heart, argument could be defined as a type of war, a verbal war. Thus argument and war could be described in the same way without a metaphorical comparison.

Furthermore, since argument and war are similar, it is inevitable that they are described by the same terms. A cheetah can run and a human can run, but saying that the human is running does not mean that s/he is compared to a cheetah; thus, a person can be defensive in both war and argument without implicitly comparing the two. Defense is simply an action on its own that can be applied to scenarios such as argument and war. In fact, does anyone know whether the word defense was first used in conjunction with war or argument or some other concept? Has anyone counted whether it is used more often with war or argument? If no, then how can we say defense is a term of war?

Finally, consider the case where something previously unknown, such as an alien, came into the world. How would we describe the alien and everything about it? Whatever it is like, the description must be made up of words already existing in the language (whichever language it may be) because we do not know another way. Even if new terms were created for this alien, these terms would in turn be defined with words in the current language. Since these words are already associated with something in our world, are we implicitly comparing that something with the alien? (If we use words such as defense or strategy in association with an alien action, does that mean we are making a metaphorical comparison between war and this alien's action?)

In "The Culture Basis of Metaphor," Naomi Quinn states her own views on metaphors. Unlike Lakoff and Johnson, Quinn believes that metaphors are driven by

culture; metaphors do not structure understanding but are chosen to “satisfy mappings onto already existing cultural understandings” (65). As example, she brought forth eight general metaphorical categories associated with marriage: sharedness, lastingness, mutual benefit, compatibility, difficulty, effort, success/failure, and risk. She argues that we do not associate any of these traits to marriage because they are fundamentally linked; instead, these metaphors reflect culture beliefs of what marriage is like. Personally, I find this argument easier to accept than that of Lakoff and Johnson’s. And the acceptance of one or the other will certainly alter the line inside which we find metaphor. However, how can we ‘proof’ that either one is closer to the ‘true’ definition of metaphor? How do we know what is and what isn’t a metaphor?

Is metaphor the answer to Ontology? Does it define how we perceive being and existence? If everything is in someway a metaphor then does the word metaphor still carry a meaning? If not, then what is a metaphor, and where are its boundaries? These questions are abstract but significant. They are also not specific to only metaphors: many of the same questions and arguments can be carried over to other forms of tropes. Take for example metonyms. Does the mention of things linked to each other necessarily imply a metonymical comparison? What if two things used to be associated with each other in the distant past but have long since lost that connection? This essay does not answer these questions. Its goal is to simply point out that writers should remain mindful of the gray boundary of what constitutes metaphor and be clear to themselves and readers what they mean when using the word until and unless a strict definition can be established.

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Student Sample

Orlando Jaquez

April 26, 2004

Professor James Howe

Second Field Assignment

Priest as Chief

The Rite of Homily as Guidance Tool

On Easter Sunday¹ 2004, I had the opportunity of attending a Catholic Mass at a church in the western suburbs of Boston. This visit, while admittedly pious in nature, allowed me to (in the metaphorical sense) kill two birds with one stone. Not only was I able to fulfill my religious obligation, but I also managed to perform fieldwork and observe a well-known ritual firsthand. Luckily for me, it also allowed me the opportunity of obtaining a transcript of the sermon, which will be used in this paper with his permission. In this short piece, I present an analysis of Catholic Mass liturgy, in particular of the rite of Homily, and I argue that through the Homily, the Catholic priest, as the ritual leader, plays a key role in the preservation and reassertion of the Faith.

Ritual study – understanding the ritual form and its function – has become an increasingly important area in anthropology, and has served as a major analytical tool for the greatest minds in the field since its inception (Bell 1992: 3). Ritual is ubiquitous in all societies, and so, the study of rituals serves as a sort of spy-hole into the “cultural dynamics by which people make and remake their worlds” (Bell 1992: 3). In the world of religion, in particular, ritual study has been especially useful, as ritual is considered (by some) to be “the ground from which religion grows” (Rappaport 1999: 26). I tend to agree with Anthony Wallace’s statement that, “it is ritual which accomplishes what religion sets out to do,” and is thus, the primary phenomenon of religion (1966: 102). Religion, then, is kept alive, not by the mere belief in the divine or the sacred, but by the performance of religious rituals. While these views of religion

and ritual may not be universal, it is nonetheless my own belief that ritual, by any definition, is a fundamental feature of the religious experience. In fact, all studied religions have a defined system of rituals that serves to provide "an aura of facticity" to religious beliefs (Geertz, 1973:

¹ The holy day of Easter marks the end of a 40-day period of Lent, and symbolizes the resurrection of the Christ after the third day of his death (See Elliott 1995).

90). It is important to note that while a number of definitions of ritual exist (Frits Staal defines it as “pure activity, without meaning or goal”, Lévi-Strauss as “a favored instance of a game”)^{2,3}, I will adopt Roy Rappaport’s general statement, which is described in his book, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (1999: 27):

“[Ritual is] the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers [that] logically entails the establishment of convention, ... the construction of time and eternity, the representation of a paradigm of creation, the generation of the concept of the sacred and the sanctification of conventional order, the generation of theories of the occult, the evocation of numinous experience, the awareness of the divine, the grasp of the holy, and the construction of orders of meaning transcending the semantic.”

By this definition, the Catholic religion is filled with ritual. In fact, the Catholic Church has defined in great detail a set of rituals – a Sacramentary – that function to establish the religion’s “aura of facticity” that Geertz describes (Elliott 1995). The Sacraments – Baptism, Communion, Confirmation, Penance, Anointment of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony – are the principal rites of the Catholic faith, and function to define membership in much the same way as the rites of passage described by Turner (1967) and Van Gennep (1909). Communion, and to a lesser extent, Penance, are calendrical rites. That is, these sacraments are performed regularly and normally adhere to a defined schedule (Rappaport 1999). The remaining five are non-calendrical and occur only as responses to events in, or at different stages in life. For the sake of brevity and in the interest of focus, I choose to only address the ritual of Communion, or the Mass, and more specifically, the rite of the Homily (the sermon).

The modern Catholic Mass is itself divided into a series of minor rites. These rites are invariably repeated at every mass, with few exceptions not herein discussed. I shall only provide a brief review of these minor rites, as I am principally concerned with the Homily. The mass opens with the Introductory Rites: the entrance hymn, the greeting, the penitential rite, the *kyrie*

² Frits Staal, “The Meaninglessness of Ritual,” *Numen* **26**, 1976. (Obtained from Bell 1992)

³ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. George Weidenfield and Nicholson Ltd., University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, 1966. (Obtained from Bell 1992)

eleison (congregation's prayer for forgiveness), the *Gloria* (a praise of God), and the opening prayer (a prayer that is peculiar to the day).⁴ Following the Introductory Rites, the congregation engages in the Liturgy of the Word: the First Reading (from the Old Testament), the Second Reading (from the New Testament), the Gospel and Acclamations (from the Book of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John), the Homily (the priest's sermon), the Credo (usually a recital of the Nicene Creed, which restates the Faith), and the Intercessions (business of the Parish and special needs). The Liturgy of the Eucharist follows, and includes: the preparation of the altar and gifts, the *Sursum Corda* (prayer calling attention to the congregation to "lift up [their] hearts"), the Preface and Sanctus (prayer of the angels), the Eucharistic Prayer (which calls for transubstantiation of bread and wine), and the Mystery of the Faith (a proclamation of the mystery of Christ's resurrection). At this point in the Mass, the bread and wine are said to be transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ, respectively. The mass concludes with the rite of Communion (Lord's Prayer, Taking of the Bread, and Prayer after Eucharist) and the Dismissal (See Elliott 1995).

The Homily, however, is of special interest to me. During this sermon, the priest normally addresses one, or a set of the readings presented during the Liturgy of the Word. I find this single rite particularly interesting, because it differs substantially from the others in the Mass. The Homily is the only non-scripted segment of the ceremony that is intended to have instructional meaning. That is, during the Homily, the priest is able to offer his personal interpretation of the readings, and more importantly, of the religious moral of these readings. This rite, then, provides the priest with a powerful window of opportunity in which to address the specific topics he deems important.

⁴ The actual order of mass can be found at: "The Order of Mass: Basic Text for the Roman Catholic Eucharist, <http://clawww.lmu.edu/faculty/fjust/Mass.htm> (accessed April 20, 2004), and "Mass (liturgy)", [http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Mass+\(liturgy\)](http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Mass+(liturgy)) (accessed April 20, 2004).

During my visit to the St. Julia Parish (Weston, MA), I had the fortune of obtaining a transcript of Father X's sermon. Just as Father X did on Easter Sunday, a Catholic priest can prepare a weekly "lesson" for his congregation. And with this weekly lesson, the priest plays a crucial role in maintaining the Catholic religion's "facticity") through three non-exhaustive, approaches: the use of easily understood vernacular and real-world examples, the selective elucidation or decoding of religious metaphors, and the use of rhetoric.

Looking at Father X's transcript, the utility of the first approach was immediately apparent. In his opening, the Father begins with two simple examples of what he considers to be the phenomenon of Easter.⁵ The first example, that which suggests that feast of Easter is similar to winning a lottery, uses the lottery metaphor to convey to the audience that Easter is an unearned (thus universal) "change for the better." With this, the speaker suggests that Easter should evoke in a person the same excitement and pleasure felt when winning the lottery. As a result, the congregation is able to compare the abstract notion of inheriting new life from Christ to the more plausible (though admittedly not by much) lottery scenario. The Father repeats this exercise in the second example. He translates the abstract notion of the new life of Christ in the Pope to the real example of the Pope's blind forgiveness of the worst of sins.

Father X. uses the second approach of selectively deciphering and elucidating the meaning behind Catholic symbols when explaining the meaning of Baptism. Much like the Kuna chief (and his interpreter) described by Howe (1977), Catholic priests often choose to explain a concept rich in symbols, in terms of a smaller subset of these symbols, which they feel directly applies to the day's lesson. In his Easter sermon, when explaining the concept of Baptism and its ties to Easter, Father Evans only chose to decode the symbols of Baptism that

⁵ Though not necessary, the reader should know that the readings for Easter Sunday 2004 included: Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-9.

were directly relevant to the topic of Easter. So, in describing Baptism, he placed heavy emphasis on the idea of incorporation of the baptized into the Body of Christ – an *incorporation that is reinforced every Easter*. What is more, the Father cleverly maintains this line of thought throughout the entirety of the sermon, reinforcing specific characteristics of Easter and Baptism, so as to produce an extremely coherent lesson on the Church’s oneness with God.

Finally, Father X. illustrates the use of rhetoric as a tool for persuasion and guidance. A clear feature of his sermon is the use of a rhetorical question, which is quickly followed by his personal answer to that question. This technique, along with the persistent repetition of key concepts, allows for an extremely convincing lesson. By asking, “what is so special about Baptism...” and quickly providing a host of answers to the question, the priest was able to instill a great deal of knowledge on the congregation, without allowing for little questioning.

With this case study I have shown that the Homily is the vehicle with which the priest drives his audience toward the “right” direction. With the sermon, he is able to selectively reinforce a different aspect of the Faith, so as to rejuvenate the “aura of facticity” of areas that may be lacking. All in all, as the leader of the ritual, the priest is able to lead his congregation in the direction he deems appropriate. In this sense, the Catholic priest shares qualities with a tribal chief that uses sermon to lead his village along a certain path (as we see with Howe’s Kuna (1977)), or with a ritual leader that asserts the facticity of a faith through his sermon (as we see with Turner’s Ndembu doctors (1967)).

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21A.212 Corinne Packard

Proppian Analysis

"In the criminal justice system, the people are represented by two separate yet equally important groups -- the police who investigate crime, and the district attorneys who prosecute the offenders. These are their stories."-Law & Order

Proppian Analysis of "Law and Order"

The award-winning NBC series, "Law and Order," about investigating crimes and punishing criminals has a highly formulaic pattern which can be analyzed using methods similar to those of Vladimir Propp in his book, *Morphology of the Folktale*. The plots of the series often bear a striking similarity to actual events in the news, though a disclaimer at the end of the show insists that the plots are all fictional. Crimes involving stem cell researchers, Falon Gong participants, civil rights-sensitive cases, and September 11th fraud cases were all used during Season 13 of "Law and Order." Perhaps one of the reasons the series is so popular is because it dramatizes yet seems to imitate real life. The "Law and Order" series has been running on NBC for 14 seasons and also has several derivative shows, "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit (SVU)" and "Law and Order: Criminal Intent (CI)." While a Proppian analysis could likely be extended to the entire spectrum of "Law and Order" episodes, this paper will focus for the sake of brevity just on episodes from season 13 of the original "Law and Order".

Each episode breaks clearly into two parts: the law section (represented as I) and the order section (represented as II). The law section is further broken down into all the elements of the detectives investigating a crime and determining which laws have been broken.

A.) Discovery of a death (or deaths)— A death is discovered by either a civilian (Ac), the police (Ap), or by some other city worker (Aw). The crime is reported to the police and they secure the crime scene.

B.) Evidence is collected and examined—Evidence is collected by the police and examined by the forensic team. Evidence may be collected from the victim’s body (Bb), from the crime scene (Bc), from the victim’s belongings or residence (Bv), or from a suspect’s belongings or residence (Bs). Evidence is analyzed and either points to a new lead (□l), confirms suspicions (□c), or results in a dead end (□e)

C.) Witness interrogations—Different witnesses are interrogated to determine their involvement in the crime or knowledge of the events. Different witnesses may be interrogated: eye-witnesses who were present at the time of the crime (Ce), neighbors surrounding the crime scene (Cnc), neighbors to the victim (Cnv), or neighbors to the suspect (Cns). Interrogations may result false alibis (□fa), true alibis (□ta), leads to new evidence or witnesses (□l), or information about motive (□m).

D.) Suspect arrested—A suspect is arrested and brought to the precinct. The suspect may either request a lawyer (Dl) or confess to a crime (Dc). Sometimes no further detail besides the arrest is given (D).

The ‘order’ part of “Law and Order” consists of actions taken by the district attorney in trying the case before a judge or jury. This sequence can be broken down just as the ‘law’ sequence.

E.) Evidence excluded-- A judge may exclude evidence such as physical evidence (Ep) or a confession (Ec) based on misconduct by the police.

F.) Plea bargain—A plea bargain is either requested (Fr) or offered by the district attorney (Fo). A request for a plea bargain may be denied by DA or the terms may be rejected by the suspect (□d).

G.) Witness/Suspect on the stand—A witness (Gw) or the defendant (Gd) takes the stand to answer questions from the district attorney or defendant’s counsel. This may lead to indications that the defendant may be guilty (□g) or may be innocent (□i).

H.) Verdict— This element may or may not be included directly in each episode. There are four possibilities: a verdict is implied, but not announced (Hn), a verdict is unknown (Hu), a guilty verdict is returned (Hg), or an innocent verdict results (Hi). There is also the possibility that the judge may overrule a verdict, changing the outcome to innocent (□i), or guilty (□g).

Finally, one last element must be introduced: the ‘wild card.’ A wild card can be placed in either section I or II. The wild card defines a moment when a dramatic twist is introduced into the case. The wild card can be described as follows:

W*.) Wild Card— a plot twist arises that is a dramatic change in the case. The wild card usually brings the plot back to a major element of the action. For instance, if tests on evidence reveal that a gun wasn’t actually the murder weapon, the wild card would be represented as W*(B), or if the suspect is revealed to be uninvolved in the case, the notation would be W*(D).

One can see how this Proppian analysis works for specific episodes. For example, the 2 episodes “Tragedy on Rye” and “The Ring” are analyzed in the separate file lawandorder2.ppt (for ease of graphical illustration of the plot structure). The plot synopses offered here were written for this paper, but the official summaries can be seen on the show’s NBC website

(<http://www.uni-television.com/laworder/html/episode/index.html>).

Orlando Jaquez

May 5, 2004

Professor James Howe

Proppian Analysis

Propp and the Folktale of “Reality” Television:

Toward a Structure of Reality Shows

The beautiful, the savvy, the romantic, the fit. These are the heroes of television’s new obsession, reality television. For the past five years, world television audiences have been deluged by these unlikely heroes and their so-called “reality shows,” each equipped with its own drama, challenge, and reward. In the United States, it truly takes serious effort to *avoid* a reality program during

primetime hours. The same is true in other nations with well-developed television industries. England's top channel, BBC, is a renowned creator of reality shows, while Australia's Seven is set to produce 15 reality shows in the coming seasons (David Dale, 2004).

These reality programs, however, are nothing more than a new type of narrative, a new type of storytelling that aims to *mimic* reality. Much like any folktale or myth, or like any soap opera or sitcom, reality shows are fantastic tales with fantastic heroes. Reality television then, should be treated not as a modern documentary of human behavior, but rather as a new genre of storytelling. And in treating these shows as stories, I argue that these contemporary tales, as do the folktales described by Vladimir Propp (1968) and Benjamin Colby (1973), invariably follow a simple, yet well-defined structure – a “magic formula” for reality television. This analysis provides a brief outline of this magic formula and illustrates it through four well-known (seemingly different) reality shows: Average Joe, Survivor, The Apprentice, and The Swan.

Many types of reality shows exist. While some simply follow humans on their daily routines, most are competitive in nature. This analysis focuses primarily on the competitive genre, and recognizes that this structure may not apply to all other genres. The competitive show

will often contain a standard set of components: a host, who serves as the story's narrator; the competitors, one of which will be the story's hero; the challenge or challenges; and the reward, often in form of a person, but mostly in some form of monetary compensation. These elements often appear in a highly predictable order, which I will call the structure of these reality shows. This structure can be broken down to eight subcomponents (events):

1. A number of contestants (16 in all the cases studied) are brought together to compete against each other for a common reward.
2. A challenge is introduced.
3. The contestants are normally divided into groups. In most cases studied, the groups were divided into groups of 8, but *The Swan* was a notable exception, where the 16 contestants competed in groups of 2.
4. The two teams compete each week in smaller challenges, with the object of eliminating a player.
5. Elimination is usually carried out by a vote or personal decision.
6. When the number of contestants falls below a certain point, a new game plan is instituted.
7. A final, "ultimate" challenge takes place between the finalists (2 in most cases, 8 in the case of *The Swan*).
8. A winner (the "hero") is selected and rewarded.

This order of events is conserved throughout the programs, and is thus the backbone of this genre of narrative. Below is an illustration of how four programs, all seemingly different in content, fit this structure. It is presented in table format for the sake of brevity (Table 1).

Table 1. Narrative structure of four reality shows				
Proposed Structure	Average Joe ¹	Survivor ²	The Swan ³	The Apprentice ⁴
1. Contestants are brought together to compete for common reward	16 men brought to mansion	16 contestants gather together in a remote location	16 women (ugly ducklings) chosen and taken to mansion	16 professionals gather in Trump boardroom
2. Challenge; reward introduced	Meet “bacholere” (challenge & reward); win \$1M	Challenge and reward introduced: outplay, outlast, outsmart for \$1M	Challenge and reward: be surgically made over and become finalist in pageant of “swans”; win \$250 K	Challenge and reward announced: become the last apprentice and earn job with Trump Organization
3. Contestants normally divided into groups	Contestants divided into 2 groups of 8	Players divided into 2 “tribes” of 8	Women divided into 8 groups of 2	Contestants divided into 2 companies of 8 (men vs. women)
4. Weekly competitions	Weekly group “dates”	Weekly tribal challenge	Weekly 1 on 1 competitions	Weekly company competitions
5. Elimination by vote	Elimination; 4 then 6	Losing tribe votes off one member	Losing swan voted out by “dream team” experts; winner on to pageant	Losing company sent to boardroom; elimination by Trump
6. Number of players below certain point; new game plan	Number of players at 8; new “beaus” introduced; special 1 on 1 dates, and 2 by 2 elimination.	Number of players at 10; tribes become one; immunity challenges introduced; 1 eliminated weekly	8 swans remaining; 1 st Annual Swan Pageant takes place	Number of players at 8; shuffle companies, assign new leaders; increasing difficulty in tasks
7. Final challenge	Special 1 on 1 nights	3 finalists in final challenge	Final challenge is to win pageant	Final challenge between 2 finalists is to become CEO of “event”
8. Winner crowned	Fiancé chosen	Survivor chosen from final 2 by vote	“Ultimate Swan” crowned	Apprentice crowned; offered “dream job”

As Table 1 illustrates, all four shows follow the proposed structure closely. Average Joe, an “unscripted relationship drama,” presents a love story that, with all but small variations, adheres to the same structure as Survivor, a Darwinian survival show.¹ This holds true for the other programs with seemingly different plots and motivations. Whereas in Survivor it is survival of

the fittest, in *The Swan*, it is survival of the prettiest. *The Apprentice* seeks out the savviest and wisest of businessmen, whereas *Average Joe* rewards the savviest and wisest of romantics. These reality programs, then, while attempting to transmit a different message, all

¹ The Average Joe Website: http://www.nbc.com/Average_Joe/about/index.html (accessed on May 3, 2004).

² The Survivor Website: <http://www.cbs.com/primetime/survivor8/index.shtml> (accessed on May 3, 2004).

³ The Swan Website: <http://www.fox.com/swan/home.htm> (accessed on May 4, 2004).

⁴ The Apprentice Website: http://www.nbc.com/The_Apprentice/ (accessed on May 3, 2004).

share a common narrative structure that is embraced by television producers and audiences alike. In this sense, they closely resemble the Russian folktales analyzed by Propp (1968).

What is of special interest in this analysis is not the similarity between this contemporary form of narrative and that of Propp and Colby, but rather, their *dissimilarity*. In “A Partial Grammar of Eskimo Folktales,” Colby (1973) explains that his proposed grammar (taken to be structure) “[applies] to the folktales of all Eskimo, but not to the folktales of neighboring peoples.” Conversely, this structure of (competitive) reality programming seems to apply across many cultures and in many languages around the world. Apart from England and Australia, a host of other nations including (though not exclusively) France, Greece, and Morocco offer extremely similar programming. While this may be a result of ratings-hungry producers, it goes to show that there is a common interest in this particular form of narrative in different cultures of the globe. Further analysis of this phenomenon would be of interest.

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