

The science of mythology (Seminar)

The Sleeping Beauty' and other tales

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Chris Knight will run this famous RAG workshop: The French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss was the first to discover that the world's magical myths and fairy tales all express the same underlying logic. Across all six continents, they are ultimately a single anonymous voice, 'One Myth Only', or so many variations on a theme. Rather as astronomers can still detect an echo of the Big Bang with which the universe began, so by listening to these myths we can detect an echo of the momentous events in which human language and culture were born. When Levi-Strauss' insights are applied to a familiar fairy story from the Brothers Grimm, the picture which emerges is breathtaking.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25uoqx8hdX8>

Introduction

Camilla: Come along to this crack in time and the entry point to the other world and the land of the dead. Exactly. 15 years ago, radical anthropology was being very, very naughty. and we brought, we danced on the grave of capitalism and brought Canary Wharf to a halt with a bunch of pumpkins, a samba band and four horsemen of the apocalypse under a new moon it should be said.

So that was in honor of, well, it was, it was the inaugural, performance or debut of the government of the dead. Now we weren't members of the government because you have to be dead to be a member of the government. We were agents, but what the slogan was that went with our 'political actions' was the only good government is a dead government.

And it has to be said that in the 15 years since then, we have not changed our minds.

The quandary this week about inviting people to put on Halloween costumes and coming to hear fairytales whilst in the out in the outside world we are witnessing such horrors and appalling situations. And whatever date we focus on, whether it's a particular date of the crimes being perpetrated or the entire picture of the ultra fuck up of patriarchy, which has been occurring and destroying this planet and our futures. How, how is it that it's right to be celebrating like Halloween, and enjoying ourselves or listening to fairy stories? And what, why is it worth doing that? What, what, what good does it do?

But Halloween or Soane to give us older name? it really is the most, the oldest, indigenous, the oldest documented, still existing rituals of respect for the dead in these islands. It, it has that indigenous tradition going back thousands of years into

the neolithic. There will be neolithic tombs and barrows, which, which have swaying cylindrical alignments.

On this November date or October, November date, that points to cattle people who owned cattle, but moved the cattle from the uplands to come back down for the winter and of course, livestock being slaughtered would be that, particularly the, the marking point of, of Halloween. So these were cattle peoples, they weren't necessarily very egalitarian. They could have been, fairly patriarchal peoples. but these are very old traditions indeed in Celtic and European, but the fairytales are really the true survivors of patriarchy.

They've come through from before war, before patriarchy. They've had to dive down underground to become children's stories or old wives tales, to hide under the cover, the cover of patriarchy to keep, keep under the radar, because they have powerful anti patriarchal messages.

So we feel that it's very much justified to lock into these traditions, which are respect of the dead, and which are taking us back to a world, to the pictures of a world before patriarchy, before warfare in many senses. and also to say to that, that whereas, and Halloween may be pointing to like cattle and farming culture, the fairytales that Chris is gonna, give us a flavor of tonight, really, they go back deeper time. I would argue they're poly lithic, provenance or Mesolithic provenance. They go back into a time of hunting people.

How do we know this? Because the stories are talking about great forests, woods where Huntsmen, Rome, yes, there's kings and queens and princesses and princes, but notice that the princes are always coming to where the girl is and the line, the royal lineage is the mother, the queen to the daughter.

The men move. This is matrilineal. It's local.

That is the opposite of what a farming or cattle people would be.

So I think we can make these claims about just how old fairytales may represent some of the indigenous remnants of the cultures of old Europe and possibly old Eurasia, generally speaking.

So let me hand over for Chris, who's, who's been doing this work with fairytales, with rag for 40 and more years.

Sleeping Beauty

Chris Knight: Okay. this is from the complete Grimms fairytales, little Briar Rose, otherwise known of course as, the sleeping Beauty. A long time ago, there were a king and queen who said every day, ah, ah, if only we had a child, but they never had one.

But it happened that once when the queen was bathing a frog crypt outta the water, onto the land, and said to her, your wish shall be fulfilled before a year has gone by.

You shall have a daughter.

What the frog had said came true, and the queen had a little girl who was so pretty that the king could not contain himself a joy and ordered a great feast, invited not only as kindred friends and acquaintances, but also the wise women in order that they might be kind and well disposed towards the child.

There were 13 of them in the kingdom, but as he had only 12 golden plates for them to eat out of, one of them had to be left at home.

The feast was held with all manner of splendor. And when it came to an end, the wise women bestowed their magic gifts upon the baby.

One gave virtue another beauty, a third riches, and so on, with everything in the world that one can wish for.

When 11 of them had made their promises, suddenly the 13th came in.

She wished to avenge herself for not having been invited and without greeting or even looking at anyone, she cried with a loud voice.

The king's daughter shall in her 15th year, prick herself with a spindle and fall down dead and without saying a word more, she turned around and left the room.

They were all shocked.

But the 12th wise woman whose good wish still remained unspoken, came forward and as she could not undo the evil sentence, but only soften it, she said, it shall not be death.

But a deep sleep of a hundred years into which the princess shall fall, the king who would faint keep his dear child from the misfortune, gave orders that every spindle in the whole kingdom should be burnt. Meanwhile, the gifts of the wise women were plentifully fulfilled on the young girl.

cause she was so beautiful, modest, good natured and wise, that everyone who saw her was bound to love her.

It happened that on the very day when she was 15 years old, the king and queen were not at home, and the maiden was left in the palace.

Quite alone, though. She went round into all sorts of places, looked into rooms and bed chambers just as she liked and it last came to an old tower.

She climbed up the narrow winding staircase and reached a little door.

The key was in the lock, ran open, and there in a little room said an old woman, just busy spinning a flax.

Good day old mother, said, the king's daughter, what are you doing there? I'm spinning, said the old woman, and nodded her head, what sort of thing is that that rattled around? So madly said the girl and she took the spindle and wanted to spin two, but scarcely had she touched the spindle when the magic decree was fulfilled and she pranked, finger on it and in the very moment when she felt the prick, she felt down upon the bed, she fell down upon the bed that stood there and lay in a deep sleep and this sleep extended over the whole palace.

The king and queen who had just come home and had entered the great Hall, began to go to sleep on the whole of the court with them.

The horses too went to sleep in the stable, the dogs in the yard, the pigeons on the roof, the flies on the wall.

Even the fire that was flaming on the hearth became quiet and slept.

The roast meat left off frizzling and the cook, who was just going to pull the hair of the scullery boy because he had forgotten something, let him go. And he too went to sleep and the wind fell, and on the trees before the castle, not a leaf moved again, but round about the castle that began to grow a hedge of thorns, which every year became higher and at last grew close up round the castle and all over it.

So there was nothing of it to be seen.

Not even the flag upon the roof, but the story of the beautiful sleeping princess. So the princess was named, went about the country, so that from time to time, king's sons came and tried to get through the thorny hedge into the castle.

But they found it impossible for the thorns held fast together as if they had hands, and the youth who caught in them could not get loose again and died a miserable death. After long, long years, a king's son came again to that country and heard an old man talking about the thorn hedge, that a castle was set to stand behind it, in which a wonderfully beautiful princess named Briar Rose had been asleep for a hundred years. And that the king and queen and the whole court were asleep.

Likewise, he had heard two from his grandfather that many king's sons had already come and had tried to get through the thorny hedge, but it remains sticking fast in it and had died a pitiful death.

Then the youth said, I'm not afraid I will go and see the beautiful princess.

The good old man might dissuade him as he would, he did not listen to his words.

But by this time, the hundred years had just passed, and the day had come in which the princess was to awake again.

When the King's son came to the Thorn Hedge, it was nothing but large and beautiful flowers, which parted from each other of their own accord and let him pass unhurt and then they closed the gate behind him like a hedge and the castle yard.

He saw the horses and the spotted hounds lying asleep on the roof, set the pigeons with their heads under their wings and when he entered the house, the flies were asleep upon the wall.

The cook in the kitchen was still holding out his hand to seize the boy, and the maid was sitting by the black hen, which he was just going to pluck.

He went on farther in the great Hall, he saw whole, the whole of the court lying asleep and up by the throne, lay the king and queen.

Then he went on still further and all was so quiet that a breath could be heard and at last, he came to the tower and opened the door into the little room where the princess was sleeping. There, as she lay so beautiful that he could not turn his eyes away, and he stooped down and gave her a kiss.

But as soon as he kissed her the princess opened her eyes awoke and looked at him quite sweetly.

Then they went down together and the king awoke and the queen and the whole court, and looked at each other in great astonishment and the horses in the court just stood up and shook themselves.

The hounds jumped up and wag their tails.

The pigeons up on the roof pulled out their heads from under their wings, looked around and flew into the open country. The flies on the wall crept again, and the fire in the kitchen burned up and flickered and cooked the meat.

The joint began to turn and sizzle again and the cook gave the boys such a box of the ear that he screamed, and the maid finished plucking the fowl and then the married of the king's son with bra rose was celebrated with all Splenda, and they lived contented to the end of their days.

So, I remember when I was at university, kind of interested in all sorts of things I shouldn't have been interested in, kind of getting a sense that some over the, over the channel, there was this amazing anthropologist. I wasn't doing anthropology, I was doing completely sub. But this anthropologist, who's all of his work was in French at that time, had, managed something absolutely astonishing. He'd, he'd shown how to apply science kind, real science, like, like Einstein to not just like physics, chemistry, molecules, biology, all those stuff, but to music, art, culture, thought, everything that makes us human, it it managed to show that everything kind of fitted together.

That there was a logic, an underlying logic to all the things we do. When, of course, we'd all assume that, okay, in culture you can sort of do anything, whatever you feel like, whatever become a tradition, there was no reason why everything should be sort of should hang together. And, I'll cut a long story short, of course, to prove his point. some years later in the seventies, maybe first decided to stop his previous studies of, kinship, for example, or, or ritual and focus on mythology and he did that because his argument was that in this, and anything can happen, you can define gravity, you can die and come alive again, there's none of the normal constraints of physics, apply mythology and so he said, well, if even here, even in the realm of myths and fairytales, you can still discern scientific constraints like laws which have to be obeyed even by storytellers who feel themselves to be free to make up any tone if even they actually as it has in, in practice, they conform to patterns which are scientific, which are scientists can gonna take. That, that proves there's something about the architecture of the human mind, the responsible for myths, rituals, kinship systems for all the different products of culture.

There's something about the human mind, which these cultural products, including myths kind of point to, we can, we can discover kind of what it means to be human, but particularly what it means to have a, a human mind by studying, even studying myths, let alone all the various other things. Of course, that social anthropologist, study.

So he wrote four massive volumes called mythology, an Introduction to the Science of Mythology. And, when I was here at UCLI wrote a PhD, which was a kind of re-

analysis of Claude Le Bit. I won't really go into that. We've gotta get to the, the story at the moment.

but, what Le said, the last chapter of the final volume of Viji, have we got any room for people? There are a few people, there is some room actually, and there's chairs.

You're not very good at timing all of you people, but on the other hand is Halloween. And as Kim said, it is a cracking time.

So, actually what, so the final chapter of David is called One Myth Only. And in that, final chapter, it makes its astonishing claim that all the world's magical myth, andary tales are variations of the sea.

The seam remains the same, the seam is as old as the hills, actually as old as homo sapiens, as old as going right back to the time when we first became humans speaking language with, with the kind of minds that all of us humans have.

So we have one myth, and this myth is like a, a kind of super myth, like a web of mythology embracing the entire planet, almost as if all of us around the entire planet kind of know the story.

It is, of course, he says the underlying logic of the myth, is constant. And I think the way to perceive that is to think in terms of, life on earth, all the different, forms of life on earth.

All the whales and the dolphins and the fruit flies that the human to the all, all emerge out of a certain structure, which is diy, right? Rope, nuclear acid, DNA.

So we have CGTA the basic component of the, of the genetic code and they can be arranged in different ways and because the code remains the same, because that genetic code as old as life on earth, it's that, it's that which enables that diversity. So lemme say, it's not saying all the myth of the same is saying the underlying syntax or the underlying kind of formal code of the world's mythology is the same and I'm gonna have to again cut it all a bit short. You might say, well, what is this? What is the, what is the, the basic myths, from which all the others derive, what's this, what's underlying constant pattern, which is inva? And I'm sort of putting it in my own way, but I think it's, I think it's fair.

It is what research says. It, it runs like this.

We're alive. you can see people, we can see each other. things are happening. People are working, cooking food, having sex, looking after kids, doing all sorts of everyday activities. So that's life and then there's the flow of blood and it figures a, a transition into the land of the dead.

So we've moved from life into death, and there's nothing magic about that. It's just, we were alive and now we're dead. And then comes the magic bit, we come back from the dead.

All the world's magical myths are versions of that story of deaths followed magically. I mean, there's no magic trick, more extraordinary that the die and then kava again, all the world's magical myths are just various different ways of telling that truth, that after death, this new life.

so sort of bear that in mind with this.

I, this, this works best as a kind of workshop rather than just me talking and talking and talking. So if I could ask a question, I mean, how many of you sort of knew the story already? Yeah. Oh, that's very, very, very, very, very good. Okay. That's fantastic.

Quite often I'll find that people sort of weren't red fairytales when they were little kids, but that's very, very intelligent. Okay? Right. Of all the different motifs in the story, supposing you're sort of forgetting some of them and not quite sure all the details. What's the image? Levi Church would say, the motif in the story, which sticks in your mind most prominently? there are various alternatives, but perhaps you can just come up with a few when she falls asleep. Okay.

Anymore when she works, when she wakes up, right. Okay. When she pulls asleep, what's the picture you have? What makes her fall asleep? And what's the picture if that's the one you've chosen? This girl, what age is she? 1415, I think it's her 15th birthday.

She picks her finger. Okay and calls down dead of Ernie for a period.

Quite a long period, but she calls down for a period.

Well, one of the things we have to realize, and this is really what Levi show told us more than anything else, respect the stories.

They know what they're talking about at first sight. They seem to be absurdity, part upon absurdity. But be careful.

These stories are crystallized. Collective wisdom.

I would actually say kind of science, collective knowledge.

And, when we speak in, in language all the time, this is a kind of, sort of relatively recent realization.

We are using metaphor. Now.

A metaphor is a false statement. It's no, no.

Metaphor is literally true. It's always wrong. It's false, right? It's cliché.

and Rome and Juliet, Juliet is the son now, she's a woman. She's got two legs. She's a human being.

That's the son up there.

Fu Can you mute please? Can everyone mute? Yeah. Alright.

I I wanted them to unmute so that they could join the talk. Okay? So all of language is built outta metaphor and every metaphor is a, is a falsehood. It's, it can't be true, but they're helpful for there. They fictions, if you like, false statements from which we can guess an intended meaning.

So when we hit a metaphor, we don't just reject it as wrong, that's not true.

We think, well, what can they mean? And of course, in, in Roman Juliet, I thinking about this now Romero, Rome is probably referring to with, her radiance, which is the sun is radiant. So in any fairy tale, all the things which just can't possibly be true, you've gotta think about it and realize that there are ways of saying something which can't be said. just boldly, just literally. so let's take, we've got two candidates for the sort of central motif of the story. One is, little bra rose comes of age, she's 15 and she

pricks her finger, and bleeds presumably, and falls down dead and the other is that she wakes up with a very, very deep sleep.

I have a feeling that the waking up from the deep sleep, waking up, being kissed on the lips by this lovely, prince, and then waking up happy, alive, getting married, not sure that's all that difficult to interpret. It's, it's not cryptic, is it? It's she except obviously, old wise woman. Spinning, spinning, spinning. okay.

It means something absolutely central to what it means to be human. What could it be? A girl comes of age and pricks something, these's the stories for children and it's a story for children, of course. Or I mean, it isn't old wires tale, which are not not designed to be children. They're part of part of both wisdom. Why don't you be, why don't wanna we just be brave.

Just, just be brave. What can it mean? The girl is 15, that she pricks her finger. You start to believe, okay, is there any other possibility? I mean, yes. I mean, I, it's important to explore just in case somebody thinks it's a bit farfetched.

I mean, does, I mean maybe it's a bit farfetched.

Surely it can't be about menstruation story, but menstruation is one doesn't talk about menstruation that does one talk about menstruation? I don't think so, but so anyway, is there no con there's no sort of controversy here.

Everyone's more or less happy. The thing is, we can tell whether that's the right interpretation because again, it's, Claude says these stories know what they're talking about.

They don't hop about from one topic to another. There's always a consistent, logical thread and one of the things that says beautifully is that they're trying to get a, the stories are sort of trying to get a message across and it's meeting resistance. And when a message meets resistance, it's noga just whispering it. There's no good just saying it once.

If you say it this way, try another way. Try another way, try another way.

Trust saying the same thing. So many different ways that hopefully, eventually the message will come through overcoming resistance to it. So if this young woman picking a finger bleeding and falling down bed, if that's a reference to menstruation, it should decode, the rest of the story. So let's get back to the beginning.

How does it all begin? We have a king and a queen, and they have a problem.

That's the problem. Yeah. Jealousy.

Sorry, jealousy. Ah, the one who's left out, I was thinking of the very first line of the story. Infertility.

Yes. So now it's about fertility or the lack of f doesn, it.

They seem to lack fertility.

So who's problem is it exactly in the story? I mean, the king I would suggest seems to be having problems.

Yeah. I mean, he seems to be unable to get his wife does. He gets help.

Now when, the queen gets pregnant, it actually not thanks to the king, is it? It's thanks to a frog. Okay? And what happens in the story, there are different versions,

but there's a frog and a pool. The green and the garden pool here, frog pops up, jumps up. I mean the great splash land in our that and they does the trick and then the frog explains that within a year you'll have, the little girl.

now what happens? Remember we've decoded the central puzzle of the story. We've said it's, it's concerned the girl's first menstruation and we already know it's, there's a something with fertility.

When a girl menstruates, what does the blood signify? She now it signifies of course, her fertility. That's what it signifies.

But now, the king and queen have to organize a ny and some of the versions, it's kind of a christening. But if it's not a christening, exactly, it's a naming ese. You have to be given a name. and, and at any rate, certain people have to be invited, to this event and who are these people? How many wise women are there in the kingdom? 13. 13.

Why does one have to be left out? Why does the king have to say no, no, I can only have 12, right? What kind of plates are they? Hmm. Or gold? Probably silver or gold is a very good question. But what's the answer? Gold.

Well, golden plates, right? If the gold, if the 12 plates are made of gold, what might the 13 traits, which they should have been because they're 13 wise women, what metal might those ones have been made out of? Not gold, but Silver, Right? So now what I've said is, again, if limitation's, right? And these stories know what they're talking about, the theme of menstruation, the theme of fertility or its absence or, or its sort of blockage, should be made at the beginning of the story.

So you've got an interesting question.

We have 13, I think silver plates is not made all that clear, but deduce it would be logical. And 13 golden plates.

Let's start with the golden ones. 13, sorry, 12 golden plates and don't forget it's the king who started on the figure 12 and the metal gold.

Whereas it's a wise women who has 13 silver coats, like 12 gold plates. What might they possibly mean given that it's all about time? How many months in a year? Wow, really? Right? What's the difference? What's, what have we got here? We've got a contradiction or a conscious between two, what would you say? Two ways of measuring time.

One way time is measured by 13 wise women.

Another way time is measured by a man, I mean a king.

Now the king seems to think that 12 months in the year 12 golden, the wise women seem to think, no, there are 13 months. Now, what should we be calling those months if there are 13 of them, or if there's silver or 13 moons? And of course we do know, don't we? But you can't really fit 12, it can't fit 13 months in a solar year.

If you want to fix the year to a particular length of time. 'cause you're, because the seasons are important to, to be aware of, then you're gonna have always some bit of the 13th sort of poking out.

You can't quite squeeze it in if you are using the moon as you are, as you're measurement of time.

So we seem to have a conflict. And it seems that the king, we might say has a problem. and I always think of it because I was born have a Catholic, Roman Catholic.

It's the problem which, patriarchal religions in general seem to have, for me, the Christian churches. and don't forget all of our colleges, universities or theology colleges, I've always realized thought these, theologians basically have a problem with two things.

One's women and the other's the moon and you'll notice that our king in the story has a bit of a problem with menstruation, and he seems to have a definite problem with the moon and that's 13 wise women whose, whose silver plates, are, are there. So anyway, he he rejects the thirteens.

He's clearly saying there are only 12 months in a year. And of course, the months which we use are the patriarchy are, let's face it, they are manmade months, which is why there've been endless squabbles and schisms and heres and between the different GRTs of the patriarch of churches, it's how you measure these months. You've got Junior Canada, Gregorian, Canada also. I mean you can't, there's no reason for, what is it, 30 days sets of South September, April two, and November. I mean, it's, it's completely arbitrary because it's manmade.

But coming from the way the sun, the moon are, are in real life surfing around this, this beautiful planet of ours.

so right, the 13th will be excluded. Now, I want, I want to think about now the 13 wise women. they're bringing gifts and we're told that they're, they're blessings aren't they really? Seems to me, beauty skill, a beautiful voice. She should dance beautifully to all this.

Anything a young man could possibly wish for in a bride.

These are the blessings given her by the, the fairies. Yeah.

the 13th blessing is rejected by the king. What happens if you come with a blessing and it's rejected? It turns into a curse. A curse.

A curse. The curse.

Yeah, the curse.

You seem to be on the right track.

The story seems to be knowing what it's talking about. So the curse.

So the king, apparently, well, all right, let's time passes.

The girl comes of age clearly. she's going to, it's like the, the kings he's got authority.

He, he's, he's a king. And, okay, he, he's not happy with all this. I should perhaps just go back a minute.

Do you remember what happens? The 13th ferry utter her curse and the curse is that she will come of age, she will bleed, but she will die. And death is death. She will die forever and she's a very powerful ferry. But luckily, the 12th ferry hasn't yet given her blessing and what she says is, well, I can commute the death sentence to a temporary death, but I can't counteract it. I can't, I can't say I can get rid of that

curse, get rid of that spel. I can make the death sentence into a death, but it'll be a death for only, a hundred years. So, and then off she goes and of course there's moaning and crying and groaning in the, in the palace and of course, the king determines, my daughter, when she comes of age, she will not read. She will not die.

So how does he do it? What's the arrange? She arranges for all, all the spindles, to be burnt because there's, with a big, a big bonfire of all the spindles. And clearly he's saying, my daughter won't bleed. And you are thinking, Hmm, can even a king, define nature in that way? He's got legislative power, he can pass laws, he can get all the s burned. But you have a feeling, even though he is the king, his power is not limitless and sure enough, as the girl grows up and comes of age, there's one final spindle, which he didn't manage to burn and up in the turret there is the, its fer.

Do you think she is up in the tart, spinning, spinning, spinning.

I think she's the 13th. Spinning, spinning, spinning.

Spinster. Mm-Hmm. The word spinster comes to mind, isn't it? What's a spinster? A woman who's on the side of the blood and not on the side of marriage, she's rejects marriage. She's a spinster, spinning, spinning, spinning.

And, it's, she is kind of the, guardian spirit, the godmother of little bra rose and she meets her guardian spirit is if she meets the ferry, who will give her, because it's the, this is the most powerful of all the fairies, the 30th world, actually the most valuable blessing of all and in these stories, that would be the blessing of menstruation, the blessing of fertility. Nothing can beat that in terms of blessings.

But the king doesn't get it. Once again, he says, my daughter will not bleed.

I'll make sure she doesn't. And you're just thinking, well, he's not going about things the right way. And of course, she comes of age and she's inside the palace, and she's opening what? Pushing at all the doors, all the entrances, all the, she's exploring everything. She's just coming of age and she finds an opening that leaves up, up, up, up, up to the tar in the sky, and she pushed open the door and there's a 30th ferry, spinning, spinning, spinning. I think she's spinning the threads of cyclical time.

She is with the moon with menstruation.

Menstruation not mean means moon change of this and she's spinning the threads of time, spinning, spinning, spinning. And something pulls beauty to that spell. Doesn't matter what her father says, she picks a finger, bleeds and falls down into a sleep.

one of the staple findings of social anthropology all around the world, and every single traditional culture, doesn't matter what the scientists say, all the various medical scientists, they say menstruation. It's nothing magical about that. It's not poisonous, it's not supernaturally potent. It's just a bit of blood.

Indigenous cultures have none of that.

Menstruation is extraordinarily potent sub substance, subject of all sorts of rules are respected, like we might call them taboo booze, but they're respect rules.

Be very careful around menstruation. What happens in, I could name it almost any sort of Mediterranean culture traditionally. Any, any any aboriginal Australian culture.

What happens to a girl on her first sation social anthropologists Here pop up. Please say what happens? What what happens to the girl? Sorry, seclusion. I, okay, I'm sorry, I'm getting old and I'm a little bit deaf, but I think Ryan over there.

I'm very glad to see Ryan so good. Yeah, seclusion. She goes into seclusion.

Now what you have to know is that when you're in seclusion, you are temporarily dead. You are dead as a wife, and you are alive as somebody different.

You're alive as in terms of your blood relationships as a sister, a daughter in the blood while in seclusion, but no man should be gazing at you. You should be in the dark and the basic rule is, the sun should not shine on her head, nor her feet touch the ground. She's in. The other world is dead to normal life, but particularly she's dead to things like cookie and marital sex and doing nice things for her husband. All that is out.

She's like secluded.

It's almost as if she's on strike to all these normal activities, and she's kind of putting herself first. So we, of course, under patriarchy, it's all a bit a bit negative. But in many cultures, particularly African, under gatherer cultures, like for example, the, the, when a girl comes of age and bleeds, it's a, it's a cause her immense, rejoicing. She's been blessed by the moon, and she goes into a grass Hutt the biggest in the, in the whole village.

It's like a, a kind of temporary church you might call it.

Obviously they don't call it a church. And it's, it's, it's, it's a, but it's the biggest structure they have and she was there with her sister, and her aunts, and they're celebrating her fertility, her blood, and the blood is kind of shared within the heart amongst all the different women. And it's powerful blessing. how long do you think a seclusion would I say normally it's not a very good word, but I mean, roughly in a, in an egal in an agenda egalitarian society, when a girl has her first menstrual period and her, her relatives celebrate roughly how long is she gonna be in this condition? Separated from the boys sep separated from the male gaze in her special place in the dark, and, and not allowed to touch the ground.

I mean, just roughly less than a hundred. That's very, very, very, very good way of saying it. Probably yes, exactly.

Less than a hundred years, probably half a month, probably two weeks, maybe a bit more. But I mean, certainly around that amount of time. Now, why do you think in this story, she goes into seclusion for a hundred years. She's a bit excessive, doesn't it? Yeah, but I'm, I, perhaps I should just check.

Are you all happy that when she pricks her finger, she's menstruating and that when she dies, that's like a code term for going into seclusion, dead to marital life, dead as a wife, but not necessary dead as a blood relative. Okay, so why do you think in this story, the seclusion lasts for so long? I mean, initially, of course, we, we understood she's gonna go into seclusion forever, or at least she's gonna die forever. And of course, it's the 12th very who, commutes that death sance into a seclusion for only, a hundred years.

I I'm any help with that? Messing with the woman wise Power. That's right. What I'm hearing here is the 13th wise woman's like you men, you kings, you patriarchs, you think you can just get rid of our precious ritual and, and avoid her being her, avoid the celebr, the necessary celebration of our first menstrual period.

We'll teach you a few things.

She's gonna have a period which is gonna last a hundred years. It's like a, as you say, a punishment. management in the story in seclusion. Have you noticed how everything stops? all the activities cease? And I'm thinking this young woman, she's certainly not having sex.

No boys are allowed anywhere near, you could say she's on a sex strike.

But what's interesting is that it's a kind of a, it's a general strike, isn't it? It's like the cooking stops, all the activities in the in the scullery, the bakers, all the flunkies doing all their different jobs looking after the horses, everything comes to a standstill and everyone's like, like fixed, like, like statues, in their positions for a hundred years. I like the idea of a strike. I read a whole book about it, all called Blood Liberations Menstruation and the Art of the Culture and the way I see it is that one of the ways we actually became human was when women established a system called bride service, which hunter goes always have, which means that, men who need or feel that they want sex are gonna make themselves useful.

And, they do that in hunter goes as artists by going and hunt, going, going hunting and women's leverage is to be able to say collectively to men.

we, you can't just take it for granted.

We own collectively our own bodies and at least once a month, we're gonna be proving that we own our own bodies by withdrawing from sex.

we like sex. You think you like sex, but if you want sex, and this has been in Africa, a message's something like this, go away hunting, bring back a zebra and we'll think about it, okay? But if you have western style or patriarchy style marriage, a woman is wedlock.

The man has conjugal rights in the woman, she cannot say no because once upon a time she said yes, she'd said yes. When she was doing the marriage ceremony, hunter gathered us don't do that. They don't have marriage in that sense.

They don't have weddings, they have initiation rights like first menstruation, rights and voice, first skill rights. So, I like to think of that in terms of solidarity and resistance mounted by women to make sure that they're not taken for granted by men.

So that women can say yes to sex, but also they can say no.

yes means yes or no. It means no. You know how it all goes.

and without that, women aren't free. And out of that connectivity, moral rules bubble, the rule against rape, but against incest and also of other forms of sexual abuse, emerged. I mean, there is another theory, called le theory actually, which is that menstrual taboo abuse were invented by men. the Inces booth was invented by men. rules about cooking were invented by men and women are simply instruments in

dealings between men. in Darwinian terms, the idea that the incest taboo was invented by men makes absolutely no sense.

In any case, the ultimate rule isn't just in the incest, it's, a rule against rape. No means no without that, without the rule against rape in any society, you can forget rules of any kind.

Don't think about grammatical rules or table manners or all the various things.

If you haven't got a rule against rape, you haven't got a rule governed society and life won't be very pleasant for anyone. So I see this story as about that, no, that powerful, no, no means no orchestrated by 13 wise women using the moon as their clock and signaling no at the moment of menstruation, at which point women go on strike. And can you see, if you are thinking in terms of human origins, going back to Africa and establishing culture and morality that way, can you see that? It wouldn't make much sense for a woman over here to be saying no and women over there saying, yes, we're happy for sex. Can you see that? If you're on strike, can you see this? It needs to be what I would call a general strike right across the landscape. But the beautiful thing is that the moon doesn't care about borders.

If you time your action to coincide with new moon, you've got your general strike. If wherever men go, those who are in two are men striking and then their blood signals, no. When you have, a strike, one of the things you have to do is kind of make sure that it's solid, as a trade union sheriff to organize it for many years.

Different traces. I'm quite familiar with this.

I'm sure a lot of you are familiar with it.

What do you do to make sure that your strike is solid? You set up a picket line.

Now, I do give this must have seen a few of those lately.

You must have seen a few of those.

It's been rather hard to miss the picket lines over the last couple of years with this wretched go, I must be political. I wasn't talking about, Nick Lynch had to teach that wretched k burley, the understanding of a picket line. What a picket line.

The point about a picket line is that you don't cross it and it's not about vines, is that if you do cross, you are cursed.

You are a scab and shame on you, and you will have a hard time living it down. Because if you're a scab, you're trying to gain an expense of your brothers and sisters selfishly.

cause of course you won't, you'll accept what the pay rides worth is and the basic rule is never cheat on your brothers and sisters. Very, very simple.

That's the logic of a picket line. I argue that actually on the picket line, it was on the picket line that all human culture, morality, language, kinship, everything else was born, all the things which make us distinctively human.

All those things were born on the world's first picket line and this story is about that. It's about the world's first picket line, and I'm gonna demonstrate it. Now, where is the picket line in the story? Tell me where it is.

A great h of thorns never cross a picket line. What happens to a, some idiotic young prince who thinks he can just get outta his horse, take out his sword, wave it around, cut through the thorns, and find his woman before? Well, he comes, he comes to a sticky end. And it's just nice to, I think it's very nice to think about this. I mean, you might think it's a little bit cruel, but after a few years, the whole of this heath thorns is kind of covered with the skeletons of ardent young men who didn't understand different stages. And they're all at different stages.

Position. Some of them are fresh corpses with the crows f*****g the eyes.

You've already got some of the, the first ones that came in the first year that they're like real skeletons.

So we don't, we don't want to delve with this too much, of course, but no means no, and you do not cross, and you certainly don't cross a menstrual picket line because you will suffer from the curse. That's the whole point. every period of menstrual seclusion has to come to an end.

And, have you noticed that in the story, the young man who makes his way in? There's nothing special about him. It's not that he's a prince, they're all princes. I mean, this is obviously with hunters and gallers, everyone's king. Everyone, when everyone's king, no one's king. I mean, it's quite a well known fact about bushman, Kalahari hunters. Everyone, everyone's part of the royal family. This is, and that's anthropologist, just said to you, oh, who's your headman? Who's your king? And oh, I think you'll find we're all headmen around here. Everyone's king it, and that means nobody is because, but it's like a kind of leveling up.

Everyone's royalty. The whole it's like the whole family, the human family, almost like the royal family. But here we have this idea, you have this idea that something of sacred, this line of thorns, hitted thorns is sacred.

You do not cross, but it's only for a period. Because of course, the, there's the, the, the wise women have come to a kind of compromise that it will last for, a hundred years instead of, instead of forever. right? He's nothing special. He's just the right man at the right, at the right place, at the right time. He's arrived at the very moment.

The story makes it really clear when the wiser themselves have agreed that their action would come to an end, it's a really long, really long, very long in duration is, this, this, in, if you like, industrial action, everything stops. And, but critically what happens in, in real life in traditional cultures, when you have a girl's first menstruation ceremony, perhaps the most important thing is that all cooking stops and that's because cooking. This is a whole volume of delivery sources, mythology. It's called the raw and the cooked point about cooking.

Imagine you are hunters and gatherers. You've got your zebra.

Maybe I said you had your mammoth, you put in a big earth oven, cover it with hot stones. You leave it there for a day or two. Everybody very, very quiet must make a noise, otherwise the blood will bubble up.

But how do whether the meat's cooked or not? It takes it, take it out and you look, is there any blood in it? And the point about menstruation is that it adds to the blood.

Cooking takes away from the blood. So you cannot mix the two.

You cannot mix menstruation with cooking. And so one of the, one of the fundamental rules around menstruation that all of those cultures is that cooking has to stop. Sometimes I hear people think saying to me, all these poor women when they're in menstrual seclusion, they're not allowed to have sex with their husband, not allowed to do his cooking. Mm-Hmm. They're not allowed to wash his socks.

All the things that a man wants from his wife, they're prevented from doing and of course, the other side of it is, hooray, hooray, hooray. Give us a break and so that's the other whole side of it. Anyway, this break has lefted a hundred years, and at the end of it, you don't need violence. I, I'm sure he's got his sword, but as he arrives, the thorns turn into flowers. Oh, the hedge opens, he steps through all the flunkies, all the servants, all the stable lads, all the cooks and scullery boys and maids, and all, all the different positions. Some of them lying on the ground, some of 'em is frozen. And what happens is that he finds his way, to where the princess slice, asleep, and he leans over and he kisses her very, very romantic.

He kisses her on the lips, she wakes up, and what happens is that the whole world wakes up with her.

So just as we had synchronized menstruation and synchronized collusion at the beginning, when the spread is cast, equally synchronized is the awakening and with the awakening comes marriage and they all lived happily ever after.

Thank you.

I'll just, I'll just say one more little thing, which is that Cinderella, Jack, the beans store shoes that were sung to pieces, they're all different versions of this fundamental idea that you're alive, the flow of blood, you move into the other world. That's not magic, okay? But then you come back from the dead and that's magic and perhaps I should just say what I hear in this old wives tale. Don't forget, Kim was mentioning it. These tales, they're old, old wives.

Storytellers have managed to preserve those tales under terrible, terrible, terrible conditions or the witch burnings. And somehow, in order to order to, to preserve these stories, the most powerful woman of all senior witch, if you like, must be wicked, wicked, wicked, wicked. You keep saying wicked, long enough, wicked, wicked, wicked. You might get through the censorship, but I hear that wicked, wicked, wicked witch and all her sisters, I hear their voice when I hear that story. You men, you think you can control time. We'll give you a lesson about time. We'll lock you in it, we'll lock you in time for a hundred years. And when we've decided, then, and only then will we set you free. That's the voice I hear. And that's the story.

Audience questions

Manchego: There was one group that also bled in this story, the poor bastards that tried to climb up to get the princess, they led and they died. And I never heard anything about 'em coming back.

Chris: I'm afraid they did a very bad thing.

The question is, there was somebody, it wasn't just the, the, little bra rose who bled there was foolish, men who, by right, those foolish men who thought no, doesn't mean no, they could just take a sword out. They bled too and I suppose to answer your question, I mean, we don't know exactly, but I very much doubt whether those poor people came back to life.

I have a feeling they did such a bad thing that they, they, they, they died and they stayed dead.

But unless anyone has got any evidence of resurrection of these strike breakers, strike breakers don't, don't, don't come back to life.

Manchego: Do you know the story about when Hara and Zeus were arguing about who would, who enjoyed sex the most Kind. Yes, I know that story. Yeah.

So they brought in as a judge, tyres, a guy who had tyres. They brought him in because he had, hit, there was a parod. He came across a pair of snakes, made him Mm-Hmm and he hit the female, or he hit the, to hit them, to break them up and he, what, what he hit was the female and instantly he was turned into a woman and he lived as a woman for seven years and he learned that about who had the best sex and so he, when he, he had to judge it, he p****d off har by, by taking Zeus's side. And she struck him blind and because like in this story, he, Zeus didn't want the curse to be that bad. he gave him the gift of Prophecy. Great. Okay. So that's, that's one more variant. Thank you very much. Manchego. Here we have a question.

yeah, can you speak up? Speak up. Just speak up. Just, why do you think that? it was, it had to do a non, it had to be a non, like to me.

Oh, I didn't say that. Some people think That. Yeah, it just, I feel that, like when I didn't hear your story, I think intuitively to me the story was more about the fact that yeah, guys can do whatever this, I, I got it. And like, the fact, so I, I always, so this something very, and then, oh, like this guy has like any power of a woman and you can just kiss her and he'll be super happy to miss him and be like, oh, it's my friend and that's what my always very Well, I mean, there's no doubt the myth is patriarchal.

I I can tell you the, the full on patriarchal interpretation of the story, it's in, called woman hating and the essence of it all is that if you are, a woman, you need to lie on your back for a hundred years and wait for a prince to, arrive and, and wake you up. And if you're a man, you've gotta take your sword and conquer all the enemies and conquer your old bride. And, and that's it. it's just that, although that is it I'm sure that's a, a meaning of the story that people will get.

It doesn't explain the 12 golden plates, the 13 silver ones, the frog, the heath thorns.

It doesn't ex, I mean, I want an explanation which interprets all the details and makes more come together and my view is that the final kiss is no doubt about it. It's consensual. Why do I think that? cause the thorns turn into flowers. Flowers and open.

Now if you think about it, thorns turning into flowers, the petals opening, that is a metaphor for a part of the human female body which welcomes in, the guy. I mean, not, it's pretty obvious to me that she, that he's been welcomed in by that, that thing and the reason he is welcomed in is because not because he is anything special, it's just because the women decided enough is enough. We made our point.

A hundred years is quite a long time to make a point. And now, let's have some sex.

So, right. And that thing at the beginning, like in order for that story to exist over time, when we are moving from a society or cultural religious practice, even going from Hagan Luna to going patriarch, those stories wouldn't necessarily, you're not saying that story would've started exactly like that might be back in, but then it evolved over time, but still keep essential messaging.

Well, this, this story clearly reflects a moment when the Christians arrived and decided right, months are not moons.

You've got 12 of them. And the, and the critical thing in the sky, the clock is not gonna be the moon, it's gonna be the sun. And just guess what, all over the world, whenever you get the switch to kings establishment of, of stable patriarchy, the gods are always sun gods. the motto is always let there be light. You never find, let there be darkness.

Okay? We ever had let there be darkness in a patriarchal story.

I mean, but I mean, the fact is the hadza hunter gather in Tanzania, the committers don't feel work with, they say exactly let there be darkness, all their major rituals that may happen in the dark time of the month.

cause any light pollution will interfere with the communication with the, with the, with the stars where the ancestral spirits probably are. And, and darkness is the condition of being able to see beyond this world.

There's too much light. You, you are in this world. You can see everything.

You want to go into the inner life, you want to get into the darkness.

So the sun is kind of the, the clock for patriarchs pretty much.

I mean, you get a bit of, you usually get a bit of both.

You get a bit of patriarchy, but bit of a bit of sun, a bit of moon.

But the moon definitely gets demoted. but, and also it becomes feminine for hunter gather's the moon is woman's other husband. It's, it's the husband you are with when you or it's brother always.

Yes. It's your, so when you are in seclusion, you are with another husband who's, who's entry into your body is your menstruation, your the moon is inside you. There's a lovely film, by the way, called the Moon Inside You, a friend of mine, so you can find it very quickly.

All about antibody, all this, but the moon that the hunter gather is almost university. The moon is male, it's your other husband. And then with patriarchy, it gets demoted to female. You know, patriarchy assumes that female is underneath, the male is on top, and then it puts the moon down there as a female. And it's, and the sun is again, aboriginal Australian.

The sun is actually usually female and the moon is male. The patriarchy, it's the other way round. The sun becomes male, the moon becomes female in general. I mean, with all these things are obviously gonna be exceptions, but even the exceptions you can soon work out. There's a pattern there.

Any more questions in the room? Yes.

Wondering how you interpret marriage? Marriage been successful? Now we have a new, Well, okay. Very interesting story. Okay. So the, the question here from the room is, how do I interpret the, the wedding at the very end Is this, ah, the strike's being successful.

We've got a good settlement now, and we can all we can get, we can, we can agree to a marriage. okay, so the way I look at it is that all of these magical mission fairytales, the ones that le tro the thousand versions that Le Tro, examined in his mythology from North and South America, but also are European fairytales. There's two things going on. One's a, a wavy line, life, death, life, death, life, death, full moon, dark moon, full moon, dark moon, waxing, waning, waxing, waning.

So there's just a periodicity. That's the fundamental structure. You have life, you have death, and you come back to life and you do it again.

Just a cyclical structure. No, not nothing's going on.

There's no one's going anywhere. But then you get an overlay and in the overlay there's a story with a, the beginning, middle, and the end and the end, of course is here we are. So we have patriarchy, we have marriage, we have a man who marries a woman, and that's it.

She doesn't divorce him Again, this story, you'd be very surprised if this story said, and then two weeks later, she's the dark change my mind. So, no, it's pretty final this, this marriage.

But of course, under patriarchy, marriage's exactly that it's final. You're, you're suddenly fixed in, you're, you're fixed in being a wife, you said yes a long time ago. You're not allowed to say no, you said yes. Can I, can I say something about, haa hunter gather, because there is no such assumption necessarily between a woman and, and her husband to hunter, about whether or not they're gonna stay married in order to demonstrate that they're staying married. Must be, there must be observation of menstrual taboos, by both the man and the woman. And, and that observation is what that means to keep those menstrual taboos is a man cannot go hunting at the time of his wife menstruating. and a woman can't go collecting berries or, or honey, because that would dry or the berries would all fall on the ground and be spoiled. So that is like, it's like a sort of public understanding that if the couple observed those, those things, those taboos and rituals, they stay married.

But it's like every time she's menstruating it's, it's up for being.

Of course, I'm sure Kevin would agree, but even the word marriage is a little bit difficult.

cause we tend to sort of think marriage is marriage and we, we translate to other cultures our own sort of concepts.

So bride service is the, is the correct term to use. So it's, it is with bride service societies, and that's the bride service is the fundamental economic institution of, immediate return hunter-gatherers.

That means hunter-gatherers who don't practice storage and who therefore haven't developed a kind of hierarchy based on inequality of wealth or stored property.

So immediate return means the kind of hunters and gatherers we were for 160,000 years you can have, but ever, ever since we became modern homo sapiens. So you don't have, you don't have weddings. You have a bride service and bride service.

The interesting thing is, it's the best way to think of bride service is if it's like a man wants to have a, a sort of legitimate relationship with a woman for obvious reasons. but he's, he's, he's kind of on trial. He's gotta be, he's gotta behave.

He's gotta behave, he's gotta behave and there's periods of being on trial because his, his partner, his sweetheart, and her mom in particular, her mom is in charge.

She is in charge of everything. He's gotta go hunting, surrender all the meat to the mother-in-law. And he never gets there.

He never gets to a point, he gets to a point where he's very much trusted and accepted. He's very, he's proved himself. He, he bounces the babies on his knees. He's been a, a kind, generous, thoughtful, modest hunter, all that.

But he never gets to the point where he can say, right, you are my wife, I've got conjugal rights in you. That never happens. It's, it is as if that's delayed, forever. Whereas of course, under patriarchy, it's the first thing that happens. You know, you have a wedding and that's it.

Okay? You're not, you're not a, a woman anymore like a sister.

You're now a wife, you. So that's one, one ceremony.

A few words by some priest has cut off all your options.

You've no longer have freedom of choice. Okay.

Ara, aia, do you wanna ask a question? I sort of a question. I, I'm just, focusing on the concept of consent, in terms of these, and look, I understand the symbology involved, implies that there's consent, but I also see it as, an issue of actually removing, the autonomy of consent from the actual young woman.

So it's like, it's like laying the groundwork for that notion that she has to be given away.

and I was just wondering if anybody else sort of, Well, I must say I don't see that. I mean, no one's giving it away, are they? Yeah, no, I'm saying, I'm saying that the symbology, is, is implying consent, but it's still not direct consent. So it's, sort of removing that autonomy from the person, from the young woman herself to say, yes, she, it's, it's implied that that's a natural consent there.

I think, I suppose that's what's catching me up a little bit.

It's, it's very, you watch the Disney version, I would totally agree. Mm-Hmm.

The story is about women and she's symbol. Yeah, it's about the collect, it's about the Collective now. So, so what, what Libby's saying, can you hear everybody what s saying is that it's not about, in the Disney version, it is about a particular woman batting her eyelids smiling here.

It's nothing to do with it. There's no individuals really.

No, and I, and look, I understand that it's just, it's it feel I mean, this is just a thought that I'm going with. it just has an underlying thing that it takes away the voice of women in that sense.

I, I will, I want to make a concession, but on a different level, it is very, very much the case that in hunter gatherer societies, egalitarian, I mean gender egalitarian, hunter gatherer societies, it's not like everyone has individual freedom of choice to do it whatever they like. There are these fundamental rules and taboos around sex and when a girl menstruates, you'll find that with a will with kind of order.

She lets her, her mom and other relatives sort of grab hold of her and keep her away from the boys. Now she may sort of feel a little bit, oh, actually I'd like to be having some fun with the boys. I'm sorry, her, her guardians are gonna say, no, no, no, that's not good and what they'll say is, we, if we just let you do what you like, you'll end up pregnant and left holding the baby.

We want to make sure that you're properly looked after you're part of a collective, and we want any man you end up having sex with, we want to make sure that he understands that he's not gonna be in charge.

He's gonna be, he's gonna be, he's gonna be thoughtful and kind to us as a family of women and, and our brothers and so on. So I'm just saying that, that you're right.

If you're saying we don't have individual freedom of choice across the board, no way, there's section No and that's basically what I'm saying is that to, to me, it's taken away the her voice in in in being able to do that.

Well, it is, yes. I mean, yeah, I agree with it. It's, it's a collectivist society. It's, I mean, it's, it's so much more beautiful and complex than that. Hunter gatherer societies.

Jerome Lewis is a great expert on this, and he's, he's, he'll be giving a talk later on, but hunter gatherer societies combine these two things, a really solid sense of collective identity and collective responsibility with every individual being such an individual with such individualism.

So many people are so different. Every character's got their own sort of their own lines, their own ways of doing things. So we combine a, a real free individualism with a strong collectivism.

But there are rules are rules. And a girl who begins menstruate, she doesn't have freedom of choice. She can't just say, I feel like going hunting with the men. I feel like having lots of sex. I no, no, no. Her, her relatives will say, no, that's not gonna be good for you.

We know better than you do on this one. Fair Enough. Thank you.

Thanks. So, take you again if, unless there's some other, but yeah, go, go for it. On this. so on what you were saying, what you think scared, scared, this thing so much enunciation, What scared the kings so much about menstruation? Right, Okay, so, okay. I mean, I'll just tell you a, a kind of brief comic strip version of history and prehistory.

First you have a human revolution. When we get, symbolic culture, including rules of morality, like, fundamental no means no blood is how we say no and it's once a month and this means that your cycle synchronized with the moon can be the engine governing the work rhythms of society. Because it, it's perfectly possible with big game hunters to hunt. You know, in the ice age hunting, a, a mammoth North America hunting, a giant Camel Australia hunting AD toad on these are huge animals. You kill one, you're made for the next for the month, you, you need to, you can slow right down and slow your hunting down to once a month ceremonial hunt organized by the menstrual cycle in conjunction with the moon. So you hunt from full moon, which when you can see all that all night, and in Africa, the lions aren't around because it acted punch on you in the dark, is also the reasons why hunting will be a once a month thing. But when you, when that, when the game animals become extinct over hunting, people having to hunt small animals a meal for a day or two, and then you've gotta hunt again. Can you see what's gonna happen? The, the economic necessity to keep foraging and twining animals is, is gonna come up against the menstrual abuse.

The menstrual cycle is gonna get in the way. So supposing your you are in California or somewhere, native Americans there and you're hunting rabbits, and some old lady says, no, no, no, you mustn't hunt. Now the moon's in the wrong face. It's, um you have to wait till it's waning and say, hang on a bit. I haven't hunt.

We have to starving. My wife's starving. Can you see what's gonna happen? The continuous hunting of smaller animals and the gathering by women is just not compatible with lunar schedules periodicity. Instead, as increasingly, humans get into farming, it's a long story there. Of course, it's gonna be seasonal rhythms, which take over and the sun takes over. So, I'm just kind of wondering if I, I've explained it.

It's like the, okay, so then you're saying why does the king have a problem with administration? I'm, I'm suggesting actually everyone has a problem with menstruation because women start menstruating at very inconvenient times, ? And so if you keep the taboo, if if women are now menstruating and everyone's gonna stop what they're doing, but they have to do, they have to do stuff, otherwise there's staff.

Can you see what there's like a clash between the moon and the menstrual cycle, A cluster in that and economic necessities.

Whereas for a hundred thousand years or so, the two went together, we became human on the basis of a once a month ceremonial hunt governed by the moon.

cause it's makes a lot of sense to hunt when there's enough light in the sky to see overnight. And then with onto the farming, seasonality takes over and then your kings, if you like your your big men, now they're gonna find menstruation getting in the way

and so when you do menstruate, instead as that's that big being a sacred time for you, you're gonna get shoved down the bottom of the valley into some little hut somewhere, so that your pollution doesn't, interfere with everything.

But In that situation, of course, it is the big men or the men as groups who take over Yeah, the work of culturally ritually, synchronized menstruation.

So we have this whole, um array of different ritual ways that men do the menstruating all over well known phenomenon in anthology. I don't think Chris can, I can't, can't, I can't really cover everything, but I mean, but I mean, there's, there's not, there's not a, a men's house of the world, what I mean by a men's house, A big, big house.

When all the men to perform their rituals with their bull rulers, with their secrets.

There's not a men's house in Papua New Guinea or a Ian or anywhere else where the men don't menstruate. I mean, of course they can't really menstruate, but they they cut their ears, they beat on the nose, they, in aboriginal Australia, they cut their penis and all that.

So the men have to bleed because then they can control the bleeding.

They can cut themselves with a knife or cut each other, cut the boys with a knife. So I'm just saying, your, your question was originally what, why does the king have a problem with menstruation? actually in real life, what happens with these male secret cults is that the men take over menstruation because then they can control it because they're doing the bleeding. And you'll find that even, even the, even say the Freemasons in London here, you'll find that their secret, secret, secret ritual involves cutting the tongue and bleeding, all that huge, huge secrecy around it.

But it's essentially goes back to these things We have. Well, of course Jesus takes the blood and Mary Virgin Mary has none.

She's a woman without, Mary has all blue, no red at all. No, no.

Her son has all the bleeding. Yeah.

By The way, that's Pathology. There is Ian, Ian, are you wanting to talk about Paulina's question or did you have something else? Yeah, Yeah. I, I mean Paulina was asking about what, why the antithesis between menstruation and cooking.

She was asking it as a symbolic question, but I think, I think is, is, is, is specifying, if it's a luna hunt, and so the, the, this massive animal is brought back, or people move to consume the, this massive animal at around full moon and it's gonna last you quite a while, a week, 10 days. then the logic is not, not just symbolically, but like practically, that there is no longer any meat in the camp at dark mood. Yeah.

The, the kids are beginning to scream. And so do you wanna say More? Certainly. So, so what happens when we became culturally human is that we had what are sometimes called institutional facts, which are facts, which are facts, objective facts, but simply by agreement and so you have, so if you're, if you're doing things using the sun of the moon as your clock, so you, I mean humans just, we can't possibly plan a future event like a, a hunt without some kind of clock, some kind of measurement of time.

So if it's the moon, the simplest way of dividing up time is just bisect it.

Now you, if you've got slightly more light or slightly less light, I mean that's possible, but it's like it's an analog difference.

It's how much light, how much light can there be for you to be ritually allowed to go hunting.

So the simplest way is to do, it's just simply say waxing versus waning.

So if you've got waxing versus waning, then on one in one category, from from New Moon, when the blood flows right up to full moon, when the, the blood taboos disappear, you've got, no cooking, no marital sex, a whole lot of things like certainly their marriage in that fr period and then it form in all those spells, those taboos suddenly are lifted and now you can ha you can enjoy sex, because women aren't covered in blood anymore. You can eat the meat.

cause that's not, that's now cooked. It hasn't got the blood in it.

So all those things go together.

So there's a reason why cooking and marital sex and, all sorts of other things. And Levi, stress goes into great detail about this. I haven't made these things up, Levi.

I mean, another one is noise, for example.

Noise belongs with blood because noise, making a lot of noise is a way of breaking up couples.

So if you wanna organize a sex right, you want, you don't want to have sweet, lovely romantic music. You wanna make a lot of noise with, with what David says called instruments of darkness.

Likes rather like sauce winds banging.

Remember the old cherry bar when the old man was married to a very young woman and all the villagers think disgrace, they come, they go under the couple's bed, bedroom and bag all the sauce boots. So noise, blood death, wet blood relations, lawes, all those things go in one category, which is waxing moon and in the other category, we have, quiet or or or musical harmony, and feasting and marital sax and blah, blah, blah a whole.

So you just divide everything into two wax aggressive waiting and it and that and so that's, so it's not just symbolism, it's not just that cooking symbolically, mustn't be linked to menstruation is an actual, in an actual ritual process.

One does not cook when menstruating and there are good traditional reasons why. And of course, even today, if you do have a, a menstrual, even in this country, it's sort of sometimes they around a little bit. You mustn't, mustn't wash your hair, you ate. But if you are, if you are thinking about menstrual, no, no, no.

Cooking is a terrible thing to do while you're, while you're on your period, really terrible.

Doesn't work very well anyway. is, is there anyone else on Zoom asking question? John, you had an interesting question. Is there anyone in the room at all? Because otherwise we are gonna, bring it together.

I think John, did you wanna put that? Because that's one last interesting question that fits with what, okay, Chris was just saying, this is about interpretation of circumcision.

Are we taking male circumcision? I I, yes. Dunno, if you wanna start Yes.

Male circumcision, Which of course male circumcision, Circumcision is another version.

Yeah. I mean, male circumcision is, is, well, I mean, okay, what happens when the patriarchs take over is that they say that when women menstruate, it's kind of rubbish. But when men do it, it's great and when women give birth, it's rubbish. 'cause all women can do, it's good, it's a lump of fresh. But if, if you want a sole, the little baby's gonna be twice born. And so it is like, circumcision is like the, the rabbi where it is, she says, well, look at this kid. It's, oh, women haven't done it properly. Look, you've gotta cut the four screen and then it's that it's proper.

It's gotta whatever. Yeah. So, but African circumcision is, is sometimes actually actually overtly called, boys menstruation. It, it can be called out overtly. not always, but, but it basically has, so even In, even in, in like, I don't know, south it's London, not so long ago, maybe even now, a woman who's given birth, she has to be churched and of course it's not until the baby's been dumped into another womb in a dumped in the water of the priest doesn't. And it comes out, but it's, it's proper and got a soul.

Otherwise it's covered in an original sin. You see, when, when, when a baby's born of a woman who's been in contact with her inside all that blood, and that's terrible. That's original sin. So to get rid of that, the priest's gotta come along and do the second birth and then the kid's reborn and then it's okay. Okay. That's page way of saying it. Women can't do anything, can't do anything properly. We've got the, so I mean, I mean we're gonna stop fairly soon. I've just, I suppose what Kada was saying earlier on is that, um in the period we're in with what's going on in the world with all the bloodshed and all the horrors of the culmination of where patriarchy was bounty to end up, I suppose when men ruling the world made a huge mess of it anyway.

But this is a, a god almighty mess.

It does seem a little bit difficult to be here, discussing fairytales, but as Camilla was saying, these stories are crystallized knowledge and wisdom, and they're telling us of a time when we became human when we didn't have, we didn't have wars, we didn't have marriage, we didn't have all these property and all these things. All those things and these stories are the, almost the only real solid evidence of all that.

Of course, you can interpret the stories in different ways, but what Levies was trying to do was to say, well, yeah, but some ways make sense because they kind of make up. So what we haven't discussed this evening is how, I mean, what about Jack and the Beanstalk? Is that the same thing? What about Cinderella? What about this Red Riding Hood? Red Riding Hood? What about the shoes that were dance to pieces? Have we got a whole book here? Yeah, book these stories. I can tell you now that

actually when you look at these stories through this lens, suddenly they start speaking to you. Suddenly they're crystal clear.

These like you've just sat, oh my God, every detail is in its right and proper place. Everything is clear and if you don't look at it through that kind of lens, it's just, oh, one story and then another, and then another all it's complicated details and you think, what the hell? so they're, they're not speaking, what's important is to hear that voice, I think. and to do that, you've gotta listen.

Great, thank you.

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