

# The history of the menstrual hut (Seminar)

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If women once exercised social and political power, how did they eventually come to lose it? Can the insights of anthropology help us answer that question?

Down through the ages, patriarchy has exercised its power through temples, synagogues, mosques and churches. These are special places where god comes down to earth. Inside, such buildings are dark, womb-like and designed to hold a congregation in such a way that all might feel as one. Although women may be admitted, the earliest congregations were all-male.

In many horticultural societies to this day, the Men's House is the most impressive building in the village and is the place from which men exercise power over women. In these societies, men believe that owing to their menstrual cycles and capacities for synchrony with the moon, women possess supernatural powers which men can defeat only through trickery and violence.

Patriarchy justifies its despotism by arguing that when women dominated the world, their seat of power was a Menstrual Hut from which men were systematically excluded.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUCjbqDFiuc>

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**Camilla:** Welcome to radical anthropology everybody after our short break and this is going to be our second last talk before the summer break and we have one more next week, which you shouldn't Miss but tonight is a radical anthropology classic with Chris Knight, his course radicon's Prodigy founder and author of blood relations and menstruation and the origins of culture and he is talking on the history of the menstrual heart.

I think I'll leave it with You Chris go for it.

**Chris:** Okay, I'm I'm gonna give a very short one minute version and then perhaps a five minute so question and then and then the talk so shocking that I don't know any kind of mainstream anthropology department can even cope with this.

If you take temples synagogues mosques churches cathedrals and Trace them back to the very beginning the world's first such sacred place was a menstrual house.

So that's the one minute version.

The full version is of course in my book *Blood Relations; Menstruation in the origins of culture* and a really splendid encapsulation of the argument about the menstrual heart was actually in the guardian in 2017 and I'll show a slide of that article. It's by Camilla. *If the body isn't sacred nothing is* and Camilla put put together the whole arguments. I don't know. I don't think anyone has ever done. It's quite so sexingly.

So okay, perhaps I'll start with this very very prestigious volume Massively Society been recommended Canary enjoy smart because the creation of inequality how our previous direct ancestors set the stage for monarchy slavery and Empire.

So, of course the origins of inequality is a classic anthropological topic.

David Graver and David Wingrow in recent book or Festival David Gregory debt to some extent in every recent in their recent term.

Book which I've actually got here. *Dawn of Everything* really argues that there's no such thing as the origin of inequality because inequality is always and existed and alongside all the various other things that humans can do.

So asking about the origin inequality is a mistake that these authors kind of disagree and yet I see about this book.

Is it it's a that you have ground plans of men's houses? You have a men's house a men's house and men's house a men's house and they go back back back in deep into history and prehistory and it's men's houses all the way down and you look in the look in the index and it's got here men's house pays 45. It is 1105 is 110 to 152 21. I mean only almost every diagram is a diagram of a special building. And of course, it's a special buildings the ceremonial buildings that leave more than likely even architectural Trace and that explains of course, if you're an archaeologist, you you need you need evidence you need. Okay look at evidence and you're not going to get certain things certain Transit things leaving much of a trace. So it's men's houses all the way down and then you'd think well wherever any women sounds and you turn it you look in the index it not only a women's houses not mentioned. Even the word women anything is invention and as for menstrual hats Um, no.

Not to mention.

Despite the fact that these days archaeologists particularly in North America have been actually quite interested in looking at first American dwellings, which have led to, remains reticulars can detect and it's absolutely clear that meant the mental house. The institution of the mental heart is something which archaeologists can can can write about and can describe.

so something rather odd is happening and how can you have the creation of inequality? if inequality always existed if it's men's houses all the way down to the exclusion of any space within which women can gather in opposition. And of course you have to remember that these things called men's houses.

I'll show a picture one later on and these were just sort of informal places for mentors that are gathering chat. These were strictly to boot to women there were institutions.

very often a kind of Institutions through which a kind of Terror was perpetrated against the opposite sex the men's house in Papua New Guinea many parts of other parts of the world was a source of one-sided male Monopoly of ritual power and Yet.

Men in their mist and they're missed and in more than just missed and their rituals as well make really clear in the beginning. We stole these things from women the original men's houses.

Where Women's houses women's houses sacred houses within which women to which women retreated during menstruation and childbirth? And the story is that one day rather heroic man managed to Brave.

the women's house overcome the terror that men had of menstrual blood managed to take over the women's house.

Transform it into its opposite expel women using Terror and from then on men have held that the men and Monopoly ritual power exercise through this thing called The Men's house the point I'm gonna be making is that whereas this in this book? There's not even a conception of a woman's house the truth.

Is that everywhere where you have a men's house and explicit? House through which men monopolize ritual power is nothing. It's not just sometimes in some cases in every single case. If you look explore and read the ethnography carefully, you'll find that the story is that that was a menstrual house and of course, I'm not saying that just because you have these myths there you need to believe them. But I'm simply I'm simply contrasting today's myths, which is that women have never held power.

You women's color that is kind of I'm gonna really difficult to achieve where it's been rich or solidarities easy to treat that is a that's a current myth actually. I mean if it is I missed really of agenda today. I would think it's more SMS that somehow male dominance is natural and what I'm saying, is that wherever men in traditional societies.

organize a monopoly ritual power They say the exact opposite. They say men had to coercively take power from the natural custodians of ritual power which was the female sex and they all every single Miss they call Miss the matriarchy, of course the ministers that women have a kind of unfair Advantage ever made through their bodies. They connect up with each other through the Moon that is unfair men's weapons can't deal with with a Witchcraft and Magic which are able to use for their purposes and so I'm not I'm not saying because miss interested Miser interesting, but I'm not saying because this is a widespread traditional mess. Therefore obviously miss a miss and they're not science, but I'm simply pointing out the extraordinary contrast between our own Western and these traditionalists.

as I said earlier the if you want the full story, I would certainly recommend this this book that relations. Yeah University press Another very interesting article, which hadn't been discussed about shin in the radical. Anthropology group is so Andrew lattice an article in there's a lot of interference. I think I'm going to mute everybody this. Yeah, I can see and I'm gonna just meet everybody. I'm sorry. Can you unmute yourself those of you can meet yourself? Okay.

so and yes Andrew lattice Particularly and sacrifice tamarans and the appropriation of FEMA reach productive powers in male initiation ceremonies in West New Britain It's a Wonderful article in the Journal of the royal anthropological Institute.

Volume number 24 a few a few years ago and what else I'm going to do. I'm going to just read out sections of that article really abbreviated because it's it gives an example of a men's house and the ritual of that men's house and the the miss through which men justify their power.

So according to miss.

this heroine female culture hero kiwak She was breaking forward with a stone ax when a piece of wood flew off making a humming noise. It occurred to her that if she bought a hole and had a string to this piece of wood. She could reproduce its sounds

thus creating the tamaran Baku. There were Tamara means a monstrous terrifying illusory figure which nevertheless might be kind of loosely is feared and The Illusions are so powerful that this monsters effectively real.

So her brother cowardly angrily demanded to know why women held the tamaran whilst men ran off nurturing children. So in the stories as in all these stories, everything was kind of reversed. So men had breast women had peers men looked after the babies women went out hunting and doing, powerful political organizing things and in this counter as in so many others, Was angry so one day he became angry. He realized that the terrifying Spirits were just tricks per protected by women.

So he walked in the taboot area of the Village plaza where he saw his sister whirling the bullro is this? Whoo, it's it's a sound that's I call it in my book. It's it's the sound of the planet. It sounds it's the sounding recognize.

It's when you're in your mother's womb you would have heard the sound of the blood the heartbeat and the bull were produces this this rhythmic heartbeat sound which is always and all these stories and all these amazing. It's always this the voice of the the monster the voice of the rainbow snake in large parts of Australia, but another areas other other mythological terrifying beings like the sound of a wounded dragon roaring it in his cabin.

He walked to the taboot area of the Village plaza where he saw his sister whirling the ball were he proclaimed that henceforth women were to rear small children while men would hold and feed the bullroist. He took the breaths from men's chest and gave them to women.

In return and received the Beards of women.

Still angry with his sister carrot chased her into the sea and killed her with a fighting stick as she struggled to get out of the water.

The fear caused by carrot killing his sister LED women to renounce and forget their former secret knowledge.

So the current patriarchal social order is here constituted. This is An Andrew lattice writing the current patriarchal social order is here constituted.

Through a massive Act.

of forgetfulness It is precisely this act of forgetting that women must currently simulate back to men in their rituals. There are many women are aware of men's trickery.

They must reenact this missing Act of forgetfulness with the ritual begins. They must run off in Terror as though Baku this monster making this full or sound is that valky? We're a real being the traditional punishment for a woman who discovered this camera and Secret was death so woman who kind of saw men wearing the borer creating this illusion of this monster the tamaran who she came across any of the secret operators through which men perpetrate this tricks and the she had to be killed.

Usually by her brother, by the way, this is over the last parts of Australia as well as preparing, New Guinea and this particular current camera and vacuum has the form of a cassowary this extraordinary.

large bird The cassowary shaped footprint of vacu was cut into her hair and the head is the head of the woman who found the secret and they had severed and Thrones to a hole in the top of the men's house to the women gathered in the Village Plaza.

Men buried the body's secret in the bush or the men's house telling the women that the chamber and had eaten it. So in real life in ritual a woman who had been found guilty of discovering some of the secrets she would kill by her, brother.

It's secretly of course and then her head would be cut off and then as a head was thrown out through the hole in the roof of the men's house. This would cause of course Terror among the women who discovered what had happened and Andrew lattice is Terror Is still very much the part of everyday life it prevents women publicly voicing the skepticism and many secretly share over whether tamarans are real.

Many men are aware of women skepticism and a primarily concern that it not be publicly voiced.

Terror plus a proud allegiance to custom Leads to a complicit participation by women in reproducing publicly the ascribed female naivety and which male ritual power depends. They are forced to enact and validate the ideologies through which they are dominated. This political simulation of itself is Iconic with and ideologically inscribed in the myth of her being the origins of the powers of simulation the powers of trickery.

Women must enact and become subject to the powers of the illusions that she created. I suppose what I'm emphasizing here.

is what how that has puts it that women kind of on purpose forget that they once held the power.

They can know it but they can't quite say it and it's convenient for them to be very forgetful about it and I suppose what I'm saying really is that this forgetfulness on the part of women, which is a part of the the origin of patriarchy the origin of this one-sided male Monopoly of ritual power.

My view is that.

That forgetfulness is still here and the book I was mentioning.

But for Emery Flannery and Kent Flannery and Marcus is an example as I said, you look through the book.

You find all these men's houses.

You find in the index the references to the men's houses. You look in the index.

For anything to do with women's houses and it all seems to have been forgotten and it's a massive Act of forgetfulness and it's kind of not it's maybe it's not in women's interests to remember anything about I mean, it has been I'm so maybe it has been in women's interest not to not to be too. I don't know to to knowledgeable and forgetfulness is kind of necessary strategy.

Okay. Now, of course, you're going to be wanting some some evidence for some of the points. I've been making here.

so let me let me say okay and when I say, okay, let's just start with Metro houses Metro lodges. I mean, it's clear.

very few images can better encapsulate the oppression of women in the image of a menstrual heart in space, rural parts of Nepal a tiny little Hut A woman who's menstruating has to go to that much. He'd probably all on her own all kinds of taboos preventing him from eating food from I mean, she has to be kept in the dark. Her feet mustn't touched the ground Son china ahead.

It's clearly I mean, it's it's a sort of acne of Oppression of women and of course these mental hats are all over the place and a very powerful description is Is bonus credulous the making of Great Men again, another Papua New Guinea example, where the men the Great Men the men with his magnificent plumages and their powerful displays and rituals who do very little work women to do nearly all the work looking after the pigs or to cultural work that of course the breastfeeding the children and the man have an absolute horror.

Of one thing and that's Anthony contact with menstruation and down in the valleys and the muddy valleys the other little Mentor hats into which women must go.

So I mean no one can possibly doubt the fact that menstrual the mental heart is a is a is a mark of patriarchal oppression of women no doubt about it. But of course when I'm arguing is an action the institution of the menstrual heart or the menstrual house.

Actually that was not itself a male invention my argument in my in my book is that met women themselves going back far enough to Hunter gather to women especially in Africa where and the gatherers even to this day and not only a Galaxy in a general sense, but our gender egalitarian You find that women's need to be set apart while menstruating is actually a source of the sickness of the bodies and a source of their solidarity and in some cases when women do menstruate young women come of age and administrate for the first time. They go into a heart and is absolutely no question.

This is a source of Pride Joy or solidarity of power and perhaps are just just illustrate this.

All right now go to an example and the Anthropologist Colin Turnbull and again for those anyone here is relatively new to anthropology. Perhaps he brought to the point new to Hunter gatheringsography.

This is from a marvelous. Classic of anthropology the forest people by Colin Turnbull and he was and he was working with the blue chick people had to gatherers.

in the Northeast part of the Congo Basin the Congo rainforest and he was struck by the contrast between Bantu Villages ideas about menstruation and those are the forest running bambooty.

According to the Villages menstrual blood signified pollution and deaths of as-sumptu to be feared.

Among their hunter-guarded neighbors. Everything was completely different and Temple describes the elima ritual a girl's first menstruation ceremony in described it as one of the most joyful occasions experienced by the entire Community.

It's actually a major ritual and this isn't cherry picking and one particular examples throughout Africa where you have hunter-gatherers.

The major rituals are not boys initiation rituals. The cinnamon is to celebrate a girl's first menstruation. So we have the color Harry Elan bulldance, but many other examples not always a special ritual for the actual menstruation, but you have very powerful ritual women's rituals. Rich as a women's Defiance sexual and gender Defiance of men into which girls as a can of age get and initiated and invariably menstruation is a is a mark of your transition to adulthood and in some ways connected to this process of initiation into a into a women's Society often a kind of women secret society. Sometimes it has a building that kind of heart and sometimes it doesn't but here I'll just read out.

So when a young girl begins to flower interiority and blood comes to her for the first time it comes to her as a gift received with gratitude and rejoicing the girl enters seclus.

But not the seclusion of the village girl. So all the way through here. We have the contrast between the Bantu and Villages go to culturalists and the hunter-gatherers and the hunter Brothers have a completely different attitude towards ministration.

So she enters seclusion, but not the seclusion of the village girl. She takes with her all her young friends those who have not yet reached maturity and some older ones so she goes into kind of seclusion, but she's not isolated.

Together they are taught the Arts and Crafts of motherhood by an old and respected relative for these people. The elima is one of the happiest most joyful occasions of the in their lives. And so it was with happiness that we all heard that not one girl, but two girls in our camp had been blessed by the moon.

With the onset of a period the girl entered a large specially built grass house the Alima accompanied by her young friends and supervised by an older female relative and maybe I should just point out.

My argument I'm saying this was a grass.

Hut if you like but more than a heart a grass house quite a large house it held about eight nine women all at once it was the biggest house ever made by the these people and what I'm saying is if the one of the reasons why archaeologists don't find women's houses it's because women's houses were particularly prominent among hunter gatherers and they're made of grass or the materials and they don't they didn't leave they didn't have foundations they didn't, so archaeologists when Find them.

But of course what I'm saying is the fact that archaeologists can't find financing doesn't mean you should then draw conclusions about about men's hazards or the origins of inequality just because you can't find an archaeological record.

You just it's no justification for extending your your conclusions from just what you happen to be able to find because you're an archaeologist. Anyway, just to carry on with this and day after day the women sing inside the house from time to time one or more will suddenly burst out to chase a boy chosen from among the many likely to have gathered around.

So what's happening is the boys get this exciting news and a new young girl has kind of come into circulation and I wrote the book should obviously reasons the boys

are pretty excited by this and they all gather around hoping to get a glimpse of the girl. But what happens is the girls carry saplings used to whip playfully with their chosen victim to be whipped establishes an obligation to visit your assailant in the elima house once inside there is no need to do anything further, but the young man is subject to considerable attention if he refuses and just because that's not all that clear terminal is being a bit careful here what happens to the girls rush out of their house any of the boys that trying to get a glimpse of them is likely chased with these saplings and for girl touches a boy.

He's an unabound to.

Go into that house and he gets driving.

Quite likely is his own first sexual experience will be in that Lima house. And of course, they said it you can imagine he's being jumped on my whole bunch of women. So his experience of this first sex is going to be like kind of my keys made. He's not gonna be the man in church and things he's he's being enjoyed it here. He doesn't have to do anything further, but the girls are very interested to be planning on him and the boy who can sense to sex inside the house is paying on with great from Turbo cannot then leave he must stay in the elima for seven nights until the festival is over to prove himself fully acceptable to the women his final task what we did Kill and bring home a large antelope.

So for both girls and boys the Aluma ritual is a form of initiation initiation into adult sexual life.

For girls, it involves entering a special house where blood flows and buddies emerged to one the boys involves a series of tests. One of which is to be accepting of the sexual demands of and kind of paraphrasing here or group of well organized women celebrating a girl's first menstruation and so it seems that what terminal tells us that these women will be fairly close relatives of each captive boy, perhaps the category of aren't cousin or even grandmother. And in that in the darkness, they will freely Express their sexual desire. But what we know is that the girls then get a bit fed up with the local boys and they take their whips and they go looking for boys further afield and the an hour boy that they now managed to catch is now if he if he now has he's down on a bound to to go back to the neighbor house. And in this case, he's more distantly related and he's more likely end up being the sexual partner of the girl. I mean the point I'm simply making here. Is that the house itself? Is a central power for the women it's recorded the women's house if you like and perhaps just think about it think about churches and they're dark. They're enclosure. They enclosed the quiet in Christianity, but actually many other religions, of course, there's quite a lot of blood in Christianity.

It's the blood of Jesus. It's symbolic blood and of course, it's the wine in other religions. Of course. It's about a sacrifice to go to some animal and but I just it's through the blood that you're you're 90 in solidarity in this enclosed building in the dark and I'm just wanting you I'm inviting you to.

picture even superficially this the kind of structural similarity between entering and a mental house, which is a source of women solidarity think of the intimacy of being

one with the with the spirit in this case with the moon's blessing with the women the two women's in this case blood and then think of in my case. I was brought up a Catholic. So this is my body. This is my blood.

I'm used to the idea that you you're one with divinity and particularly one with divinity's food the blood. So I'm trying to try to make the point that although it's a shocking and thought to these patriarchal religions all of them. It didn't it? Isn't it isn't logically inconceivable. You can see immediately. I hope a number of parallels and between what goes on in a communal menstrual heart and what goes on in a men's house and now okay now for an even more I suppose powerful example of communal house much more recently. This is 2001 and win Maggie and anthropology who describes what happens regularly to this.

They instead the best Charlie.

A communal menstrual house used by women among the kalasha people of Northwest Pakistan. So now disturbing Pakistan is not a place where too many women's houses exist. They mostly obviously men's houses if right musk, but here we have an exception when Maggie was so surprised at what she found that she found that she fear that her Western readers might not believe her.

So she writes. I don't want to make the mistake of leading you to believe.

That women always achieve Mystic solidarity simply by virtue of sharing time in the menstrual house.

Yet one of the delightful things for me at least that for a few days women whose past otherwise rarely cross fine things in common. The bashari is a place of intense physical intimacy where women share knowledge about their bodies.

That would be Unsinkable in everyday life.

So when Maggie's book is called our women are free. So wonderful book and now our women are free is something which men in this culture in the Himalayas and one of the valleys in the Himalayas is our women are free is something which the men are proud to say. They say our women are free and women in the kalasha valley consider themselves free where they're married or not men are not to support it. But proud of the fact that we've been a free to travel free once married to return whenever they like to the home where they were born and most importantly free to resist men's demands in this community that I know isolated menstrual Hearts instead. There's a large sacred building serving as a communal meeting house for the women.

You see it as a physical Center for their solidarity and freedom women congregate here when menstruating you're giving birth so that at any one time there may be as many as 20 women inside gossiping laughing and singing together many with their babies and toddlers during a stain what they call them. Most. Holy place.

Women compare notes of the duration of events or throws in the Kenosha Valley where there are no means houses or temples.

the communal menstrual house is the most sacred building there is and so to my mind it qualifies as a church or Temple showing where the very idea of such an institution originally comes from The nationality building is off limits to men and provides a

period of refuge and retrieve extending over several days women who want to get away from their husband for a few days can use it as a refuge. So to fill up with a husband they can go to this this women's house.

This would women sacred almost Temple and when Maggie and relates how a young woman who planned to aloke use the excuse of menstruation as a critics for leaving a family confident in the support and solidarity. She would find so you're having an argument the husband you say you menstruating you've got to go to the house. And of course you find this immense Matt amount of female solid American Support to me to enable you to make a decision and if she wants to pack in our husband and form another relationship is very little man can do And in Maggie describes graphically how women enjoy the intimacy of sleeping together in the bishali arms and legs wrapped closely together.

Exactly what happens in the bashari as women secret so much so that men don't even have the words to ask what happens there.

The greatest secrets are the words used to describe menstruation intimate parts of the body and details of fever reproduction and being an anthropologist win Maggie herself Compares these women secrets and privileges with those so often monopolized by men in their men's houses.

So what I'm saying isn't, ? It's not entirely new and when Maggie has if you like witnessed it she's witness a whole culture. But all the people have only one Temple and that's the women's house said it's a mental house. And of course women therefore safe from Men's and crying eyes from his demands. No man would dare go into that house.

So I've I've given a modern example and a given a hunter Gathering example and the bamboo tea and I think together they make they make the point.

I don't want to go too long because of course it's all is all very controversial and we would be very nice to have some discussion of it all. I'm going to just try and show just a couple of them slides by sharing my screen and then showing this yeah, is that now? Can I just see can you see my screen? Yes. Okay, right. So this is Camillus article in the guardian from 2017 if the body isn't sacred nothing is Why menstrual taboos matter? And you can see the subheading here menstrual seclusion was once about giving women a safe space hunter-gatherer cultures can teach us how women's blood is potent and not and polluting.

So I would very much recommend that article it's 11<sup>th</sup> of February 2017, but it's you can easily if you just type in one of those if the body isn't sacred nothing is it'll come up on Google.

Um now again, no on my screen. I've got the wrong. Why is this? Oh, yeah. Okay. I can move it. That's good.

So, this is a Nepalese menstrual.

Heart and on the right. I've just got this and sorry on the right.

I don't quite know why my screen is.

It it's kind of offs anyway.

Yeah, quite recently in Nepal. There's been a ban on menstrual house very understandably and no way am I saying that these particular kind of mental that's a sites of women solidarity quite the opposite.

But now it's the text underneath in this magazine women and girls Nepal has banned the practice of banishing menstruating women and girls to sheds.

Activists of welcome the new law but say there's more work to be done and I've just got this up here just to make the point that is about when patriarchy takes over.

What it does, is it it? Transforms what was once the menstrual House of power and solidarity? Making sure that women are isolated when they menstruate making sure that the menstrual house that women have to go into this is a small building very often in a valley that nobody wants to go to while the men expand their version of the mental house into what's called a men's house, which the archeologists Can it can can easily just see over time turns into the temple the mosque the church the cathedral the synagogue and so forth. So so you get this bifurcation with the women's version of the best one house getting smaller and more more marginalized and women feeling more and more oppressed in there. Even though of course, there's a tradition is very strong and sometimes no doubt about it. Sometimes the the descriptions of the oppression are overstated. I'm sure sometimes understated but as well I'm saying is that women very often in these in some of these cultures. They actually want to break from Men's demands of family demands and in some cases there's something in it for women.

Sense of when you're in your period maybe you don't want to be cooking the food and many your husband's socks and giving him sex and stuff. They might be all sorts of reasons why this sort of give us a break and is is kind of a way of describing women's feelings, but still of clearly this is in this case looking at this picture. This is a oppression female oppression.

So and this is just the reason that I've got this is it if you look on Wikipedia.

You've got this little description of the collection. I've been describing the Clash of having read when Maggie's book, but here we have kind of the usual assumption in contrast to the surrounding Pakistani Culture The Clash of do not in general separate males and females of frown on contact within the sectors. However, menstruating girls and women are sent.

To live in the bush the basalini The Village menstrual building during their periods until they regain their purity. They also required to give birth in the barceleni. There's also a rich restoring creative to them now all I'm saying is this this Wikipedia entry. Can you see it's it's a simulating.

The bashari to the traditional Western image of the menstrual heart. It's saying the women are sent.

When my win Maggie did some proper fieldwork in this part of the world in no sense our women sent to the Russian army women want to be there if that's where they find their solid Everybody celebrate their power as women and giving birth in that place with other women is actually empowering compared with having to give

birth maybe with your husband and without women's and active support and the idea of impurity again.

It's this it's so clear that the whole idea of impurity is is not. Yeah, where's the best Charlie and we saw as I read out from Colin terrible if If something's holy if your body is Holy and marked as Sacred by your blood.

If you're a woman marked a sacred by your blood.

Then what's impure is contact with the opposite sex and an inappropriate period of time, so, what's what's impure? is the mixing of opposites but the blood itself isn't considered to be impure and of course under under a patriarchal culture. This gets changed and menstrual blood itself becomes polluting impure and all this all the positives which are discussed from the previous examples get turned into negatives under patriarchy.

so this is just this is just a lovely picture. These are the kashali women incredible amount of solidarity, wherever you read about these people. There's always the women of together the old women are very very proud beautifully dressed constantly together with each other having this space this and so called us and again, this is this this picture was on committed as article in the guardian and this is this is just a is actually rather. Nice film you can find on if on Google of this is actually a clip from a video women inside dismantle house.

Yes during housework, but they're doing it for they're doing it for themselves as well as the child giving themselves. There's no sense in which they're doing. This these jobs for men. And then finally, I've just got this picture.

This is the Kent family Joyce Marcus and down here.

I've just got this strange thing, which I've described as following Andrew lattice as an actor forgetfulness. You've got men's house men's house men's house men's house. Every almost every illustration is a picture of men's house and yet the books called The Creation are inequality and I'm saying how can you what what does that mean? I mean according to this book men always were the sex that have the the ritual power and the, the the house or lodged through which that power was exercised. How can you talk about the creation inequality if it's men's houses and all the way down? So for the moment, that's it, but I'm luckily Camilla is here and I think Camilla will be I'm wanting to say Lisa hopes. You can be want you to say a few things as well because the credit of quite I'm ingenious.

biological anthropological studies of some of these topics and so Okay. Thanks.

Did you want me to ship in now or? What? Yes, I think so. Yeah, I mean I could talk a bit because there is clearly this.

Ambivalence real ambivalence and no question about it with hand gatherers and many other cultures women are finding big solidarity in their menstrual hearts and but on the other hand, there are case studies where the argument is that the menstrual heart may be an instrument of patriarchal control and one of the case studies is from the dog on and sadly don't have the picture of the dog on heart, but I was advertising the talk with the beautiful mud. It's a very Stately building in the middle of dogon

village with Beauty's Mud House with beautiful carvings of figures with Rich your blood flow linked together. It's very it's very artistic beautiful building and so there was a an evolutionary Anthropologist Beverly Strassman who's done an extraordinary amount of work with a dog on women on questions about menstruation menstrual synchrony and their visits to the menstrual heart and she she gained information about hormonal assays to show her that when women went to the menstrual heart. They really were menstruating. No kidding. It was real they were going there and it only happened when they were menstruating and of course for dog on women, we've got to remember for women in natural fertility populations. They will menstruate a lot less than women in the West in a western lifestyle and because they have much longer periods breastfeeding having many more children generally speaking the most western women so menstruations much less of the time and so menstruation really marks out when a woman might be fertile and therefore if a woman's visiting the heart it's kind of rendering that visible. It makes that Amplified the fact that she's coming up to her fertility and she's going to be in that Hut so stressman made an argument. She's evolutionary darwinian Anthropologist and she made an argument from a very patriarchal kind of point of view.

That what's happening is dog on men are kind of monitoring their wives fertility by checking out when they're going to the menstrual heart and some dog or men are polygenous and so they might miss, they might not know about their wives menstruating but by forcing them to go to the Hut forcing them to go to the heart, they're kind of checking up on it.

But you then sort of think and but why why wouldn't it be better for men kind of keep the information to themselves? Because the heart is right in the middle of the whole village and it's kind of broadcasting to all the the men there in the village and in fact the old French ethnographers of the dogon who are in Mali, I didn't say that perhaps the old French Colonial ethnographers. They observed. This was columbkill your they observed that when a woman is in her the menstrual heart. She's resting there for a few days.

Her husband he has to go and talk to her through the walls. This is called because they Farm it's called chatting to the the wife and he's got to do that to prove his affections.

If he doesn't do that she is highly liable to be looking for other lovers.

So you got to think this is happening when a woman is coming to a new stage of fertility.

She's kind of advertising the fact that she's gonna be soon going to be fertile. And if the Hut if hubby doesn't show his attention some other man will so why are they advertising this in front of the whole village? But the issue with the dogon is very kind of rigid patrilineages with very very tight ancestry holding land and for the dogon of Mali the the cliffs in the Niger Valley there up in the hills, and they don't have a lot of farmable land and the pattern lineage is hold it so it's very important for the men of the patrilineage to know that women are having children by members of the patronage.

So this surveillance that's going on is coming from the the kind of the the men's kin group. So it's really showing a case where Women are under significant control and yet they are also flipping that control by kind of exercising their rights to potentially other other lovers and there are many other cases where where the menstrual heart can be seen as a kind of sight where women can invite invite secret lovers in the case of the bashari. It's a sight for organizing elopements and so forth and so it's a very ambivalent sight of women's power or attempted mail control that that may not in fact transpire and is that enough for now, I could go on for ages, but I don't particularly want to that's great.

Thanks very much. Mark has got some stuff on the miski too. I think maybe we ought to ask Mark. Okay, Mark.

Where is Mark are you there Mark? I don't know if he can talk.

Oh Mark doesn't know about it. He didn't California. All right, he hasn't got evidence so that he's just saying about the mosquito. Hello. Yeah, I could talk. Sorry. I've got Theo's got this thing on in the background. So if I can move from there, so I'm yeah convenience is a was an ethnographer who works in lower Central America in the 20s and 30s and actually Fresh Mark. Is it any chance? see if I Yeah, that's better. Yep. I need to yeah, because consumers rights about men's draw hearts amongst formula who's writing in them 1930s, but it doesn't have much to say about it doesn't have anything to say about the reasons for the existence of these Arts. It says that quite often an older woman would come in and help the younger woman with whatever she needed and so on and men were expressly forbidden to enter but beyond that he doesn't really say much and in my own work, I haven't found anything like that. I mean there are amongst the mosquito menstrual taboos that are, similar to those found in many other places of the world, but I'm found anything on menstrual hearts and I haven't seen anything like that reported among ethnographers have been working.

Where with the mosquito since continuous this time? So as I say, I mean there's about it's about two or three paragraphs and not much else. So it's prosperatingly.

Very much there. But yeah, so that's enough. I can't Steve myself any hands up.

This should be absolute Fury from all sorts of people because it's very very controversial thought that the first temples were menstrual hats and I well and there was some nice contributions in the chat and Nicola was talking about her experiences of or not her own but experiences of Tonga people his husband her husband from Zambia being Tonga and do Nicola. Can you say anything about it? And talking about young women.

Going with older women and relatives to very secluded areas during menstruation and that this was very positive experience not separation for reasons of Shame and stigma and so forth. There are still examples of menstrual seclusion happening in in areas of Africa that can be experienced.

Pretty positively. I believe met Mary you want to talk? Right. Thank you so much in in a win Maggie's Booker or woman are free. There was this wonderful Sundown saying and that all custom involving personal inconvenience on the part of the new

mother because in The Bachelor there is giving birth as well. There is menstruation and then there is giving birth.

Then that one woman or one woman only one woman a 30 the right.

To choose not to follow some of the Customs they very quickly fell out of fashion.

So I had really liked that because there is a goddess there is the icon of a goddess in the bachelo. It's a very very sacred place and there is so so many things that can be done and they can't be done and object that can be brought in but not be brought out and there is a lot of things but sometimes the woman decide to just drop something to make it a little bit easier on themselves. So About the comparison with the church. I had never heard of that from the church as we know it where the more inconvenience the better.

It has to be really costly for the the participant that he prove his face. Whereas in the vashi. I mean, they they even smoke Ashish in the vashali the wrestle the chicle each other there is laws of seeing that you don't expect so there is a There is still this difference not being too rigid like in the patriarchal Institution.

I think as a wonderful point, of course the lot the laughter is such a critical feature of women solidarity in whatever you have it wherever you find hunter gatherers where women have their own sacred spaces and their own sacred rituals. It's full of laughter and what you just noticed in all the men's houses is not a lot of laughter and, it's the same as of course behind backed it was one of the the great Genius of all this he just pointed out that all the Bishops and theologians and all this Rich yeah authority to the established church. The one thing they won't do is laugh and so laughing at them and trying to make them laugh is the way to bring them all down so lovely point and of course when you mentioned all that I remember when I remember reading anything like this lovely, but of course I'm also reminded of Jerome's amazing work with and with the benjelly hunt together as the congregation and women have their nagaku their own ritual. They don't exactly have a house without really need one because they take over the whole camp and the men and the minutes of banished for a while, but it's full of raucous and laughter mostly at the expense of not just of men in general but of men's anatomy and sexual prowess and general. It's a it's laughing at the opposite sex, in a In some ways a way that the men find a little bit difficult, but of course the men just have to get over it because they're going to have their ritual. They're, their own men's ritual and sometime in the same month probably so you get this lovely pendulum of Power with each each gender group kind of laughing at the other, in a wonderful way and it's it's the laughter that's so missing in all these patriarchal religions and we got fire. Yeah, and then Harry and then Mark has a question that's in the chat.

Hi everyone. I'm sure you get after the last that's probably no definite answer but I always find it intriguing when we look at Women's power switching.

How it could have happened. I mean they spoke about forgetting and amnesian that they still forget thing of power. But even more than between different groups or tribes. I find it hard to imagine what catechismic moments in society all the way through the

world split families. So strongly or split I just I'm always curious to what you would speculate the origins of those moments would have been.

Do you mean the origins of the patriarchy origins of immense? Yeah, the origins of Oppression of women because it seems so counter to what's good for both sides and the whole Community it's not impressive men versus women, . Yeah, so I mean it's just so so right. I mean I became committed to anthropology largely.

Well partly through Reading Frederick Engels on the early mature local Society, but actually just as much from reading them and bonus Keys the sexual was horrible title the sexual life of savages, but the point I'm making there was that where when women have solidarity and power so much easier for partners, to come and go to leave each other. There's no big loss. If you lose your part, there's always plenty of other partners because and there's so much more sexual enjoyment and so that backs up your point that actually men if men like sex when he's patriotic is the last thing you need because it just makes it very scarce. So but anyway just to kind of answer the point the thing is that I mean committed the expert on how it was that we've even established that some things are sacred namely the body and with menstruation the mark of that but really I'm in my view is this is that in order for women to keep power they had to be in ritually in tune with The clock through which our species and evolve to have a cycle of 29.5 days and that's of course is the moon and not people not many people realize the extent to which the Moon is the is the clock for hunters and gatherers obviously not always and there's another clock the seasonal clock you get summer and winter or rainy season and dry season you get night and day but in terms of hunting and in what's his written a beautiful article on this the Moon is what matters and you need if you're gonna if men are gonna stay out overnight in Africa on a long distance hunt they need light to see at night. And if you go out with a long time in the months the lion to prowling with their within that excellent night vision you're a meal for a lion. So you really have to pulse your Hunting Expeditions particularly in the past when they were collective experience as a Spears and you need to the Past needs to be the Luna pops with drawing around dark moon and going out to hunt at Full Moon and coming back with a meet around full moon and then A honeymoon for everybody and lots and lots of sex as well as feasting until the next new moon. So to answer your question.

When hunting and Gathering was progressively replaced by Horticulture and then farming you you can you can you can go hunting and bring back the meat or within a month. You can't plant the seeds and reap the crop with an amounts you're now.

economically determined by seasonal change and so what happens is Okay, the Sun the solar Rhythm and seasonal Rhythm begins to replace the moon and in fact the moon gets in the way you don't want with if you've got a man with his wife or wives working in the garden. It's actually kind of a bit of a nuisance for the women to be synchronizing her periods in any sense with the moon and, the once women once women are actually providing labor as well as sexual services for the men women sort of going on on strike once a month is actually inconvenient. So there's the quick answer I've

got it's not the full answer and that much in lots of work to be done on it. All is that for women to be really free they need to be able to synchronize their menstrual cycles or at least and organize the presentation of restoration in a way which is in some ways connected with the moon with Administration around dark moon and ovulation and honeymoon around full moon. And once that rhythm is broken.

In favor of of us much slower the ritual calendar as Michael once maybe once a year and Uprising by a women of some sort. That's too long appear a gap and patriarchy Creeps in that long period between between the rituals, whereas a once a month ritual of rebellion, that's that's that's that's that's fine that will that will enhance women's power and that's how we evolve you well within it as well as with the sun on with a connection of rebellion, once a month women's Uprising something like the Goku of the Benji on a once a month basis and losing that was a tragedy Incredible and I hadn't thought of energetic behind lunar and solar power as well and this facing of ritual and the rhythm of that. So wow. Thank you very much. But today we are actually it's very unusual to have life on the planet. And actually that's not even the right way putting it. We are a living planet, even the rocks of, the continental drift. It's all made of either present life or previous life. So we're Sun Moon system and it is remarkable how Sort of so called mainstream science, which is mostly large part of it, which is ideology just leaves out the moon, is let there be light all the idea all the ideas about ancient religion is about Sun worship and Sun Gods including Stonehenge and all those things. It's completely wrong. There's no question that Stonehenge and there's other might make basic monuments marked a transition from a essentially lunar calendar to a solar calendar and therefore transition from gender egalitarianism kind of opinion of power what one of Finnegan calls communism to one sidedly male Monopoly of power and therefore a static form of dominance instead of a pendulum.

Thank you so much. Thanks, Freya and Harry do you want to go and then I'll ask Mark from the zoom? Yeah. Thank you very much everyone. Yeah, very very interesting indeed. And it definitely like I guess there's two things I wanted to say. First of which is that it rings true with like a lot of like melanese like I used to live in and worked in Pap when you're Guinea and done ethnographic work there and I think in in proper New Guinea Melania what you get is a sense of like like the women used to run the world but don't anymore kind of thing and like I was initiated into a kind of one of these so called men's Cults and Papa New Guinea and the imagery around is very much around women's power and it's around the idea that woman used to run the world all the things that you're told is yeah. Yeah. This is how we've taken it back now and all of that kind of stuff which is really interesting. So it's fast thanks to see how that's transition. I can very well believe the kind of Culture like that of happening any which is definitely patriarchal and it's based on on gardening more so than hunting and Gathering has sort of evolved from something more more primordial in Africa. The other point I wanted to make is I'm interested in because like my mom is a midwife and is very strongly feminist and she's interested in the kind of work. I do with anthropology, but she's she's often wants to know about like Midwifery and I'm

interested to know because my mom being a midwife has experienced a lot of kind of like aggression by doctors and that kind of thing and talks a lot about the replacement of women caring for other women in terms of childbirth and menstruation that kind of thing. So I'm kind of interested to know and some of the origins of Midwifery and how that's been taking away, I guess because presumably it was I like this I would imagine and my mom definitely likes to think that we're free has Origins and more sort of organic and feminist things. And so yeah, that's kind of what to ask friendly.

You're gonna speak and test that that's amazing Harry. That's fantastic. It should we should be in touch to hear more about all that and the question on on Midwifery sadly Ingrid who really has background knowledge for the bayaka on it Midwifery is not here. I don't believe Ingrid's here. Is she and which that's sad and the There's if we consider an evolutionary perspective. There's little doubts that Midwifery would have been very important in human childhood childbirth for most of the last phase of evolution of homo sapiens is just because of very large brand children, very large Brain difference infants. It would have been a very critical importance and probably even earlier in genus homo. There may have been some aspect of Midwifery. It's probably got some evolutionary time depth I would say and but then there really needs to be a lot more.

Close study of home of hunter-gatherer cultures of Midwifery, but often these menstrual hearts or houses women's houses that Chris has talked about are very much centers of childbirths where women will be looking after women. So it is is kind of reproduction not just menstruation and childbirth included.

But in my book blood donations, I described what happens in Northeast Sunderland where women it was this the possibly the most well-known missing all anthropologies the story the two where would like sisters and the story is that the two women massage each other as each gave birth, but in the local culture the the men who just quite a large extent.

I think fairly recently in some cases men gained a monopoly of ritual power their intensely jealous of the fact that women give birth in each other's presence and they're sort of I quote these very same examples of of the the male idea is a woman and it just or other any other female relative and she should give us she should come back without making any exception and get on with whatever she was doing. There must be no ceremony. No solidarity no ritual now, I mean in my view, that's no way but it was that a reality but it's no no question that men did feel kind of Envy of this son of that food childbirth, and that's that's exactly the point which has been made in that article in the J Rai that's done a journal of the Royal Hospital Institute by Andrew lattice. He was saying that And the thing which men most envy and fear is not just women's prerogative power the fact that they do menstruate and give birth. But but two facts one that they do that they do it or can do it or what want to do it collectively with each incentive actually with each other and also that the first illusion's were created by women and it's a little bit of a story there. But the idea is that these these tamarans which are kind of Illusions are women's tricks against men so men don't quite know

whether women really are menstruating or not menstruating there's all kinds of secrets between keep and the performances they stage for men's benefit are kind of trickery. So when men in organized their own trickery there and tricks of deception against the women they say well, we're just giving the women a bit of their own medicine but women with The Originators of collective deception, which is You know ritual and it's Associated mythology, but it's all around women's.

empowerment through and giving birth and menstruating Yeah, that's really interesting. Thank you for that. It's definitely yeah, like what you see in Papua New Guinea in men's houses the idea of like ritual bloodletting but associated with this is like male solidarity and that kind of thing that you can so clearly see how that is appropriated by more. Yeah pretty like yeah like more like historical things associated with women's houses. Thank you for that. Let me just let me show you one more thing follows there because of course this the stories are what what the men that say they say in the men's houses and in Northeast tournament in many other places around the world where where men have a monopoly of ritual power what they say is we still these things from women and mainstream answer biologists almost University.

They just say well this is interesting. It's a myth. Maybe there's a certain sort of tendency for humans to think the past is the opposite of the future. So if men are really now the kind of some sort of cognitive and propensity to say women must have ruled in the future what I'm saying.

It when men say we stole these things from women, they know what they're talking about because they are still doing it because what when what men do is they actually menstruate in their men's houses and they actually give birth in their men's houses. And the sense that they they cut themselves they cut the arm in some cases they cut the penis of course and the sub incision and huge areas of Australia. I mean many parts. I'm not prepping New Guinea and massive amount of nose blood has to spilled getting male menstruation. So then so the men menstruate and that while at the same time saying women, they menstruate collectively with a lot of ceremonial while saying women should never dream of doing this something terrible will happen. It gets swallowed by some monsters some snake or something if women were to menstruate in some of that actually and not only do the main street. They give birth because what this the short version of the only stories is it all women do is they give birth to flesh? Well, that's all that is it you can have spirit and that means men are going to get this flesh for the women when the Super 8 reach the age of 9 or 12 whatever age it is and then they got to go through rebirth. So that a proper man has been twice born. Once the flesh from a woman. That's a woman can manage it's pretty fresh but actual Spirit, he needs these male intervention and then you think of Christianity and all those things about baptism and all the rest of it. You just see it's the same story. So what I'm saying when I say these stories are true they're not really about prehistory. They don't have a concert to prehistory what this what they're saying is we stole these tricks from women. They know what they're doing. And the reason they

know what they're doing is because it's in the present they are still doing it. They are menstruating and giving birth when men give birth and that's right.

You know, it's a trick.

It's very interesting. Thank you and go to the I'm going to the zoom chat now, but Mark putsato, can you speak or do you want me to read the question? I don't read it and yes, I'll speak. Thank you.

Because I've been thinking about the question some more through this discussion and maybe some of the details I put in my question help to focus the answer, but I'm I myself am researching European churches in Chinese temples through a performance studies and anthropological view.

So be very interested in what connections you're drawing to the historical developments.

across various cultures, especially European and East Asian where offerings to the gods or to God Are the primary focus? in the religious building often in an exclusive area so I can see the connection to You know separating women or men? in that sense, but it seems to be there was somehow a shift.

from the focus that explaining with menstruation and childbirth to Getting on the good side of ancestors and gods.

in relation to hunting weather natural disasters other threats so I understand your argument, but I'd like a little more on the connections to how men not only stole or tried to steal women's power through other rituals in spaces. But also we're dealing with other kinds of threats and goals Which is very briefly. I mean We mustn't forget that hunter gatherers when they when they go hunting and killing animals. They're not doing it. The men on the men themselves on aren't doing it simply to eat the meat because most often they don't they can't eat the meat so a man hunts and kills an animal the blood flows and that blood makes that meet that raw flesh and sacred in the same way that his sister's menstrual blood makes her fresh sacred.

So the man the men have to keep bring the meat the bloody meat the raw meat back to the women to the campfire who then cook it and thereby remove the blood rendering that meat and edible. So what I'm saying is that it's absolutely right. You're quite right in those and patriarchal temples. The majority is one of sacrifice animal sacrifice and a question about it. But all I want to do just make sure we remember the hunter gatherers had already invented the concept of sacrifice in the sense that, you you're killing an animal and you're offering it up.

Is who does who demand to whom do the men offer up that animal? Well, actually it's called bright service. So when hunter-gatherers kill an animal they offer it up to the suit to the superior powers and Superior powers of the mother in law. and the man the man's, the Man's partner because, he can't he can't just have sex when he feels like and he's gonna make he's gonna earn it and you make you're gonna make yourself desirable by proving yourself. Not just a good Hunter technically but a generous Hunter who knows, what to do and so offering up the offering up the raw flesh to the gods takes the form of offering up the Royal fresh to your mother-in-law and her daughter who you

want to have sex with and if you don't want that service, you're not gonna get any sex. Of course, you've asked about deeper question about what goes on to the temples and I don't think we've got time but as long as we slowly constantly remember that hunter gatherers got everywhere first and none of those concepts are religion were invented by Patriarchs. I would say patriarchy admitted nothing. All he did was distort everything.

You could say something about Jeep in respect to Christianity Chris Jesus Christ as the sacrifice ending all sacrifices and the ultimate menstrual man. Yes. Okay. Thank you. Okay. So the reason why again this needs to be written up and I never got around to doing it. So I'm saying it now that somebody just a proper researcher.

They please the reason why Christianity took off.

was because the the Jewish tradition of having to every time you killed an animal every time we killed a goat or, whatever other animal it was you had to take it to the temple.

That was quite a burden quite a costly burden. So you could you couldn't just have your animal and then kill it and eat it you had to take it to the to the temple.

Um and obviously a huge inconvenience and of course the temple the priests obviously had that cut and it's hugely expensive and it's, okay it worked for it worked for a very long time, but the wonderful thing about Jesus and by the way, I must really stress this.

I think Jesus was a revolutionary. I think he was a Freedom Fighter fighting for Jewish Liberation against Roman occupation. So but nothing against Jesus, but what's in Paul manager do was to transform this real revolutionary hero of the Jews into a Mythic figure and the critical thing that Paul did was to make him into the sacrifice to end all sacrifices. So what Paul says quite nity says what use for those ancient sacrifices what you said those sacrifices used to perform after all they had to keep doing them again and again and again every month every year every kind of so hardship it it's a sacrifice at work. They wouldn't have to do it again. Why not have a sacrifice which works for all time. Jesus is the Lamb of God.

He's the sacramental lamb the sacrifice to end all sacrifices and the brilliant thing about that is it made religion a lot cheaper it didn't it didn't interfere with economics about she could just go to church once a Sunday and then you're sort of participating this one and only sacrifice and it just it just let people off the hook from his rather costly business of having to make a sacrifice of every animal you'd you read in your in, so what I'm saying, it's the history religion one way of looking at it is it's an endless reduction of costs religion gets cheaper and cheaper and cheaper and cheaper. So compare with say cassanoism protestantism is already cheap. You don't have them monasteries. You don't have the charity. You don't have all the fast days, protestantly just got to believe you've got to believe in the blood of Jesus and that's it and then you get today's religion with the church of England. I don't know what what cost is enrolled in me. Remember the Church of England. You just go there. That's what's maybe once On daily weather right close. I mean it's just it's so capitalism. It's completely rampant because any kind of opposition to it from any kind of ancient form of solidarity in sort

of sharing and communism and stuff. It's just been whittled away Whittle the way Whittle the way Whittle the way into the kind of religion which leaves, leaves nothing and people are free to, be a selfish as they like really and that's that's the way that's the basic principle of the world. Whereas obviously the ancient religions are all about making sure that people weren't too selfish and made offerings of their wealth.

Thanks and Edward do you want to go? Yeah, I was just thinking of another example that you've written about which shows this show this male appropriation of women's power, which is of course the the Sundance in the planes Indians and they're great lodge there which which is I mean the and now you cross you've got the the myth you've you've got the you've got the actual space itself and you've got the You got the the victuals that are taking place there. And of course the great lodge is is so full of of all this kind of menstrual kind of symbolism and associations with the kind of wet plants, which they they bring in the kind of some swampy areas and they kind of the associations with serpents and there's there's menstrual sex at which I think is taking place there as well. And then of course there's the Sundance and you can really see how all this has been kind of taken over by the men. Sorry, not the front side the the sun disc and where they've kind of taken over the kind of male cyclicity female difficulty and turned it into a kind of a cosmic Universal a kind of solar PV defertity So, I don't know if you I mean if you want to talk more about that. Um It's just quite interesting and I always think like like trying to imagine what happened at Stonehenge. I when you read about the Sundance it almost like you're almost feel like you're gonna stepping into kind of like a Neolithic kind of world almost just don't hand your name's and of course silbury remembering Lionel's last talked to rank.

Before he died when he talked just like you're saying and it would about the marshes in the grass and stuff at the base of Silver Hill and so very interested. They thought they'd found and a gold and silver and all they found was sort of March Marcy plants at the very base of Silver Hill and then they found this little Lake of red. Okay, the whole hill was was based on so I yes, I agree. I mean a lot the same but of course quite a bit of it, but thank goodness. So there's no question that both the Sundance and Stone Age where Mark is a transition from moon to Sun from women's power to men's power.

Nothing else makes it slightest bit of sense and yet you go to the British Museum today and look at the Stonehenge exhibition and it's all about the Sun. And as far as I know. I haven't been here other people just don't The mood is dimension. You must it's like it's it's like literally used to say that the N word don't mention menstruation. Don't mention the moon. You know, it's costing its religious religion is patriotic religion is infected our universities, especially this country. They're all once theological colleges not so long ago actually and one must not say certain things and those quite a few of them begin with the letter m so in Hey guys, it's just gonna sort of add a bit more to the to the variability Within.

A girl's first menstruation rituals in amongst African hunter-gatherers. Yeah when Chris mentioned the Bushman And what the the monocular rituals most famous for of course is Elan bulldance, which is this great celebration.

of a women's Collective if you like, but what you've this you wasn't lose sight of the fact that the monocular girl herself doesn't participate in that dance. She is actually undergoing quite.

This I wouldn't call it a traumatic experience, but she's not having an easy time of it. She's secluded in that heart her.

Food and her water are very limited and for quite a long time.

I mean she has this.

Incredible Supernatural potency is if she was to look at a man, she could turn him into a star or a tree or a rock or so on but of course, she mustn't she mustn't do that. She's got to stay with facing the wall in seclusion. She can't participate in the dance. She is alone all that time on a very narrow diet. It's only when she comes out.

that that Her that she herself is.

A celebrant in a sense but where she's giving blessings to the whole community.

So there's quite a lot of, it's not all like turnbulls description of the elima and yet they are nevertheless just as gender egalitarian so in a sense and which does it's not a problem for our model because I mean the point about Initiations is that the initiators is paying a cost to become part of a coalition. Yeah, but that mustn't be lost sight of Yeah, there's an interesting point which the David Graber makes in his book on Kings.

Which is that nobody's more powerful than the king and yet no one is more limited in their limited to make any kind of move then guess who the king.

I mean the king the Divine King is Just divinely potent.

But but absolutely restricted in the kinds of things it is permitted to do but precisely for the same reasons and of course that brings to mind and Sir James Fraser's point, which is that all the the rules and prohibitions which prevent the Divine King and was it the Mercado Japan.

I mean I got it in front of me. I won't go into it. The zipper text that the queen of Tahiti in Kings are to Zuma whatever they must let the sunshine on their head or their feet touch the ground and those are exactly the prohibitions of the girl in her first menstruation. And of course, yes, and it's quite right. I mean see that that girl who's become the Elan bull And she's reversed her gender. She's masculine. She's reversed the species. She's an animal namely the bull.

She certainly not available for sex. She's menstruating and all the characteristics of a Divine King apply to her and so the Elan bull is really the Divine King is the horned God. It's, it's it's so all that is Absolutely necessary to remember and of course. Yes again.

In there's no there's no cheap way of signaling your commitment to Coalition. You have to pay some costs.

Which I suppose makes makes the Turnbull ethnography is slightly positively sick. The girls need to be having a whale of a time not quite sure what the cost that they're

paying but it's fairly clear that the cost the boys are paying is fairly substantial I mean is okay they do have sex. But yeah, it's quite they get quite a drabbing as they're having sex and I don't know it's seems a bit. I mean terrible said it's a bit frightening.

He was chased by the girls of the and he said he ran for his life and the boys have to be the boys do run and they don't want to be Better chat with one of these whips because if they do they've just got to enter the elima and then they jumped on sexually jumped on as far as I can work out.

Right seven or eight women so they're paying across I suppose the mystery is what costs exactly to the girls play. I'm not quite sure.

well see the female cosmetic Coalition the issue for the non menstrating women is to make sure that the men any menstrating is under their control not men's control.

So that it exactly what Ian's describing in respect of the lamble dance that a girl who's menstruating and four Sun. It'll be very rare for more than one girl to be menstruating at once it might happen but it's it's a red thing. So so that would be a pretty normal response for making sure that the girl is undercover. Everybody knows she's there but she's being protected she's being walled off from any, attempted male approach in respect to the booty. Those girls are the Alima are inside.

Elima heart for quite a long time doing the singing that they're creating a a real community of the music before they come rushing out at the boys. And even when that's happening with the boys as you say the boys have to go through that. The girls are under protection of moms aunties. The reason the boys get the dropping is that they're being inspected by all the older women who are checking out what's, who they are and what they're doing and so it's about this kind of dynamic of of intergenerational control of the young.

Coming up to fertile. Newly fertile women.

So that's a strong moral Dynamic that's going on which FCC predicts? Yeah, and then you've got the heads of situation where there's a sort of rather.

Rather short peremptory initial menstrual seclusion for a girl by herself, but then the girls get joined in a cohort where they do go through some really costly ritual but then get let loose on the boys to fight it out very similar to the elima.

so we have got variabilities the insects, but all of it's kind of Within the remit of the of FCC I would I would definitely I just suggest committee you do explain to everybody what FCC means and even said female cosmetic coalitions. I never never well, I mean, well, I was gonna ask Fred. I don't know if we meant to do I mean most people here know if there's people who don't you can look it up on Wikipedia and find out most people here know because they've heard of it before. Yeah.

Okay. There's a very good explanation.

I'll type into the chat for Wiki if you don't know female cosmetic coalitions, but I was going to ask Freya to ask question now.

Yeah, thank you everyone. And so to me, there's two areas Ventures one night perhaps on earlier which is some historically how to be happen. But the other one is how did it happen differently through different cultures once it started to happen, so

There's this promise which I agree with that Hunter gathers sides were much more equal and yet we see.

Vastly different levels of Oppression of women across the globe at the moment. um in different cultures and Almost some of the ones that I suspect.

I mean like say Islam came in later and check overseas and some of the practices we even more harsh on women things like female first decision, which I know isn't in all countries that is in several Arabic countries didn't as far as I know happen under in Judaism or in Christianity and I guess I'm wondering given that in many cases unlikely that I hope you preserve those come together. We have that we're going to go back to the hunt together.

So at least anytime soon. What is the most realistic modern day way back into some kind of Harmony a more egalitarian sort of energetic balanced men and women and Associated question.

I know they're both quite large questions and could probably be the longer debate why you think that it played out so differently and different places throughout history and even today A is in some cases? I mean quite horrific.

in terms of women questions You're not answer that or shall I say I suppose I mean committed female cosmetic coalitions pretty much says there was one way of getting to symbolic culture.

Um One Way really it needed wherever a woman starts a menstruate and thereby signal that she's available to be impregnated obviously imminently fertile. Not not available. I mean, yeah imminent so she's bleeding signaling. She's imminently fertile. All the other indications of fertility being phased out of ovulation has become concealed and so it's very important for The Other Women to grab hold of her to prevent all the male interest being in in her so exactly what the kind of things we've just been talking about happened so that the short answer I think is there's one way of getting to symbolic culture in that form and then countless different ways of sort of undermining it according to local environmental conditions, whether you could with, just whether it's on a mountain slope and a valley with whether you can I mean great when you're quite good on all that actually the countless different ways of preserving some of that gender equality under some conditions and then losing all of it and a different ones.

So that's not a very satisfactory answer. It's just like saying there's one way of getting it all to work and a countless different ways of Smashing it all up.

Push Pull Dynamic of male attempts to control female fertility female attempts to resist that control that's going on all the background all the time and we've menstruation because menstruation is a dead giveaway Against The evolutionary background of our bodies for imminent fertility. There are basically two things to do.

Either you hide menstruation or you advertise it? And we can see almost every culture chooses one of those things and I'm talking here about real women's menstruation rather than the fake menstruation and so either you can just hide it pretend it's not there or advertise it join into big groups advertising it and almost every culture makes a decision about that and part of the determinants of the decision or the

types of the forms of marriage that that are engaged in by and the forms of kind of marital exchange and you economic exchange that are happening between men and women which are extremely variable all around the world depending on economics and subsistence and So take Christianity.

Christianity's form of marriage it's ideology is till death. Do you part your net you you're supposed to one man one woman monogamy forever. Yeah in that circumstance in the circumstances of Christianity with monogamy.

No other man, except the husband should know that a woman's menstruating. So you get this ideology of the Scarlet woman.

She's a Scarlet woman because she's showing other men.

She's menstruating. We should never happen with Christianity because of the way Christianity's Freight's ideology we can argue about what are the economic the causes the economic causes Christian Chris talked about about doing away with animal sacrifice and so forth about why that arose but in those circumstances and monogamous marriage, what do we expect about menstruation? It's completely suppressed.

Our model predicts exactly what we see with Christianity a woman can't even mention it.

She can't talk about it. Let alone show it. Okay, that's that's what we expect amongst hunter-gatherers.

It's a very different scenario because or amongst the dog on who I was talking about in Mali is very different scenario because it's quite possible when a woman comes back to menstruating again.

She's gonna change her husband. She's kind of using her menstruation to advertise the fact that she's now ready to get pregnant again to pick and choose the men. She's got a big value huge value and she is the one who's actually got freedom to to choose potentially, but of course in very patriarchal cultures the men want to control that Kinsman want to control it or or religious officials want to control it in all kinds of ways. So I'd say you've just got to apply that kind of lens to the very very circumstances that there are To get some idea but it's a huge project.

I look forward to talking to you about that another time Miller. And so that be a fascinating one. Yeah, they're just chip in the little comment there.

Which is like what Chris was originally arguing. I think it's still a quite good argument, which was that.

the material basis of women's solidarity economically was a monthly big get Collective big game hunt and that depended on the abundance of big game.

Yeah, but as we moved out of Africa by which time we were already highly efficient. Big game hunters and we moved into consonants.

Some of which had no previous hominin occupation like Australia and the Americas we wiped out the big game pretty rapidly and but it also happened in Eurasia as well and it happened at least in Africa.

Because they had been that the animals had been co-evolving with hominins all that time over several million years and what happens in those circumstances is that

you have to hunt throughout the month hunt smaller game rely more on women's Gathering and any and is in all that diversity that it becomes possible for men to take women as more permanent sexual and economic partners for the marriage side of the equation to start winning out over the kinship solidarity. That was originally Metro local and matrilineal.

It's quite a simple story, but I think it's quite useful to hold on to when we start thinking about how it broke down.

The Ted K Archive

Chris Knight  
The history of the menstrual hut (Seminar)  
June 7, 2022

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