

Book Launch: Human Origins; Contributions from Social Anthropology

Various Authors

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Promo for a book edited by Camilla Power, Morna Finnegan and Hilary Callan, with an afterword by Alan Barnard (Berghahn Book Series).

Human Origins brings together new thinking by social anthropologists and other scholars on the evolution of human culture and society. No other discipline has more relevant expertise to consider the emergence of humans as the symbolic species. Yet, social anthropologists have been conspicuously absent from debates about the origins of modern humans. These contributions explore why that is, and how social anthropology can shed light on early kinship and economic relations, gender politics, ritual, cosmology, ethnobiology, medicine, and the evolution of language.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyHNth-ZoJw>

Camilla Power: Welcome everybody and thank you very much for coming to this book launch of the edited volume Human Origins, which there still are a few copies on sale there. They're going like hotcakes, I see. And especially welcome to the number of contributors and authors who have, I'm just so dazzled and impressed by the commitment of people to come, including people who have come from overseas, from Ireland, from Denmark, from Greece. And the only people who aren't here are actually on different continents. And so they've kind of forgiven, apart from the people who are north of the border in Scotland. And the person who is really the inspiration behind this volume is Alan Barnard, one of the most important social anthropology scholars of the Khoisan Bushmen cultures, but also a very important in his efforts to try to get social anthropology and evolutionary anthropology and the understanding of human origins to start talking to each other. He's recently written a trilogy of books. starting with social anthropology and human origins. Did I say his name? Alan Barnard. I did, thank you. I'm sorry, I had too much wine. Social anthropology and human origins, he started with, then the genesis of symbolic thought, and then the end of the trilogy, language in prehistory. And this has been a sterling cry, a rallying cry, to try to get social anthropologists involved in human origin study. Now, for a lot of people here, because you've been attending radical anthropology, you may not realize how radical and far out radical anthropology is, and that in the normal run of anthropology, To have evolutionary and social anthropology trying to talk to each other is very unusual. And partly what we're going to be talking about a little bit tonight is to address, well, why is that? Why is that so problematic? But Alan was the person who kind of pushed, and we organized a panel at an association of social anthropologists conference two or three years ago to try to develop a community of social anthropologists who thought they must have contributions to make to the discussions on human origins. And everyone here has made a very unique and interesting and specific contribution with their own perspectives. Previously there have been There have been many books,

I think Wendy will talk about the Lucy to Language Project books particularly, which have included social anthropologists in the sort of wider interdisciplinary frame with evolutionists, with archeologists, with other disciplines. But this time we wanted to make it dedicatedly that we were fundamentally social anthropologists, or writing in a social anthropology framework, and we were going to talk about aspects of human origins. So this is a kind of a new departure, we can say, it's quite a new departure, and we'll see how it gets received, perhaps in some quarters with more friendship than in other quarters. We will see how that goes. What I'm going to do is ask each of the speakers to give us a short kind of taster of their own contribution. I'm going to give a privilege to the people who've come the furthest. and give them a little bit longer than the people who are kind of weak. You see me and Chris and Jerome quite regularly at RAG, so we're going to just finish things off, basically. But my co-editors, Morna Finnigan and Hilary, who's just come all the way back from the Antarctic back here to me here, that's even more impressive, definitely have very important contributions to make. And I'm actually going to ask Morna if you would start. I want to shall say a couple of words about Morna, if that's all right with you. Morna, I first got to know at University of East London when she was a star student of the women's, it was a women's studies course, wasn't it, that you did. And this is now, well, it's a bit too long ago to think about really, but 20 odd years ago, Women's Studies was a very notable and famous program at University of East London. It was one of the kind of most important academically, and they closed it down. But thankfully, Morna managed to get a fantastic, a stellar degree, and she also managed to get a taste of anthropology, thanks to some of us who were teaching anthropology at the time, and I think that inspired you to go on to anthropology at UCL and then to work with Alan Barnard, who's at Edinburgh. Morna has written some of the most passionate articles on gender egalitarianism and whether it exists amongst hunter-gatherers that anyone has, in my view. I just want to say one more thing. The next programme that they're closing down at, at University of East London, is the anthropology programme. And of course, I'm very heartbroken. Mark Jamieson, my colleague, is here today and maybe at some stage will talk about the repercussions of that. But this Human Origins book is really a, to some degree, it is the product of the interdisciplinary nature of the anthropology that has been studied at University of East London. And so There's something to be said about the shortsightedness and idiocy of the University of London, which I'd just like to put in and out as a bit of a rant. But Morna is going to pay attention to the book itself. Are you all right for microphone? Do I leave this? I'll move this microphone.

Morna Finnegan: Well, if those of us who have traveled from further away get to say more, I should really, coming from Australia, because I'm over-prepared. I'm going to have to try to cut out as I go, and I hope it's going to make sense.

Basically, I kind of- I wanted to say something about the book as a whole, and also about- My part in the book, or what I feel I wanted to contribute to the book, was the importance of women's cooperative behavior in shaping culture. And that's not just at origins, but among contemporary hunter-gatherers. I think women's collective behavior

has been vastly underestimated as a driver in shaping social and cultural systems. And I also think that the presence of children has generally been vastly underestimated, because we're not just humans, we're parents. We're mothers and fathers and children as well. And it seems that that's been kind of a It's been missing in the collective story to a large extent, as we talk about male preoccupations with warfare or territory or male strategic and reproductive interests. So yeah, I want to say something about that. So what is it that makes us human, not just per se, but as parents? What differentiates us from a very clever chimp, mother or father. All apes share a capacity for Machiavellian intelligence. We're all socially astute, sharing cognitive capacities, an incipient theory of mind. What distinguishes humans is the need to connect and share our inner states, to intuit intentions, to communicate ideas, and to be deeply affected by what others are thinking and feeling. Cooperative breeding, vitally, seems to have been the pre-existing condition permitting the evolution of all those traits we now consider distinctively human. We share not only material goods and food, but we share our children. We cooperate to nurture and protect our young in a way that no other primate is known to do. We work collectively to safeguard the needs of the vulnerable among us. Now, that's kind of us painted in a rosy light, because in the last couple of thousand years, since the late Pleistocene, really, it's as though everything that seemed to make us distinctively human has been gradually siphoned off, and the priorities of the alpha male have once again taken over the cultural we. Now, I think that the stories we tell about ourselves shape us. They're very important. The stories we tell about our lives, our shared history, stories we inherit and live by or strain against, things we understand as having created or defined us, and that includes origin stories. Relationships we can't accept, borders we can't transgress, realities we can't imagine, which harden cumulatively into the parameters of our world. Recently, as in the last few thousand years or so, one story has been drowning out most of the others. And it's a bit of a bully, this story. In it, man the warrior, man the farmer, man the accumulator, has been the main character in our collective narrative. And anthropology has become somewhat enchanted by his violence. His structural hierarchy, or complex hierarchy, so-called, has come to seem like the only workable frame. Stephen Pinker's recent book, *The Better Angels*, popularized that idea, arguing that the best hope we have for maintaining civilized society is the modern state. We're experiencing less violence, apparently, as a result of the benevolent capitalist machine currently managing global progress. That must be why we're doing so well as a species. Telling an alternative story these days can be a subversive act. It can be quietly, diligently subversive. And to my mind, that's what so many of the hunter-gatherer ethnographers of the last 50 years— people like James Woodburn, Richard Lee, Alan Barnard, more recently, Jerome Lewis— people who have worked to assemble an alternative story as against this idea that dominance, hierarchy, ownership, and elite power is the only version of ourselves we have. That's a crucial part of the human story that needs to come much more into the forefront of our discussions about origins. Because what you find in the work of most hunter-gatherer specialists, wherever they started out, is a consistent interest in the

political consequences of sharing. And what happens when power belongs to everyone, and therefore, no one? This moving matrix of relationships that represents a coherent social philosophy in situations where the abhorrence of privatization is the dominant impulse. Why study those societies where people still matter more than stuff? Having a knowledge of sharing among hunter-gatherers, writes Alan Barnard, gets us closer to a theory of sharing. Comparing hunter-gatherers with non-hunter-gatherers advances that theory, just as focusing our attention on the boundaries between egalitarian and non-egalitarian societies gives us insights into egalitarianism, sharing, and morality. And I think it also gives us insights. used alongside some of the new data coming out from feminist biologists and primatologists into our collective history and into the evolution of modern humans. Now, there's been a lot of talk within anthropology about complex hierarchies, the auto-setting for the species, the ranking and grading of people into classes of worthiness or unworthiness as the the best and most sophisticated way of organizing. Egalitarianism, by contrast, is seen as a little bit kind of sentimental and boring. There's no mass bloodshed, no kings, no warriors. But actually, when you go deeply into hunter-gatherer cosmology, into hunter-gatherer ritual systems, what you find is this incredibly vibrant virtual structure, this web of virtual structure that's circling all the time around reproductive tropes, around menstrual blood, around birth, around game blood, around, there's a whole corpus of ideas that are centered on the reproductive body. And the structure that you find there isn't the kind of structure where things are pinned down and fenced off. It's something you have to be able to recognize through flux. And in that sense, I think it's a lot more sophisticated, actually, than hierarchy. So if our stories define us, what story do we tell about shared origins? Does it matter if women are subdued into the category man? The essays in this book cover a vast swath of theoretical ground. from the critical rethinking of human cultural cognition in light of ethno-biological knowledge by Roy Allen, to the careful combing through a huge body of ethnographic data in search of a source cosmology for African hunter-gatherers, the richly textured ethnography of Hadza ritual and cosmology by Thea Scans. to the analysis of Bedouin kinship and matrilineality by Joseph from Callan's critical re-analysis of the landmark bio-social anthropology, to Wendy James' re-evaluation of the Lucy to Language program. You have a really diverse mix of essays, and yet they have a common thread. They share a concern with bringing to light alternative stories. with representing aspects of our species' evolutionary story which have been neglected. And there's a politics here, from the obvious feminist politics in Ardener's essay on female militancy and counter-dominance, to the rethinking of San's humanic healing and view of theories of the so-called human cognitive revolution by Chris Lowe or Anne Watts, examination of the relationship between aboriginal and bushman cosmological systems. Human origins were reminded again and again are not the origins of man. And still a surprising majority of theories past and present take no account of female reproductivity and commence from the assumption that when we look at the emergence of modern humans, we're dealing with male reproductive strategies or male preoccupations with subsistence or warfare. The growing volume of

work on cooperative child care grounded in female coalitionary networks as an essential precursor to what Sarah Hardy calls emotional modernity, without which there is no human, has been largely ignored. So I think I'm cutting through a lot of stuff here. But one of the most exciting features of this book is that several of the chapters begin from that assumption of female reproductive and strategic agency and progress from there. With that fundamental new layer in the story, whole new kinds of questions become available. So the question persistently raised by Shirley Ardiner throughout her chapter is really at the core of the book. And that's why it has an important place in this volume. If the models of a society are drawn from male experience and priorities, basically from the male collective body, How can we hope to achieve a complete picture of ourselves without listening to what the collective female body is saying, particularly in societies where it's still active? Everything we know about ourselves is partial. And if the story we're telling ourselves and being told again and again is dominance, hierarchy, privatization, and ownership, then on some level, we resign ourselves to that. It's just the way it is. This is just who humans are. Or we are compelled to struggle against our nature, which is what many feminists have discovered over the years. So how refreshing to discover that new science now emerging from female biologists and primatologists, along with research coming out of genetics, archaeology, and linguistics, are beginning to pull together a whole other story, very close, actually, to the hunter-gatherer story. where female reproductive and sensual experience is pushed up into a public language and architecture, where the resonance and volume of the body is generating a whole new set of competing terms, such as sharing, connection, relationship, autonomy, which begin to act on those dominant motifs defined by male reproductive interests. We're no longer compelled to begin and end with hierarchy. Female procreative experience becomes a symbolic field in which whole communities participate. And the first thing that happens as a result of that opening of female procreative power into the public domain is that children get elevated a way up over stuff. The labour women do in carrying, birthing, feeding, and sharing their kids becomes really the prime form of labour. And in my essay, I used the work of Chris Knight and Camilla Power, where they argue that— and Ian Watts— where they argue that female blood was first used to signal a ritual relationship of antipathy and power that was crucial to women in their role as mothers. And in the moral code at the heart of that story, the signaling power of blood represents the first taboo. And I just want to finish by saying that once we know that cooperative breeding, and this is coming louder and louder all the time from so many different areas of research, once we know that cooperative breeding, with all its implications for contact and response, as opposed to control and command, is an ancient template for our species, we're able to react to the mass disattachment of our children. The fact that kids are now surviving largely without contact as a result of systems premised on male reproductive and territorial interests, and without the kinds of nurture their brains and bodies have evolved to expect, has massive repercussions for our species. And so to me, this book, bringing out, as it does again and again, the strategies and the collective ritual action of female coalitions is telling an even deeper

story, and it's an intensely political story, because we're not just speaking any more about an academic interest in origins. We're talking about information relevant to us as a species and relevant to what's going to happen to our children as they continue to grow through networks where contact has moved away down the list of priorities. And so the story we tell really matters.

Camilla: Thank you. Great. Thank you very much, Morning, because I think that was one of the nicest encapsulations; the story we tell really matters.

I'm going to ask my longtime colleague, Ian Watts, who we've co-authored with for many, many years. Ian was putting on a slightly different hat in this book because Ian is maybe the most famous as perhaps the world's major archaeologist of the ochre record in human evolution. We can say that, or we're pretty close to it anyway. The archaeologist of both Blombos and Pinnacle Point, and also recently of the ochre record at Vunderwerk. But in this book, you were particularly interested in examining comparisons between Australian, very ancient Australian cosmological structures and very ancient Bushmen cosmological structures. Do you want to say a bit more about that?

Ian Watts: Yes. Thank you. As I've been spending about the last 25 years looking at the record of red ochre use primarily in southern Africa, trying to see what it can tell us about the evolution of collective ritual, and at what point can we reliably infer symbolic culture? So refusing to say that collective ritual is necessarily symbolic culture, but it has to be a precursor. So I'm taking a fairly Durkheimian view. Durkheim said, more than 100 years ago, that he predicted, in a sense, that the earliest artistic and religious traditions would be the marking of abstract designs on human bodies in the context of ritual performances. And that this established the sacred. And that it was metaphor. It was metaphors about blood, connecting women's blood with the blood of game animals. Now, jumping forward 100 years from Durkheim, you'd ask any archaeologist 15 years ago, when can we first identify symbolic culture in archaeology? And they'd say 40,000 years ago. This is when you get the first beads, sculptures, cave paintings, elaborated burials. It's a fairly Eurocentric story insofar as this is when modern humans started to replace Neanderthals. But it's not enough to say it was Eurocentric because it was also a sort of fairly major transition in Africa between what's known as the Middle Stone Age and the Later Stone Age. And it's also when it was thought that humans first occupied Australia. Now, red ochre use is much older than 40,000. But the significance of these earlier occurrences was poorly understood, particularly or partly because it was a tradition shared by Neanderthals. Now, what I've done over the last couple of decades, really, is to show three things, I think. Most recently, that the tradition of pigment use goes back about half a million years, and not much more than that. And that this seems to correlate with the evolution of campsites as a sort of campsite-focused form of social organization. But that for the first two or three hundred thousand years of that ochre record, it's very rare. And it's only around the time of our speciation in Africa somewhere between 150 and 200,000 years ago, that it spread like wildfire. It became a ubiquitous feature to campsites throughout South-

ern Africa, all the rock shelters, all the cave occupations, ochres there in significant amounts. And it doesn't disappear thereafter. It's a continuous tradition. So it's the nearest thing we have. So although our speciation is normally identified on genetic and fossil grounds, I'm saying that there is actually an archaeological behavioral marker of it, which is contentious because most archaeologists aren't prepared to accept that yet. Now, I'm also pointing out that the reason that's the case is that our speciation was also the last episode in sort of brain size increase in our lineage. Neanderthals, their last period of increase was slightly later. But ours was, at our speciation, something like a 10% increase, and that this imposed extra burdens on mothers in terms of maternal energy budgets. And it was their strategies that were driving the evolution of collective ritual. Now, my contribution in this book is, as Camilla's pointed out, is coming at it from a very different angle. It's not archaeological. It's about cosmology. And it's about the cosmology of rainbow snakes in particular, or shorthand phrase, rainbow snakes. Now, I haven't gone into this in any depth, but from what I can gather, Even before anthropology kicked off as a discipline in the 1860s and 1870s, comparative theologians got fascinated by the relevance of serpents in religious systems in early states, whether it was Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Apollo killing the serpent at Delphi, and of course, their starting point, Eve being tempted by the serpent in the Bible. So when anthropology sort of got going in the 1860s and 70s, there was a mushrooming of this literature, this fascination with serpents as a key element of cosmologies, but it was still largely focused on early state formations. And it wasn't really until the 1920s that hunter-gatherer social anthropologists started looking at this, and most prominently, Radcliffe Brown, who was an English functionalist anthropologist who helped set up anthropology in South Africa and Australia. And he, just in passing, noted some similarities, he thought, between Australian rainbow snake cosmologies and the fact that Bushmen in Southern Africa also associated water snakes with serpents with water holes. It didn't provide any evidence on the African side for this. And the issue was left for 70 years, something like that. Chris picked it up in his book, *Blood Relations*, in 1991. Then Alan Barnard, in the light of the realization that we all have a very relatively recent African origin, 200,000 years ago, He started getting interested in these questions, and going back to Durkheim, who comparing Australia and Africa, which might be more useful in terms of origins models? He came down very firmly on the African side of the argument, saying that Australian Aborigines, they're just so structurally evolved in their cosmology, you can't really treat it as a starting point. And one of the points of difference he pointed out, or that he identified, was the significance of the rainbow snake as almost a pan-Australian entity. and of the dream time and he thought that these things didn't really have equivalence amongst the bushmen. Now I wasn't totally satisfied with that and so Chris had done some of this work looking at some koi san material, much of it was actually from koi pastoralists, so I got interested in trying to dig deeper into the Bushmen material. And then just a couple of years ago— and that was part of my thesis, but I never did anything with it. And then a couple of years ago, Chris Lowe, another contributor to this volume, and Sian Sullivan,

they produced a paper on rainbow snakes and Khoisan mythology. Khoisan are the indigenous peoples of Southern Africa, whether they be Bushmen, hunter-gatherers, or Khoi-speaking pastoralists. And they said that what Chris was saying about the rainbow snake in Australia, about it being the epitome of paradox and its features of movement between worlds, association with the changing of seasons and women's cyclicity and changing states, that all this syntax applied equally well to the Southern African material. And so My paper in the book is just going into a bit more detail on that, focusing specifically on Bushman material, and particularly the mythology and the connections around the girls' first menstruation rituals, which is at the core of the Rainbow Serpent myth in Australia, and pointing out the same thing in the Bushman context as well. And that there, the rain animal is primarily the eland, which Thea is going to talk about. So I'll leave it there.

Camilla: Thanks very much. Any questions for Ian? I was just going to— put in there or asking to maybe elaborate a little bit more about the implications of the age of the construct of rainbow snake and rainbow soap and I think maybe it would be good to spell that out.

Ian: Thank you, thank you.

Camilla: And that's kind of something that I was aiming to do with my chapter as well.

Ian: If Mona reckons she was over-prepared, I was under-prepared. I mean, basically, as I said, the consensus now is that we evolved in Africa around 200,000 years ago, but there is no evidence for us having moved out of Africa until sometime within the last 100,000 years. And this is, at the moment, archaeologists are stuck at this point. This is when they can identify the earliest evidence for symbolic behavior. They point to beads in southern and northern Africa 100,000 years ago, geometric engravings then, the first symbolically elaborated burials then. All these lines of evidence, the one thing linking them all together is red ochre use. And this is the template, if you like, or the package that we take with us as we spread out from Africa, whether it was as recently as 50,000 as some people think, or whether it was as early as 120,000. It doesn't really matter. We took that package first around the Indian Ocean to Australia, and only late in the day did we sort of start mixing it with the Neanderthals. Who were knocking on the same doors and coming up with similar answers? They're addressing the same problems of encephalization and female strategies. Does that.

Camilla: Yeah, I think so. But if it implies, if you've got rainbow snake contracts in Australia with entry into Australia at the latest 50,000, and very similar rainbow snake contracts.

Ian: There's one more little gem in the story, which was about five years ago, some Norwegian archaeologists working in Botswana. working on a very small fissure of a cave in the Tsodilo Hills in the Kalahari, re-excavating a site. But the thing that they were most impressed by was that at the back of this fissure, the natural formation of the rock was like a huge snake coming out of the rock with a natural crack like a mouth and a natural hole like an eye. But then the whole surface of the snake had been

scalloped out, ground out like scales. And they excavated a test pit underneath this, and they were finding that they had later Stone Age deposits and Middle Stone Age deposits. They couldn't date the Middle Stone Age, but typologically, it's somewhere between 60,000 and 100,000 years old. And they found fragments of the scraping the scales of the snake in those archaeological deposits. So my archaeological colleagues aren't prepared to accept this yet, but I think we can say that the rainbow snake was part of that cosmological package when we left the country. You know, there's the evidence, if you like.

Camilla: Yes, so we're looking at extraordinary archaic shared structures that take us back into the Middle Stone Age, into the time of the emergence of symbolic culture. I think that's the picture. And one of the points in the book is to say to, hey, archaeologists, actually, we can start to identify this kind of shared symbolic structure as that old. And this is the kind of data that they actually need to incorporate into their models of human origins. Thank you very much.

Can I next introduce Professor Wendy James, who is Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology at Oxford, with a very long, distinguished history of fieldwork with the Uduk people, most especially in Sudan. Many outstanding books that have been fundamental to anthropologists for the last few decades. Famous for *The Ceremonial Animal*, for *Listening Ebony* amongst the wonderful ethnographies of the Uduk. But Wendy has also played a special role in the interdisciplinary discourse and discussion with other evolutionary anthropologists, evolutionary psychologists, archaeologists. She was co-editor of one of the precursor books, perhaps, for this volume, the early human kinship volume that a number of us also took part in. And also the qualities of time, which Ian also took part in. So perhaps Wendy has one of the best kind of all around sort of interdisciplinary perspectives in locating where social anthropology stands in relation to those other disciplines. And so yes, perhaps let's hear about that.

Wendy James: Thank you. If you don't mind, I will stand up because I'm a little bit shorter than Ian.

Camilla: I feel, you know, better able to get over one or two once.

Wendy: This is modern rather than ancient jewellery. Okay, well, as Camilla explained, I have written a chapter in this book which is intentionally trying to connect ourselves in social anthropology with other disciplines. We've heard from Ian, whose sort of roots are really in archaeology. Some of the rest of us are more within social anthropology. It is extremely important that we do set up the kind of of interdisciplinary work that Ian has been doing. And this has dawned on me gradually since I was a student in the 1960s doing social anthropology in Evans-Pritchard's Institute in Oxford. At that time, we did not speak to the biological anthropologists because we were interested in the human mind and imagination. And they were not much, were they, in those days. We did not speak very much at all to the museum people, even though we had one of the world famous museums just across the road in Petrus Museum. Because why? Because we wanted to get away from the idea that the people who made these stone axes were different from us. We wanted to concentrate on who

we are today. Look at all the world with the ethnographic examples of this tribe and that tribe and so on, but they're people like us. And it was through the promotion of personal fieldwork, in my view, personal, spending months and months in a place, trying to study some of the ancient or supposedly ancient languages of the world. getting to know the people, understanding them not as answering questions in a survey, not as producing throwing sticks or rock paintings, whatever it may be they were still producing, but to think of them as rounded people in the way that we are ourselves, or we used to think we were. Because the museums in those days gave the impression that those who produced these ancient artifacts were ancient people, not quite like us. They were different. They were tribal. They were primitive. They had primitive minds. And in the 19th century, special terms were invented and became currency, even today. Tyler, Sir Edward Tyler's word, animism, to mean a kind of pre-modern, pre-almost whom type of religion, just belief in spirits. that emerged from nature. Whereas in social anthropology, we were even in the early 20th century, I'm guessing I'm not a historian, but we were even trying to study the Christian and Muslim and Hindu communities. They were part of our human world within the scope of civilization as defined by the production of writing. That was the old idea, really, civilization. But in social anthropology, we wanted really to go beyond that sort of barrier between ourselves and primitive men, or women. And we tried and we tried. And I think we are succeeding in that social anthropologists today do not feel that we are somehow a more advanced type of human being than those who produce the stone axes in southern Africa, whatever. I think that we are succeeding in that, and I think that the way in which social anthropology focused very much on collective structures of social organization social facts or phenomena on one hand and psychology on the other. I think that modern social anthropologists and many other modern social scientists try to link together the idea of the individual person, the interaction between people, and the creation or emergence of social facts, which are subject to change as interactions, patterns of interactions change. And we do this in our own way as modern civilized people, using this older-fashioned term, but also if you go out to Australia or wherever you would like to go, New Guinea, what about the Arctic peoples, the Eskimos and so on? about whom extremely important things have been written by social anthropologists, especially including our French predecessors. Now, what I'm trying to say is that in my case, we felt social anthropology was trying to break away from the hard sciences and biology and the museums. In the course of my career, I found myself getting to know more people who were on the science side. By the 1970s, we had a degree in Oxford called Human Sciences, which included some archaeology, some linguistics as an option, and biological subjects and so on. We then started a degree more on the alliance of Durham and UCL and Cambridge, anthropology and archaeology. That only began in 1990, I think. And I was involved in helping to teach those interdisciplinary degrees. And I began to learn more from the students than I had expected, in a way. Later in my work, as Camilla mentioned, I became a kind of linking member of a committee, which the British Academy had set up to keep in touch with and link with the Lucy to Language

Centenary Project of the British Academy. And as many of you will know, this was run by Robin Dunbar, who's an evolutionary psychologist, if you like, interested in the form of the brain, the ancient fossil remains of heads and brains and so on, which give you an idea of how far these creatures could think like us. And the other two directors were Clive Gamble, archaeologist, and John Gowlett, an archaeologist who specialized in the early human use of fire. And my position on this committee was a source of tremendous enlightenment because here was a project which involved dozens of people, including quite a number of PhD graduates, doing different things across the science side in a way of human evolution, looking at genetics, okay? And of course there have been so many dramatic developments in genetics, you know, mitochondrial eve and all the rest of it, the emergence from Africa. 60,000 years ago, or whatever, and tracing that across the world. The implications of these scientific developments were being put together in a manner extremely relevant to us in the social sciences. Because as some of you will know very well, Robin Dunbar's main guiding theory was that there had been over a long period of time, way beyond in fact the red ochre and the collaborative child parenting and so on, there had been links, provable links from a scientist's point of view between the size of the brain, especially the frontal lobes, and the size of population groupings. So what was at issue with this theory. The issue was, what is it that drives more complex brain activity because the group is larger? Now, they talk in the Lucy to Language project of social bonding. Human intelligence was assumed to increase because of the need for sharper sorts of social bonding between groups in order to ensure group survival. And in my piece in this volume, I say, look, here are many opportunities for social anthropology to engage a little more with the science of, you know, history of human lineage genetics, the history of our brain sizes, the history of our size of groupings, we need to think what is involved in social bonding that is perhaps more demanding on intelligence. Well, it is the interaction, the communication, the exchange, the careful negotiation of relations with others across the genders, across the ages, et cetera. And it was here that it struck some of us, many here around the table who have contributed to this book, but also others even in the lucitor language world. And it's mentioned, it's discussed in our book, , and the rest of us. early human kinship, the point being that the growth of heads means that birth is more difficult. Women have to collaborate in giving birth. And there is more of a residential continuity between men, women, and children for that reason. But especially what you have as the beginnings of a community of children learning and playing with each other. and a greater sort of proportion of the community being young and learning from each other and carrying things forward. And this is one of the ideas where I think a lot of us have come together. Let me stop there and just thank everybody for having provided us with a chance to try and bring forward those conversations.

Camilla: Anybody, any points or questions, you're very welcome to make comments. We'd like to make it more of an open discussion perhaps later. Shall we just take... Perhaps do Hilary first of all, and then we'll have a short break so that Thea can set

up, 'cause Thea's gonna show us some. I, dread to think what you're going to show us, Thea. Actually, I'm not worried, I'm worried about it, but we'll see, and or hear, and now Hilary, well, without Hilary, I don't think the book would have actually happened, because... We made sure of it getting published by Berkhahn. She's one of the editors. And Hilary Callan is the former director of the Royal Anthropological Institute, but has also herself done many, written many books and edited many books. especially negotiating the trading zones between anthropology, social anthropology, and other disciplines or areas of anthropology. Am I right, Tony, to say that you were one of the first social anthropologists who went to study the peculiar tribe of Western scientists? Is that true?

Hilary Callan: I'm not sure. I wouldn't claim that.

Camilla: You're one of the early– definitely one of the earliest to do that. the peculiar tribe of Western science. But Hilary has a very long-term perspective on this sometimes very fraught relationship between biology and social anthropology.

Hilary: First of all, of course, it's been a huge privilege and a learning experience for me to co-edit the book and have contact with so many different authors, with so many different areas of profoundly impressive expertise, which goes way beyond anything that I can claim. What I'd like to say this evening is that, for me personally, the book has worked on two levels. And the first level, of course, is the abundance of entirely new knowledge and insights from social anthropology that can now be deployed to shed light on the evolutionary roots of our own humanity. And of course, the individual chapters present many examples, as we've already heard this evening, and we'll hear as we go further on. And in this particular respect, As I think Wendy has also mentioned, the book slots into a number of recent conversations about bridging the historical rift between the component subdisciplines of anthropology, and again, as Wendy has mentioned, the Lucid Language Project and the book *Early Human Kinship*, which came out in 2018, which was in some respects, as Camilla has said, a precursor of this one. What I find truly remarkable in the way the current stream of conversations, including the one that's in this book, is the way that these are actually converging on themes which I think lie at the constitutive core of both evolutionary and of social anthropology, what we have in other places called the big questions of anthropology as a whole. And these big questions, it seems to me, take us back into the 19th century roots of the total discipline of anthropology before the 20th century rifts between the different sub-disciplines took shape and split us apart, as Wendy has mentioned. Now, of course, I'm stepping very much and skipping over the surface of issues here, but for me, The big questions that I think this book, as part of the ongoing conversations, really touches on include the following– kinship and relatedness, of course, gender and the social agency of men and women, as Morna has told us in a great deal in more detail, reproduction, child care, intergenerational cooperation or competition, again, as Wendy has touched on, All of these, of course, approachable within a Darwinian framework. Settlement in the home base, including, of course, the life of the fireside, which we also discuss in the book. The articulation of politics, power,

and coalition, including, of course, the tensions between hierarchy and egalitarianism, which, again, Morna has spoken of. Ritual, symbolic action, the articulation of emotion in society and in the body. And that comes through very, very clearly in the book. The social organization of time and the rhythm of life, reciprocity, game play. And this, again, touches on children's lives, as Wendy has mentioned. So this list is not by any means exhaustive, but I really find it remarkable that we find ourselves more and more reaching back to the big questions that actually are at the roots of our discipline, however our discipline is contemporarily constituted. And for me, I'd like to say the realization of the perennial presence of these big questions brings very much into focus the richness of the ethnographic record itself in social anthropology and its capacity to be sensitively drawn, and I precise sensitively, sensitively to context. drawn on for new insights into human origins, even where this was not the original purpose or context of the ethnographic accounts in question. And one of the things that I think the book does, I hope successfully, is to insist that good ethnography of any period, what David Graeber has termed social anthropology's, quote, vast archive of human experience, of social and political experiments no one else really knows about, is good in its own right and can stand up to sensitive reinterpretation in the light of new questions being asked precisely because good ethnography is grounded in scrupulous and careful scholarship. And of course, Shirley Ardner's ethnography on sexual insult and female emergency, which we include in the book, and the light it casts potentially on the questions we raise, is, I think, an excellent demonstration of this resource value of the ethnographic record. So this phenomenon of reaching back into the roots of the whole of anthropology, which I think is a thread running throughout the book's content, touches on the second level at which the collection works particularly well for me, and that is placing the conversations that are taking place now into a broader context of the twists and the turns of anthropological ideas over time, and their connections to the currents flowing through the wider world beyond academic anthropology. And in my own chapter in the book, I take the debate on bio-social anthropology of the mid-1970s as a kind of historical moment, and I try to trace some of its links to what was going on at the time, both in popular science and more broadly in the world at large. And this attempt has led me to the suggestion that despite the rift that has certainly obtained throughout the 20th century between evolutionary social anthropology as formally constituted, which, of course, we documented in our introduction to the book, there have actually been a number of underground linkages and threads of connection throughout this period. And some of these linkages have been indirect, and some of them have been effectively invisible to those who were writing at the time, such as what we can recognize now as the heavy embedding of ethnocentric cultural assumptions into the building of theories about human evolution and the human condition. and also what I call the slippage of language across the biological and social domains, the use of metaphors and the misuse of metaphors, the uncritical use of metaphors, leading to spurious illusions of continuity, masking where there may be real continuity. So some of these linkages were... invisible, implicit, but we can see them in retrospect. Some of them were more

evident at the time. For example, there was at the time a tension over scientificity, over how far you could be scientific in watching human beings. And I talk a bit in the paper about the rise of human ethology, that is, observing human beings within the same zoological framework as one can observe non-human beings and whether this actually masks and obscures and denies what is most human about the human condition in the terms that Wendy has outlined. And I've argued and would argue that in order to fully understand how our academic understanding of the roots of our humanity has diverted and shifted over time, we need to take account of the currents of public life going on beyond the academy, and what I've called, in fact following an expression originally by David Mills, the trading zones of ideas passing backwards and forwards across the domains, and Camilla has already mentioned this. Lots and lots of examples of this kind of exchange of ideas, often unconscious, could be adduced. But in my own piece, the ones I've highlighted are the influence of popular science, the economics of popular publishing, and public intellectuals, the Cold War anxieties of the mid-20th century, and of course, the impact of critical feminism, particularly on primate behavior studies. And again, this is a very, very strong thread throughout the book. It's important, I think, to acknowledge an autobiographical dimension to this. Wendy spoke of the personal nature of fieldwork, going into the field, having the experience of bringing it back to communicate with one's public. I could not have written this chapter had I not actually lived through many of the tensions, many of the events, and many of the controversies that were going on at the time, both then and since. It's actually, it comes with the territory of being a bit ancient, one's own memories of academic engagement. coalesce with the history of ideas themselves over the period in which one has been active. I think it's quite important to recognize this. And again, as I'm sure you know, there is a strong strand in contemporary social anthropology about reflexivity and about the role of autobiography in producing the anthropological account. And I think it's important to recognize that. In our introduction to the book, we argue that the time is ripe for some reconfiguring of the relationship between social and evolutionary anthropology. And again, this follows on, as Camilla says, from Alan Barnard's call, that we should be carving a new sub-discipline within social anthropology to bridge the gap. And alongside this, I want to argue, on the basis of what I learned in writing my own piece, that it needs to be recognised somewhere as a mainstream job of anthropology reflexively to chart its own successive entanglement both with its sister sub-disciplines of evolutionary anthropology and also of course of archaeology and with the wider world within a self-consciously historical narrative. That is to include this self-consciously historical narrative in the stories we tell ourselves and the world about our own discipline. Thank you.

Camilla: Thank you very much. I think there is some great benefit, which is something of enormous importance for humans in this long-term perspective. We could think about the grand parental generation perspective of being able to hark back to those memories. And it seems to me there is some link between what Hilary is discussing and what Morland's discussed in terms of this tension between— because much

of that bio-social anthropology and the human ethology that belonged to the early '70s revolved very much around militaristic models of man watching, the aggressive instincts, Conrad Lorenz type, and his followers. But at the same time, Hilary produces a beautiful analysis of the ethology of Nick Blurton Jones, which was very much focused around children and interactions in childcare and children's behavior and how that was such an important source. So in some ways, we're coming back to revisit that type of oppositional trend of, at the moment, there is a very strong trend, this so-called bellicose school that Morda referred to, Pinker's "Better Angels of Our Nature", at the same time as we have Sarah Herdy, "The Cooperative Childcare Matrix". So, it does seem like we kind of do revisit these debates at, we hope, a greater stage, a more advanced stage of understanding and of needing, with the social brain power hypothesis, perhaps, to have a much more sophisticated understanding of interrelationship in gender.

We can have a short break to enable Thea to set herself up with these magical happenings. Do not go away, because this is perhaps one of the— I would say every single chapter here is worth buying the book for that chapter alone, especially at half price. But Thea's chapter is, whoa, magic. And so don't go away, and then we're going to have our final contributions.

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Radical Anthropology. <www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyHNth-ZoJw>

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