The world's first picket line

Camilla Power

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‘Do you not know how a picket line works?’ Mick Lynch asked the Sky News Reporter.

Sometimes, we wonder if our Human Origins research colleagues understand how picket lines work.

Because the picket line provides the most powerful model for the emergence of human solidarity, shared consciousness, rules and symbolism.

But in the Pleistocene, with the origins of our species, who ‘downed tools?’ Who were the ‘workers’ and who were the ‘bosses’? How did they get organized? What did this picket line look like, and what is the evidence remaining today?

`https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9ACH6ix_Ps`

Chris Knight: So this evening we have Dr. Camilla Power on the world’s first picket line.

So what do I say about Camilla? Well, actually her T-shirt says quite a lot about Camilla.

She got it at a Tolpuddle martyrs event where the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers Union were selling T-shirts.

Camilla: Not only them, but Bob Crow himself.

Chris Knight: Well, OK, Bob Crow himself.

Camilla: The late great.

Chris Knight: The late and great Bob Crow of the RMT.

Camilla: It’s a vintage piece.

Chris Knight: It’s a vintage T-shirt. Now, of course, that might make you think that you’ve come to a series of political, militant rabble rousing talks.

But it’s not at all the case. And seriously, over the years, although we’ve all got our politics, I think it’s fair to say we’ve tried very hard not to harangue people.

I mean, I don’t want to, you know, when people come to hear and talk to me, I don’t want to harangue you with my politics. You’ve come here to learn anthropology, and anthropology is what we do.

But of course, you know, almost everything you do has some kind of political implications. And some people think that picket lines are particularly political.

I mean, there’s a case for that. If you’re on a picket line, you’re making a point and clearly you’re taking a position. But to be honest, on a picket line, you have everybody on a picket line that’s in the workplace, hopefully. So, whether you’re Protestant or Catholic, black or white, you’re gay or straight, whatever, it doesn’t matter. The more people on the picket line, the better. And in that sense, the picket line, of course, isn’t political at all.

But anyway, let's just introduce Canada properly. As I think I've said before, here at UCL we teach anthropology, the study of what it means to be human, and more than probably any other institution, anthropology department in the country, here at UCL, we address that question, what does it mean to be human from pretty much all the different angles you can address that question from, whether archaeology, primatology, social anthropology, and in particular, I think it's fair to say that Camilla embodies that combination of different sub-disciplines within anthropology more than most of us.

So I could describe Camilla as a biological anthropologist, but she always gets a bit cross if I say that, despite the fact that she was trained here by no lesser figure than Leslie Ayello, probably one of the most prominent and influential biological anthropologists in the world.

Paleontologists, biological anthropologists, specialists in those topics of human evolution. But probably unlike so many paleontologists, paleoanthropologists, biological anthropologists, its focus has always been the evolutionary emergence of this very strange thing that humans do, which is communicate through symbols.

So we are the symbolic species and most biological anthropologists hold back because, of course, symbolic anthropology, cultural and social anthropology is a whole new, a whole different area. But still, we think that we should try where possible to join things up.

So Camilla, in particular, is a biological anthropologist, a pale anthropologist, and a social and symbolic anthropologist.

And this evening, she's going to be talking about, in a way, about the origins of symbolic culture itself, or clearly symbolic culture, all kinds of ways of defining that. But one of the things is that we humans inhabit a world not simply brute facts, or real things that you can cake or taste or lick like other animals do, but also a realm of facts which have this paradoxical property.

They're objective facts, but they only exist thanks to a subjective factor, namely collective belief. So we believe in things like citizenship, marriage. The most weird of all the things we believe in is probably money. That's a weird thing because money doesn't exist at all, of course, unless you've got faith in the currency. As soon as the faith collapses, the money collapses and all you've got is bits of metal, bits of paper. And these days, of course, not even that.

So it's really a challenge for biological anthropologists, evolutionary anthropologists, Darwinians, to explain how it was that any biological species, which of course we are, got to relying on these things which are really fictions. It's a really difficult problem. And I think Camaro's going to be explaining that with sort of with reference to this kind of metaphor, I suppose, of the world's first picket line.

But of course, we don't really think it's just a metaphor. We think that something like a picket line was where this domain of symbolic culture emerged. So I think I'm going to let Camilla say it all probably a lot better yourself.

Camilla: Thank you very much, Chris.

I was this morning foraging for my rabbit, as usual, and stole an apple branch, which I'm very often doing, over somebody's fence. And somebody muttered behind me about private property. And I said, oh, I don't believe in that stuff. Certainly my rabbit doesn't.

OK, so world's first picket line.

I'm going to share the screen and let the general secretary of the RMT explain a few things for me.

This autumn and Saturday, we've seen such a mushrooming and blossoming of all these diverse picket lines, a real flourishing diversity of picket lines for railway workers, signals, ticket offices, ticket office staff, train drivers, posties, bin man, barristers, college staff, who have I forgotten? There must be more, and there'll be more joining in.

It takes some of us back several decades, back to the 80s or 90s, some of this.

And indeed, Mick Lynch, the general secretary of the RMT, had to do a lot of wise instruction to the media hacks who kept asking him these probing, leading, pretty dumb questions. And one of them was Kay Burley.

There was this famous, she's Sky News's person, and this famous Maxim or question from Nick Lynch.

Do you not know how a picket line works? And she's so he explains it.

We picket them.

What does that involve? She asked.

We picket them. That means we stand outside a workplace to encourage workers who want to come to work, not to go to work.

And then Burley persists because she said, well, what does that involve? And he slowly turns around.

This beautiful, orderly, calm picket, all organised behind it, can see what it involves.

And she keeps on badgering, but doesn't, implying there's going to be all this violence somehow breaking out.

And of course, she references the miners' strike.

And for those of you who are rather too young to remember the miners' strike, of course, the great government organ of propaganda, the BBC, used to regularly switch film footage with regard to the white miners strike, this famous occasion of the picket at Orgreef, whereby they they put the footage of miners chucking stuff, stones and bottles and bricks.

And then they showed the mounted police come charging, the cossacks.

But of course, the events had happened the other way round.

The police had charged and then the miners tried to protect themselves from being charged down by cossacks.

But Kay Burley was probably too young to remember that.

She says she's older than she looks, but she's too young to remember it.

So she keeps on saying, 'you won't try to stop agency workers?'

And Mick says, yes, we will try to stop agency workers by asking them not to go to work.

So there's all this implication, picket lines must entail violence.

So intrinsically violent, Of course, the vast majority of violence on picket lines comes from the ruling class, suppression of picket lines or making life very difficult for picket lines.

But for any trade unionists, let's see if this works, does this go to the next slide? Let me try that way.

Any trade unionists, the picket line is emblematic of solidarity.

It is the place where people share consciousness.

It is the place of where workers kind of expand in their linkage of people that they may never normally see in their workplace.

And they suddenly find there's all this support and this feeling of solidarity.

And there is this almost religious idea that belongs to trade union activists, the 11th commandment, thou shalt never cross a picket line.

And now if we start to think about that idea as a means of establishing rules and norms and generating solidarity, actually this becomes a really interesting model for human origins.

So here at RAG, We kind of would like to take Mick Lynch's question to the many human origins researchers out there who have thought about the question of human pro-sociality and say, do you not know how a picket line works? That a picket line actually may be the best model for the generation of solidarity, the generation of symbolic culture itself, the generation of rules and norms.

And the irony is, there is a great deal of research currently being conducted among human origins researchers on the question of human pro-sociality, solidarity, symbolism.

How do humans create social norms such that people's selfish interests may be put aside for a collective interest.

How does that occur? Because we certainly can't see it with our closest relatives among great apes.

That's pretty clear.

And this is, of course, the basis for anything symbolic, language, linguistic.

We need to have all this in place.

So ironically, we have the models that are usually put forward for understanding human group identity, group consciousness, entail group on group aggression.

There's a long history of this so-called bellicose school, which envisages us versus them as the creation of group identity.

That you need to have a group that actually wants to kill you to generate sufficient solidarity within your group, that you will suppress selfish interest to to and have and share collective interest instead of selfish interest.

This goes back to people like Richard Alexander, a very famous sociologist, biology of moral systems.

Steven Pinker, you'll be aware of, evolutionary psychologist, Samuel Bowles, an evolutionary economist.

Did warfare among the ancestral hunter-gatherers affect the evolution of human social behaviours? Recently, it is people like Richard Wrangham, a major primatologist, evolutionary anthropologist, very influential guy.

But Peterson he's working with there on his chimpanzee warfare book, Demonic Males, is Dale Peterson.

But Richard Wrangham freely and unhappily gives interviews to Jordan Peterson.

And he's kind of gives Jordan Peterson sort of respectability in terms of evolution.

Even more surprising for supporting this viewpoint is Michael Tomasello.

This is Tomasello in our paper, Two Key Steps in the Evolution of Human Cooperation.

Michael Tomasello, a wonderful developmental psychologist, looking at children's development in terms of shared intentionality and joint attention, children's understanding of this is the way we do things and this is what counts for us.

as a stepping stone into cultures, rules and norms of a group that they had a culturally identified group.

So Thomas Sullivan is talking about this in terms of necessary group on group conflict.

This guy is a real lefty progressive.

He's not he's not some sort of red meat redneck.

People like extending from Thomas Sello's work, Curtis Marion, African, an archaeologist of the African Middle Stone Age.

And he applies Thomas Sello's ideas to the specific area of human evolution, Southern African coastline, sites like Blombos and Pinnacle Point, a little bit of later, arguing that these are very resource-rich, sites which groups would have fought over, and that they were resource-rich and would have supported high-density populations.

Groups would have fought over these, and that would have been the onset of group identity and morality.

Then he gives the game away by saying, oh, but what's the motivation here is so that they can grab females from the other group and possibly eat people.

So the basis of morality turns out to be rape and cannibalism.

Rangan's recent book, 2019, is Goodness Paradox, with a model of execution squads, with males ganging together to execute or just remove any obnoxious male.

The Rangan model has only males concerned.

Females just aren't in the picture.

So my major thought is, you know, with this warfare hypothesis.

It's a warfare hypothesis for group-mindedness, the emergence of norms, we intentionality, that we belong to this group.

How do you generate sex immorality out of something like that? You know, if anybody's got ideas about that, I'd like to know about it, because if you can't make rules about sex, what can you make rules about? It's basic as that in my book.

But especially the warfare hypothesis places everything on a territorial, very parochial struggle.

You're looking at groups fighting over territory, one may prevail another time, others may prevail.

There's no kind of consistency.

How do you create widespread cooperative networks that go across landscapes, that go all the way across continents? Because the archaeology of African Middle Stone Age is suggesting indeed that there was linkage of southern to eastern Africa, right up to North Africa, This is with transcontinental cultural networks.

How is that emerging from warfare? And therefore, I think we should think about other alternative ones.

And I'm talking about picket lines now.

And this is an illustration of how we just remove the issue of territoriality.

Picket lines can stretch infinitely.

They have the capacity, the more the merrier.

The more people join, the further it goes, the better.

And this is an example of a recent picket line.

which was thrown up by Southampton dockers, because the Liverpool dockers were on strike, and the ships that could not be unloaded at Liverpool decided to come around to Southampton.

And of course, the Southampton dockers said, no, we're not going to do that, in solidarity with Liverpool dockers.

And across space, okay, that's just That's just England.

But dockers' picket lines, in particular the Liverpool dockers back in the 1990s, dockers' picket lines, they actually went right around the planet.

The world skipped a heartbeat when all the ships, you know, it's far, far worse than Suez Canal, what's it name, Evergreen.

The ships were just lined up, stacked up because they couldn't be done, they couldn't be unloaded.

Australia, Japan, South Africa, west or east coast of the US, anywhere, Rotterdam, anywhere.

And this occurred particularly January 1987.

International, so trans-spatial, picket lines are quite trans-spatial.

But what matters is synchrony of time, especially.

And synchrony time matters because if the Liverpool dockers are on strike one week and the ships can't go there, okay, they can come to Southampton that week.

And then there's Southampton dockers are strike the next week, that should be obvious.

So synchrony time, we saw a beautiful example on Saturday, mega strike with posties out, all the rail workers out, everybody out, synchronized nicely to the beginning of the Tory Conference.

So general strike would be the ultimate synchrony.

Okay, but we're talking about the Pleistocene.

So let's be real.

What on earth does a picket line mean in the Pleistocene? We are not talking about class society.

We're not talking about capitalism with labour, workers and bosses.

But who would be analogous to the bosses, who are the workers, and how are they being exploited? What does exploitation mean in this context? So I'm going to jump straight in to where I think we can see it is not so much exploitation of labour as particularly exploitation of reproduction, not labour in production, but exploitation of labour in reproduction.

That is the issue for the Pleistocene.

And if we go back before the Pleistocene to a great ape, great ape mothers, the great ape ancestry, this is immediately apparent.

So our lovely orangutan mum with her baby, she will be spending seven years of nursing that offspring.

And she has absolutely no help at all.

If she's near any male, that's a risk to the offspring, unless that happens to be the daddy, which isn't always certain.

So all by herself.

In the case of bonobos, Chris was discussing a week or two ago, so the bonobos more socially gregarious than orangutans, and Chris was telling us because of their Gigi rubbing that Hoka Hoka, the females make these very strong solidary bonds and they really hang out together.

And what that does is keeps a lid on any male violence and any kind of male threat to offspring, but still Even with that much cooperation, these bonobo females who aren't related to each other look after their own offspring themselves.

There's really no cooperative, there isn't cooperative breeding or childcare with bonobos.

Great ape moms are doing all the work.

And let's just stress that even though they are not like as large-brained as humans, great apes have very large brains compared to other primates, other species.

So this is our very big problem.

And this is really the story of human evolution as we change from being a fairly, a very ape-like biped australopithecine with those very long arms down here in the, like 3 million years ago, to become modern humans.

The story of human evolution is the, how do you, how do mothers in particular pay the energy bills, produce the energy.

They have to do the work, the breastfeeding, the work through pregnancy, gestation, the breastfeeding to support that increasingly large brained offspring.

So we're going from this like ape-sized brain, one jump, relatively stable, this other big jump that leads to modern humans.

I'm showing that in another chart, another way.

And I'm showing it in terms of brain volumes of chimp, like chimpanzee brain volumes.

So if this isn't clear, that's the measure of the brain volume in terms of perennial cubic centimetres there.

Chimpanzees somewhere over 400 or so CC to 500, potentially big male.

You can see australopithecines there.

These are all particular fossil specimens with measures of cranial capacity.

They have very similar brain volumes to chimpanzees or other grey tapes.

And this has been called, because there's just this strong similarity that all these grey tapes and the australopithecines at this level, this has been called the grey ceiling.

It's like they're just knocking up against a kind of ceiling that they cannot get through.

And the reason for that is very simple.

It's that it's a mum by herself doing all the work in all those mating systems.

And that means she just can't afford to have offspring with larger brains.

Brain tissue is the most expensive.

It's such an expensive form of organic tissue compared to the average of the rest of our body.

It's 10 times more expensive in terms of metabolic rate.

She just cannot afford to have to raise an offspring larger than that.

So this is a constraint.

About 2 million years ago, wham, we went up through that ceiling, just like smashed it with twice the chimpanzee volume.

And then we're kind of trundling along for a while with haemorectus.

And then again, we just go smashing through three times chain chimpanzee volume and higher and higher with both modern humans and Neanderthals, or Denoserides would be on there as well.

Okay, I'm going to show you more sexy brain charts.

I'm sure you love them.

Now, first of all, I'm going to say, well, how did we smash through that first grey ceiling? And the best and most convincing argument, I believe, comes from Sarah Hurdy, and she has many colleagues supporting that argument.

Sarah Hurdy, this wonderful book, Others and Others, If you want to know about human evolution basics of this is the best I used to take my students through reading this chapter by chapter.

It's just the best on human origins and evolution this century.

And her argument is, yeah, to enable that going through that grey seeding, cooperative breeding was that mothers then found others to support them.

It wasn't just the mum alone.

And this had a very significant effect on human cognition, in particular, generating the emergence of inter-subjectivity, that we would mesh our mental and emotional states with each other.

We were willing to do that.

And this was a key stepping stone for human pro-sociality.

This is preceding language, preceding symbolism, but it's bringing us into the arena of our cooperative eyes, our willingness to look at each other in the eye and show each other what we're thinking.

And grey tapes just don't have those cooperative eyes.

They're not engaging in that level of cooperation.

It's as if they're kind of wearing dark glasses with their eyes, not really, they're not the shape.

We have these long eyes that show what we're looking at.

And grey tapes have much round eyes, very dark background, that you can't really see where their gaze is, and therefore you don't know quite what they're thinking about.

They're not letting each other.

They're very Machiavellian great tapes.

They want to know what each other is thinking.

They want to know what the other guy is thinking, but they're not so willing to let the other person know.

So we have two-way mind reading.

And this is obviously a very significant step of cooperation.

So where did that help, that cooperative breeding come from? And I'm not saying males weren't any use whatsoever at that stage, but the most reliable people to start helping mother in the 1st place would be female relatives.

Grandmother's mother's mother is the obvious candidate and the grandmother hypothesis is really part and parcel of the cooperative childcare idea.

This is Kristen Hawks and colleagues hypothesis.

And as well as grandmother, daughters, older daughters, who then become helpers, childcare helpers for the next.

And humans have what are known as stacked families.

Our inter-birth intervals are narrowed down compared to great apes, so they're orangutans, seven-year inter-birth intervals.

But found together is 4 to three years is a more standard.

So we Hunter-gatherer mothers or mothers in natural fertility population wean offspring very quickly relative to great apes.

And then somebody else is kind of picking that offspring up in terms of feeding.

Had the grandmothers, so this is a, had the grandmother proudly showing off a grandkid of children in the camp who were the daughter, children of her daughter.

and they will work incredibly hard to provide food for weanling children.

So they're supporting their daughters to be able to then start having more children.

So the stacked families have children very quick intervals, certainly compared to great apes.

Okay, so I'm just giving you a nut and the sexy brain charts.

This is just a very recent analysis of the pattern and rate of change of brain size.

And it's changed the, that's the brain measurement, a log scale of the volume of brain size.

And that's the age.

So it's changed the axes round here.

But what it's showing are four phases.

That's the australopithecine under the grey ceiling phase.

And you're seeing it doesn't change very much.

It doesn't go far along the brain scale.

And that carries on for a long, time back through Oster Pit, right back into the ancestors and great apes.

About 2 million years ago, this is the big jump to about 1.5, there is suddenly a really big shift that's smashing through the glass ceiling.

So that's phase two is the cooperative childcare beginning there with intersubjectivity.

And then phase three is Homo erectus, generally speaking, pretty much staying the same level.

Something has stabilized and it's just kind of sticking there at the same level.

And then about 800, 700,000 years ago, this kicks up again right through the Pleistocene, the rest of the Pleistocene to like just virtually modern humans about 10,000 years ago.

And it's in phase four that we're really looking at what happens, what is going on for the females, what are they doing that creates that situation, that enables females to raise offspring with such incredibly large brain sizes.

So this is now that last phase, that last phase four, the middle to late lives seen expansion over 800,000 years.

These ancestors are both Neanderthal, European and African ancestors fossils.

The blue light, these blue there with Jabilu hood and these onset of modern humans, those blue circles, you can see how it's kind of rising right through the speciation of modern humans.

So females are needing more and more energy.

They're needing more reliable subsidy of the energy requirements for those large brains.

So we can see what, you know, if If males are trying to just carry on with a great ape strategy, this would be hugely exploitative of women's, of females' reproductive labour.

But it would be impossible for females to raise the offspring at this level of brain size unless they were receiving some kind of energy subsidy from not just grandmother and female relatives, but also presumably males as mates.

You're kind of man the hunter, but man the hunter is highly, you know, qualified here.

So the question becomes for females, how do you make males work? That is the question.

I mean, there's no way that they're raising the offspring like that.

How do you make males work? Because great ape males just don't work.

And this is green tape mills.

They're working, they're working, chimps working for.

colobus monkeys.

But it's kind of all the males are doing the hunting here.

And females who want to get any small quantity of meat out of the keel of the colobus, which the colobus kind of gets torn apart and eaten alive.

If the females want to get any aspect, any bit of that, they've got to keep running, running, running after the males.

And it's very difficult for the females to be involved if they have, if they're weighed down with babies.

It's really, this isn't going to help raise a larger brained offspring.

And this is the total contrast.

These are Po hunters from central Kalahari.

We were watching a couple of weeks ago, watching some film of Po people with a menstrual ritual, in fact.

since the film later.

But the guys are carrying the huge gang chem spot right across, kilometres across the scorching Kalahari Desert, back to camp where there are women, there are children, and everyone is going to share from that kill.

It's a complete diametric opposition between what's going on in a chimpanzee hunt and what happens in amongst African hunter-gatherers, almost big game hunter-gatherers.

So how did, how did they get males to do that? Because the great ape strategy doesn't do that.

So let me just go.

Okay, so one of the best ways to influence male behaviour might be with sexual signals.

And we can tell a lot from the evolution of sexual signals, modern human females, women's sexual signals, about, you know, where did we come from in terms of evolutionary mating systems? What changed compared to, say, compared to great apes such as chimpanzees, how they've gone down a very different pathway with their very large estra signals and so forth? We have a number of features, concealment of ovulation, with the biggest continuous receptivity or possibility of sex almost any time of the cycle compared to any other primate.

We can have sex or not any time of the cycle, pretty much.

And the effect of that is to make males, kind of confuse the males, make them wait around, doesn't let them know when is the moment of fertility.

I mean, some of you guys out there might think, you know, you're probably trying to work it out without even realizing, but you're not very good at it.

And women have been designed to really confuse the issue in all kinds of ways and all kinds of formal signals.

So there's a confusion strategy, which means that women are designed to waste the time of, sorry, waste the time of males.

Because if males are useful and can do things useful, like go and put up shells, go and get an animal, go and bring something into the camp, everyone should have one.

Everyone should have one.

And There are a few other features as well.

I'm putting it, I'm being arguable here, a lunar periodic synchrony as a feature, and I'm going to show what synchrony does.

The effect of synchrony is to undermine harems.

It doesn't let the great ape strategy of trying to keep more than harem of females like a gorilla, if all the female gorillas come synchronize their fertile moments, that is difficult for them.

I'll show you why.

And we'll come back to menstruation.

So let's just start off with a sort of typical great ape type.

This would be like a gorilla system.

So there's one, we're going to call him a boss male.

I'm going to use a boss male and a few other males hanging about hoping they might get some opportunities.

And these females, they're being represented, remember those picket lines, it's time that's the crucial issue.

Well, females and fertility, it's all about time.

Timing, So this is kind of signifying that the fertile, the sperm comes along, just meets at exactly the right moment.

And it really helps that guy if he can, the great hope strategy, pick her off when she's fertile, dealt with her.

Okay, who's next? Oh, right, we're going now.

And who's next? Oh, right.

So he's moving from one to the next to the next.

Great strategy if you can do it.

Okay, so how do females deal with that? If you need males, you know, they don't want, langur females won't want to do that because that means too many males eating their food.

So the langur females will prefer to keep separate if they can.

There are decent ones.

But for hominin females who need lots of food for their very large brained offspring, much better to get more males involved in the system.

And this is a clever way to do it if you can link up.

So what's been known as menstrual synchrony really is ovulatory synchrony there.

We can have an argument about whether menstrual synchrony exists in a while.

But in theory, in principle, reproductive synchrony is a brilliant strategy for undermining male boss males is how it works.

And then we can go to The problem is if you show the signal, if you show when you're fertile, then all the males have done the job and they can move off elsewhere.

So you don't want to show anything.

What you want is a system where you are just confusing the males.

You don't show any signal of fertility.

And if you can, you line up your fertility signals together, if you can.

But of course, With hominins, with our ancestors, that's not really going to be very easy because hominins, some females will be breastfeeding, some females will be pregnant, some females breastfeeding, some females just about to wean offspring, some females returning to cycling.

So you have the interbirth intervals, maybe four years or so for all that breastfeeding for these very large brained offspring.

And then when the weanlings at about age 4, they're putting enormous amount of energy to growing their brain at that point.

They're incredibly hungry, nothing hungrier than a four-year-old child as far as humans are concerned.

Okay, so we've got all these signals, but there is a problem because, well, we've kind of got rid of the signals, but there's one signal that is a giveaway.

And it gives away information that's incredibly interesting to males, and this is menstruation.

So once you've removed any sign of, any reliable sign of ovulation, okay, but still, males can tell, and this is true with monkeys, langur monkeys, let alone homonyms.

Sorry about that.

One female is menstruating amongst others, pregnant, breastfeeding, and close to weaning.

And the males will be well aware that this female is the one who is going to be fertile very shortly.

So she is going to be the subject of a lot of attention.

And this is causing conflict.

Yeah, amongst the females.

Now, she's probably a relative of some of those females.

She was talking about core female childcare coalitions.

She's going to be a relative, but there's still this conflict.

But she may attract attention from the males away from mothers who are pregnant and breastfeeding and need support.

And amongst the males, this is going to cause conflict as they kind of hustle to be able to get close to to this live prospect.

They want to bring her flowers and chocolates, but she's the one to target.

And of course, if any of those males thinks they're a boss male and the dominant male, then they may be the one that's really trying to get in there.

And the first thing, it's a female problem.

Above all, it's a female problem in this, and the females have to work out strategically what to do.

And this problem may have arisen and arisen.

In that period of time of that expansion of brain size, in that last 800,000 years, this problem will have arisen and arisen and arisen again.

So there will be not a practice for this.

These females may be relatives of the one who's menstruating.

They don't want to let her go.

She's a friend and relative.

She's powerful.

She's got, you know, she's fertile.

She's powerful.

They want to make sure she's safe.

Don't want to let any of these males try and take her off on safari or anything like that.

They've got two possibilities.

Hide it.

Try and hide it like concealed regulation.

They may already be too late for that.

So the other possibility is this.

Lo and behold, we'll pick it up.

We've got to pick it up.

is that you borrow in the 1st place, it may be a really impromptu, borrow blood, the signal of blood, and say, we're all menstruating.

But as that strategy gets more practiced and the more that the brain size, the pressure of the brain size increase is causing females this problem, they will start to use materials, cosmetics, pigments, even blood, I mean, natural, plant pigments and blood itself could be used, but they will use pigments, mineral pigments as well.

They will collect materials that will enable them to establish the pig.

Now, I'm showing these guys as all very confused, but actually, no.

What we're getting here is a situation where the females, through solidarity, That solidarity and gender by the picket that is saying, no, you're not going to come near our friend, you're going to deal with all of us together.

Some of these males are going to be perfectly happy to invest and work for the females, whereas the other ones, the boss males, if you like, they are going to get phased out by this strategy.

As soon as the females are saying that, the signal is really to the males who are willing investors, because the boss males don't get a chance in that.

They're not going to be able to grab a female and then waltz off.

The females are saying, no, unless you go away, do the work, and come back, and then we'll see.

But it's complete.

The picket line is demanding this is going to be on the terms of the females, on the terms of the people who are doing all the energetic work that these guys can help with.

They will, they'll accept helpful males.

They're phasing out the unhelpful males.

So investors win this.

becomes a mutual process of sexual selection.

And the investor males will sexually select the cosmetic females because they're kind of moral fit.

They're females who are saying, no, we're not dealing with boss males anymore.

Okay, I'm just going to put up.

I know Ian Watts doesn't like this very much, but I just can't help it use the Himba Namibia as the model of the picket line.

because of their incredibly beautiful use of the pigments and the red ochre to express their solidarity in their ritual ceremony.

Himba are not hunter-gatherers, the Namibian group not hunter-gatherers, they're paschalists, but they are renowned, the women are renowned for their incredibly strong solidarity, renowned for their fantastic sexual autonomy, with lovers accepted alongside husbands.

They absolutely demand it.

And it comes out of this, you know, the solidarity is generated through exactly this ceremonial picket line.

It's actually a premarital festival that's going on.

But, you know, men have to be incredibly respectful.

In fact, you can't imagine anyone charging into that and start grabbing who is the menstruating female.

It's as if the entire show is kind of the antidote to menstruation in many ways.

We're all menstruating, but none of us are menstruating.

We're all together on this.

We can't touch any of them.

So this is morality.

This is establishing rules about who mates with who.

How does economic exchange work with sexual exchange? This is the generation of all those taboos and prohibitions that associate to menstruation, which are known across cultures, indigenous cultures worldwide.

And this model, I don't know how long I've got at this stage where we just go on another 5, 10 minutes.

This model has many predictions.

I'm only just going to touch on one or two and show you a few examples, show you a few little examples of ethnographic examples of singing and dancing picket lines.

The model expects that the archaeology of the first human symbolic culture will come with a cosmetics industry of pigment.

That's what the model expects.

And that should align with the time period of the brain size increase.

It should be in that sort of window of time.

And I've got a very, I've got a slide that I stole from Chris Stringer at some stage, just showing these are early **** human fossils from Jebel Uhud over 300,000 years ago in Morocco.

The Ethiopian specimen, Omo Kabish, is now a bit over 200,000, Herto about 160.

The ochre from sites in East Africa, Central and South Africa, 300,000 years going at the same time period.

In fact, the ochre comes from earlier.

Ian Watts, who's on our Zoom, I believe, and he can answer all the questions on the ochre, has worked in sites, Kurum and Hill sites like Bundaberg, with perhaps 500,000 years old anthropogenic ochres, red, blood red hematite as the key pigment.

And we've just had independent confirmation that at this period, about the same time as Pinnacle Point and Herto, this fossil in Ethiopia, about 160,000 years ago, the ochre is emergent before that and then it goes, shoot it, starts to increase at a radical, an exponential rate.

It becomes what Ian has described as regular, ubiquitous.

It's being habitually used.

So it is really part of our speciation process that use of ochre.

We are the species which used cosmetic red ochre.

This doesn't mean Neanderthals didn't do.

That would be a whole other lecture.

So we've got a testable model.

I'm just talking about the first two.

Earliest evidence of symbolic behaviour focused on blood red pigments.

a window of emergence correlating with encephalisation the rate of the growing brain size in relation to body size.

I've said for them 600,000 to 150 is that kind of window, which should be then, because once brain size kind of sort of levels off, well, if it hasn't happened by then, why would it be happening later? And this is also speaking about the specific symbolism.

What symbolism will that picket line actually generate? Well, I've said women in creating their picket line with menstrual pigment, so ritual menstrual synchrony, if you like, they need to have a clock because picket lines must have synchrony of time.

And the obvious clock, will be the moon.

So if we talk to Hadza women about when they menstruate, they will say, I look at the moon, the moon will tell me.

The idea, I can answer many more questions if anyone has them about menstrual cyclicity in relation to the cycles, because it's not a simple subject, but this is indigenous cosmology that women link such use of pigment or ritual associated with menstruation to lunar cycles.

So lunar and menstrual cosmologies. And then I'll talk about the wrong, the gender aspect here.

But the model comes, of course, originally from Chris Knight's sex strike model of human origins from blood relations.

Women's strike, their strike action, their menstrual picket lines goes dark of the moon.

And this is the face blood, solidarity with blood kin, that is with their own brothers or their sisters, children and so forth.

Not yet any hunting, but as the moon waxes bright, the gibbous moon, that will be the best time for hunting.

Large game, Ian can talk about, might stand waterhole hunting, which is still part of the strategies of hunter-gatherers.

By the full moon, the mention of large game kills back to camp for everybody.

They can't eat anything, which is bleeding, The women's strike is creating a taboo on blood that also applies for the blood of animals.

The women are identifying themselves to the gay animals that were being hunted.

When the full moon is there, the fires can be lit.

Feasting can commence sex, marriage.

This was this switching between waxing and waning moon, phase of blood, phase of kinship with marital feasting and sex.

argued by Chris many years ago.

And we just look at the role of gender here, because it's really part of this no, the no signal set up by the strike.

Women say no by becoming a different species and becoming different sex.

They can become Elan Bulls, this famous Elan Bull dance for the Kalahari.

I'll show you some more pictures for the Maitoko initiates of the Hadza.

These girls become hunters, hunting down.

They're males, but they're also identifying to the woman with the zebra's penis who used to hunt.

It's a mythical ancestress who used to hunt zebra, tie the penis on.

So she's both male and an animal.

So this is a complete, what Chris was talking about, a symbolic construct of complete virtual reality is something imaginary that everybody who's engaged in these ceremonies, in these rituals, creating as an imaginary construct, an objective fact depending on collective belief.

Wrong sex, wrong species, the wrong time because of the bleeding, because of the blood.

of the pigment and menstrual time.

So we've got some more Elan bull dance varieties of the Elan bull dance from right over in Natal, the Brakensburg, a picture that is believed to depict the Elan bull dance, the girl's first menstruation ritual.

And we were watching film of the rushing around the menstrual hut, the girls, the women having such fun with the girl inside the hut, who is the bull.

She is male Eland or antelope, the hemsbok.

She actually acts as a hunter and shoots an arrow into a mask of a hemsbok.

So she acts as a hunter, as also those Hadza girls were doing, and the qua picture we've seen.

And I'm just going to say something for also for Jerome's.

I've got pictures of Jerome's here.

Yes, we've got Jerome of the Ngoku as one of the key examples of a dancing picket line.

So we can see the women sweeping across the village plaza.

These Ngoku Bayaka women from Congo, Brazilville, and they're sweeping across a picket line there, singing all kinds of rude and taunting songs.

Now, what I want to do is actually pick up the film of Ngoku to show you what does a picket line look like in this context of highly egalitarian hunter-gatherers.

I'm going to play this film:

> Women singing: ...making love, making love, making love... How is the penis? Is it strong? No it's not - it's useless! Making love, making love, making love...
>
> Group of men being interviewed: When the women dance, it makes us men happy. When people sing and dance, it brings joy to the world. We don't feel any anger about this. It makes everyone happy.
>
> **Women singing:** The owner... wibbly wobbly, wibbly wobbly goes the owner, goes the owner. Like the millipede stumble goes the owner, goes the owner...
>
> **Bruce Parry:** I feel it inside as a man. It's powerful coming from the women.
>
> **Group of men being interviewed:** They are celebrating their thing. They are telling us how good we look as it swings from side to side.
>
> **Women singing:** Look at his penis! He trembles, why? Making love, making love, making love...
>
> **Group of men being interviewed:** When the women sing they insult us men a lot. We, the men, do not like that at all. But that is the way they do it, so we have to let it happen.
>
> That's the world of Masana, we just accept it, that is the way the ritual goes, that's how Masana is!

Bruce Parry: And is there a male response to this?

Group of men being interviewed: Once the women have don Ngoku, it is time for the mens dance. Edjengi. We won't refuse them or stop them when they dance like this. But when it's time for Edjengi, then we take over. It's Edjengi. Not us! When the spirit of Edjengi dances, we are going to the roots of our life, to the beginning of the world.[1]

Camilla: So we're getting this picture with this very egalitarian groups of the women's picket line, but then that's going to be responded to by the men's solidary group as well.

So it's created, it's solidarity amongst the women, creating and reflecting solidarity amongst the men.

And this is a mutual and interdependent phenomenon.

And in calling it a picket line I'm saying we need a flourishing diversity of picket lines because, our picket lines look very different in this day and age.

If we go to examples, many times in rock art, picket lines will be depicted in terms of mighty snakes and serpents.

And the reason for that is that snakes have these kind of uniform, homogenous, that there's not, there's no kind of hierarchy there.

There's this same solidarity aspect of the snake that it has this segmented uniformity that everybody shares into that.

We've got this lovely example from California, from the Lesotho Range Snake Shelter, Aboriginal rainbow snake examples.

It is the swallowing up of everybody solidarity of the feeling of being with your kin, with your blood, with everybody.

And of course, thank you for reminding me, Stephen. Yeah, I was boasting about getting this t-shirt sold to me by the late great Bob Crow at a solidarity price, 'if provoked, will strike'.

This is a perfect snake cosmology used by the RMT. It's very nice. In the unions' picket lines there were on Saturday and later this week, but also some of the most important picket lines on the planet. Perhaps the just stop oil picket lines on the bridges on Saturday were amongst the most significant and important that also occurred in synchrony with the mega strike. But also I would argue the picket lines in Iran today with the Kurdish and Malachi and Iranian women especially leading their pickets say no, refusing to be crushed, be forced into wearing what the ultra-patriarchal rulers want them to wear. This may be seen as the most important.

We need a flourishing diversity of pickets that stream together, return.

And if we think of the slogan, which is a Kurdish slogan of that Iranian uprising, Jean Azadi, which is woman, life, freedom.

[1] Egalitarianism with the Mbendjele of the Congo (Tawai III) <www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SnI0PKXqhc>

It is kind of carrying us back to these very ancient picket lines, the world's first picket lines of modern humanity.

Audience questions

Chris Knight: OK, we're going to have questions and discussion.

Audiance member #1: I'm just wondering, so in terms of like the red being used, associated with... being used like during the times of menstruation, specifically around menstruation, if that's like one theory.

Camilla: Yeah. So the question is, there any ethnographic evidence from indigenous cultures whether red pigment gets used and associated to menstruation? Ian, are you there? Do you want to answer this?

Ian: Yeah. Plenty. I mean, I'm only familiar with the African hunter-gatherer record. But certainly amongst the Bushmen in Southern Africa, it's probably the most ubiquitous context.

I mean, it's the one context where use of a girl's first menstruation ritual is the one context where use of some form of blood symbolism, plant pigments or red ochre is almost invariably present.

more frequently than...

Camilla: Yes.

Any else? Any more?

Chris Knight: I mean, if you're interested, you'd read my book.

It's called Blood Relations, Menstruation and the Orange of the Culture, and I've got lots and lots of ethnographic examples.

So Kuruku, South America, and Rocca, I don't know.

Camilla: We should say that we're not expecting that like 200,000 years later, whenever people use red pigments, that equals menstruation.

But this is like the launchpad, the founding step, if you like, to get.

It's the pivotal step to go into culture.

And that then is going to be elaborated to all kinds of religious concepts.

So really what the red is mobilizing is ritual power to go to the other world.

And that could be in relation to mortuary ritual, it could be in relation to healing ritual, but that power of the redness and what's associated with it, always will come down towards menstruation somewhere.

And it's very strongly linked to initiation ritual for both boys and girls.

It isn't just girls.

But it has this very, but when it's linked to boys, it will also be thought of in terms of a form of menstruation potentially.

So this is kind of, that's extraordinary that would happen.

And that comes out of that ambiguity, gender itself is very much the underlying ambiguous system in this symbolic, this symbolic overthrow of the real world.

Gender is one of the most significant aspects of this overthrowing actual sex, that whatever body you have in going through initiation ritual with pigments and so forth, you kind of reach for the opposite type of body and start mingling with that body.

And that's really what gender is in the 1st place.

Chris Knight: The other part of your question was, Is this one theory about the red ochre, the redness of the ochre, although there are lots of other theories? Again, Ian's the best person to talk about.

I mean, I'm going to be a bit provocative, I suppose.

I'm going to say, well, tell me of another theory, apart from the fact that you see the ochre.

And we even have archaeologists honestly saying, well, kids, you could go to kids' schools, you'll find them playing with orange ochre, green face paint, blue face paint.

And they're sort of making the point that actually kids like, humans like color.

Here's the question, why when you look at the archaeology of the people, do the people quite clearly select, value, you know, use the most blood rate of the possible locus they could have? So, I mean, I've never come across a theory apart from our theory.

Camilla: You want to add to that, Ian?

Ian: Basically, the archaeologists refuse to engage with social anthropology precisely because social anthropology has a 100-year tradition, 140-year tradition of identifying red ochre with blood symbolism and identifying it specifically with menstruation at origin.

So, it's you can't separate the politics from the science, in a sense.

Chris Knight: In referring to Sir James Fraser and the Golden Bough, Emmy of Durkheim, or more recently, Alan Testa, I mean, all the great, many of the great founders of the discipline of social anthropology, when they're trying to argue about what is it that makes things sacred? What kind of signals do you need to move from this world to the other world, the world of the day? underworld.

I mean, it's not a new idea to say that you need blood or a substitute for blood.

And it comes up with some sacrifice, of course, it comes up in Christianity with the blood of Jesus.

I mean, and then if you work back to try to work, why was blood the signal? I mean, there aren't too many other explanations.

Camilla: So when we have the predictions coming out, is the wrong plus red is going to be this kind of fundamental syntax in in religious constructs as a whole.

And that's still obtains.

It's like it doesn't have to be hunter-gatherers.

You were the first hunter-gatherers of human.

Chris Knight: Culture.

Perhaps that question of wrong maybe needs a little bit of elaboration.

It's just that if females are going to say no to sex, you can imagine, it's not much whispering in the male's ear, by the way, maybe not perceiving.

I mean, males are quite fond of sex.

And you've got to, you may have to say the loudest possible body language.

You may need to say it collectively, so it's not just one of you saying no.

And you may need to amplify and repeat this message into a, you know, a big Southern dance.

No means no.

And the way to do it is through body language.

Camilla: And they're cool girls who are playing with the penises and yelling and singing at the men beautifully about how, you know, how useless the penises are.

They're saying no, those males, you know, they don't I didn't even think about it at that particular time.

So that's kind of the role of the sort of aspect of role.

You had a question over there and then I'll go to Zoom.

The grey ceiling, yes, You.

Chris Knight: Did say glass at one point.

Camilla: Oh, did I?

Chris Knight: By mistake.

Camilla: Oh, I'm sorry.

It's a grey ceiling.

Yeah, I'm so sorry.

Audiance member #1: And then it's great.

some back brain cases.

I'm wondering that's the mechanism that the underlying is because suddenly the strength and the power and the male where it was used by more of a cooperation.

I'm wondering what the mechanism was in the second.

Do you know any of the mechanisms?

Camilla: I'm not quite sure what you mean by mechanism.

Yeah, but I mean, this is very mechanistic.

It's not an it's causal explanation of why the brains are getting bigger.

It may be, you know, it may be that there would be selection for genes for Creating that the might.

Audiance member #1: Not be a single mutation.

Do you know of any other things that would correlate?

Chris Knight: The story is that it's a globularisation.

Camilla: Well, there's a two-stage process for modern humans, not Neanderthals, of first of all the flat face and then the globularisation.

And there's some argument about expansion of cerebellum in parietal I'm not very fond of these very mechanistic arguments because I'm trying to reach for social causal explanations rather than just a mutation.

I don't think mutations are causal.

Mutations occur if they're favoured in the context.

I would say behaviour goes before mutations.

or like mutations are happening, but the behaviour that means that mutation is going to be successful.

I mean, that's sort of going at the same time is what is.

So I can't say anything that's too specific or not.

But it's a very it's an interesting question and that the person to ask might be Chris Stringer.

Who is speaking later? Who is speaking later?

Chris Knight: Chris Stringer is the world's number one paleontologist to help people.

Kathleen: Isn't there a little bit of a timing problem with this theory? in that it's it's proposing quite a complex kind of social behavior and social coordination with a with a big symbolic component as a driver of brain development.

But it seems like you'd already have to have a pretty big brain to come up with the idea of doing this.

So unless I unless I missed something, isn't there a isn't there a problem in terms of if this is the thing that allows females to have a cooperative coalition that gets males to bring them food, that allows them to feed their babies, to have these big brains.

That's a very complex thing to coordinate.

It seems like you'd need the big brain already to do this.

So if you could just elaborate on that a bit.

Thank you.

Camilla: Okay, thanks.

So did people hear that? So Kathleen's arguing that you need to have the big brain already to be able to do such complex strategies.

So I was showing all those four phases.

And of course, the first big jump engages many of the capacities that are going to be used subsequently in symbolism, including, well, intersubjectivity, the capacity to share intentions, And you're verging on the ability of linguistic capacities.

Some people are arguing that Homo erectus would have those linguistic capacities.

You already have a very significant range of capacities.

And we're not sure what exactly it is that is forcing the brains to get bigger.

But I agree with you that there's a kind of feedback process that as the females have to do the organization to try to organize the males to get with it and to get helpful, that is increasing the pressure of the brain sites.

It is a kind of feedback process and that is surely what would explain the reason that the brain is rising such a rate.

And it is a kind of, it is, it could also be explained as a type of sexual conflict feedback where there is a lot of, there's a problematic conflict between the male strategies and the female strategies.

This is a, it's just like a picket line.

It's a kind of, it's a kind of sexual social conflict, not so much sexual in picket line, a social conflict that requires A revolutionary transcendence or resolution.

And that's what I think happened in the case of human culture and human symbolism with the final kind of breakthrough of our species.

It would be very interesting to compare the Neanderthals, and we have tried to make some comparison of the Neanderthal records on this.

And there is some parallelism in the Neanderthal brain expansion and the use of pigments as well.

although there are also interesting difficulties, differences which may be explained by environmental factors potentially.

But I hope that kind of answers the question.

It may not be satisfactory, but we'd like to, you know, we'd like to look at where are alternative theories that deal with the relationship of symbolism to the female energetic problems and energetic burden, and where we can point to predictions that show actual rituals and actual use of pigments in the context that are predicted.

So we'll kind of appeal to a sort of parsimony with this theory.

I hope that helps.

Rowan: That's right.

I'd have loved to have been there, but I've been a little under the web.

But it's a fantastic speech.

Really grateful to have heard it all and have taken lots of notes.

You know, as a socialist, it's really great to hear a theory of human sociology that emerges in something, you know, like a picket line in solidarity as sort of instrumental to the sort of arising of human consciousness.

That's a fantastic view.

I was really interested in some of the things that were said about gender towards the end of the talk.

And I think Chris Knight came in and sort of said something about about it as well, about the idea of gender as the mingling of as a kind of ritual mingling of bodies, if I if I heard correctly.

And also that stuff about the rock art and the use of snakes and serpents as a as a kind of way of of involving everybody, as a way of, I guess, hinting at sort of more androgynous imagery, more sort of more inclusive imagery.

And it's something that's, I guess, debated a lot in queer food, which is something, you know, I'm quite interested in as well about, you know, there's a lot of ideas now, I guess, around sort of the abolition of gender and gender as a kind of problem, as and against people who sort of want to use genders more radically and in ways that I think they express solidarity.

But I'm interested in like, Would you argue then that there's kind of an origin of gender in a form that isn't constricted, that isn't a form of domination and control, that has liberating potentials at its heart? That's something that I'd be very interested in hearing more about.

If you excuse my meandering question.

Thank you.

Right.

Camilla: I'll just repeat for people who are here.

Rowan's suggesting, because I was saying something about gender being at the heart of this emergence of symbolic culture.

Is it possible that gender could, we have a model where gender is sort of from origin, is seen as this liberatory and not constrained non-binary potential? And yeah, I'm sure I hope I'm repeating that question adequately.

I think it's absolutely so.

Gender is like a sort of volcanic force in the origin of symbolism itself.

And gender is not mapping onto pure, just biological sex.

It's a play with biological sex, a play with brute facts, if you like, and creating a whole space of new possibilities.

And all those those constructions, those new constructions of wrong sex, wrong species, wrong are kind of interwoven there.

And we have this again and again that these religious constructs have wholly ambiguous aspects of gender.

The most, the original construct which may really stand for that is trickster as trickster as an entity that is of enormous importance for African hunter-gatherers in general, but particularly the Bushmen, and is the creative force, is fundamentally creative force of the rules pertaining to puberty, ritual, but a creative force of storytelling and of healing and of all these aspects.

And trickster is almost impossible to describe in terms of gender.

In fact, as many, this, what you say, this intermingling aspects, a body that gets kind of cut up into bits and then reassembled into bits in various juxtapositions.

So I hope that says enough for now.

I'm going to take from the room a question.

Can you louder?

Audiance member #1: So, yeah, when we're kind of showing, like, according to your model, maybe actually, yeah.

But it seems a little bit.

I was just wondering it's like a long, maybe like the phase you think suspect that like maybe like eventually?

Camilla: So the first one is about the role of same-sex behaviour, somewhat along the lines that Rowan's talked about gender and non-binary.

Yes, absolutely, the strike and the picket is against marital heterosexual sex.

So almost any other forms of sex potentially might be able to bloom, that space is really opened up.

And those forms could be definitely an aspect of creating cooperative bonds.

We've got, I mean, we're not exactly like bonobos in our sex lives.

And the bonobos definitely using the same sex for creation of bonds.

There are many examples I know of female.

I mean, we looked at the Ngroku women and they're enacting sex acts.

It's a play, it's a game and a performance.

But I know of other initiation examples where women's songs and women's actions have a very, really ****** tinge.

Whether it's, you know, our mode of thinking about it in terms of sexual behaviour, it's is a question that's very culturally specific, and also with men as well, the solidarity of men could potentially be...

And the second part of the question was deterministic.

Can you just say that again? Well, in the sex strike model that we've come up with, this lunar key idea that it swings between, and which is kind of exemplified by the Bayaka within Ngoku, that the women uprise within Ngoku, and then the Ajengi comes back, and there's this movement.

And we read that as a kind of egalitarian, it's neither matriarchy nor patriarchy.

We actually call it lunar key because it in some, at least symbolically is governed by the moon.

And yeah, I think I would make a strong argument that our ancestors came through a phase of prolonged egalitarianism where male dominance didn't do very well.

It wasn't a very successful strategy.

And then you had farming.

And then it comes back to situations where females get, well, it happens before.

If females can get atomized because there's a breakdown of big game hunting, female groups are having to separate.

You get the situation like with the summer with the Arctic hunters where groups are going into like small nuclear family whereas they're gathered together in the winter, and that's kind of communistic.

And then small nuclear families in the summer, it's a kind of seasonal life for the Eskimo, seasonal variations for the life of the Eskimo, that kind of thing.

So you kind of get the potential of male dominance or patriarchy is always there, and in the context it can come back.

But also there are social contexts that make sure it only has so much, it can't take the **** all the time, if you like.

So does that help?

Chris Knight: Yeah.

Sorry, you did say you wanted to stop at 8.

Camilla: Yeah.

Have we got any queries on the Zoom or have we got burning questions in? We are a little bit late.

Yes.

Is just menstruation being perceived as a clinic and then taking the medical break you up with people, you know, Brilliant.

A brilliant idea.

Yeah.

And the absolutely to link to, the question about patriarchy, patriarchy will absolutely attack the signal that women have, which is a signal of linked up female power.

And they will put, you know, so Think of the young girls in Nepal being put into corners where they were guarded.

So they're being absolutely separated from any sense of power, atomized completely, and yet they're still observing these very ancient traditional taboos.

And yes, you're right.

It's like it's an equivalent of ruling class attack on any kind of symbolism, menstruation is a kind of red flag.

Anything like the Labour Party singing the red flag, did they ever do it in the end? No, I don't think so.

Chris Knight: I have to start with.

Camilla: God, so the Queen, they can't sing the red flag.

It doesn't work, does it? So they still have.

I'm glad to hear it.

I'm very glad to hear that.

But yeah, you're absolutely right.

And what is the real trickery is that the patriarchs of the dominant males reasserting their dominance through aspects of ritual knowledge will themselves perform menstruation in various guises, circumcision, subincision, many male initiation rituals are, that's so it's like male menstruation becomes the proper form, whereas women's is just dirty in that body, yeah.

So yes, it's complete trickery for sure.

I think we need to stop.

Yeah, unless there's burning questions on the Zoom here.

Thank you very much.

I think we're gonna come to an end, unless there's any further thoughts.

Thank you very much for attending with the Zoom people.

And next week, just to announce next week, we are going to hear from Ian Watts, who is talking tonight on the pigment.

And he is going to be talking about a Hadza mystery, the mantis, who is a very enigmatic figure in Hadza mythology, the mantis.

The mantis also exists as the embodiment of trickster to a large extent in Bushman mythology.

So we're dealing with a very ancient, we've been talking a little about trickster tonight, a very ancient connection to trickster mythology in two African, deep time African hunter-gatherer cultures there.

That's with Ian Watts next week.

So I hope you'll be joining us again.

Thank you very much.

Camilla Power
The world's first picket line
Feb 5, 2024

Radical Anthropology YouTube channel.
<www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9ACH6ix_Ps>