

Modern metaphors from political resistance movements applied to human evolution (Seminar)

Jerome Lewis and Chris Knight

Dec 3 2024

Jerome Lewis and Chris Knight will be discussing the final chapter of their book on the topic of importing modern industrial political action as models for human evolutionary strategies. How can such ideas address an Indigenous voice to make them relevant?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELf1Gn0GI1k>

We are going to be hearing from Chris Knight and Jerome on modern metaphors from political resistance movements supplied to human evolution.

I selected this image for our Twitter feed 'cause wow, it wasn't me that thought of this, dance in red body paint and pretty naked, pretty naked as well. We really shocked John McDonald, John McDonald's the MP for Hayes.

This was an action against Heathrow expansion.

So he turned up on this line of, of it's kind of line of red t-shirts to try and put a protest there.

These young women had decided on this action and I found out about it, but it wasn't me that invented what they were going to do.

They decided we are gonna use this red body paint to say no.

and since I'm the author of the Female Cosmetic Coalition Theory, this was kind of putting into practice my kind of scientific series.

So I thought, alright, I'll do it too.

that's why I got in there.

But the point is here that we are looking at incredibly ancient female strategies being applied in a political, a recent political context.

that's why I use this as applies.

So we are gonna be hearing much more about the debates here from Chris and Jerome.

Do, does Chris wanna start or I'm gonna blank that screen Here. Yes. So, if You need a, if you need any more screen, it's not, Yeah. So, Jerome and I sort of, sort of finished, a book.

We've been working on it for about six 70 years or so, and it's called When Eve Laughed, the Origin of Language.

and of course, although we have huge amounts of agreement, Jerome and I sort of come from sort of different both social, cultural, political backgrounds as, as any two people would really, and we've been having lots of, discussions.

So we're gonna be reliving some of those now, this evening.

So I'm gonna sort of, James's asked me to start.

So, I mean, we are the radical and group, so welcome to radical anthropology.

radical, it's something to do with radishes.

Radishes are roots.

and we are, we are trying to get to the roots of things.

So I think we all agree that you can't really understand much about what's going on in say, England or America or anywhere else in the world without knowing a bit of history and you can't really know much about all of us humans on this planet without going back into prehistory and you can't really understand much about any part of life on earth without going into the history of life on earth.

So you've, we've got the, the, the time dimension is absolutely critical.

So we want to get to the roots, particularly because we're anthropologists.

So what does it mean to be human and how do we become human? and, although that's kind of radical in the radical anthropology group, we've been quite careful.

I've been, I think, careful, I, I've got my politics, but you come to radical anthropology not to be haran by me or somebody else telling you all about our political position.

You want to learn anthropology.

and somehow it's, it's always a little bit difficult to know quite how politics and science and anthropology and various other things kind of connect or don't connect.

My own view is that politics is always bad for science.

but it's also, I think, the case that you can't really be doing anything exciting in science.

There's never really been any scientific breakthrough, for example, without it having political repercussions.

So there's always gonna be some sort of connection that, when politics is a driving force, driving and of conclusions you arrive at in science, it's just not gonna be science.

It's, it is gonna be rubbish and I would think it's not gonna be any good to anyone.

So we've had all sorts of experiences of what happens if you you put your Marxism or your other kind politics first, say what's called science it, then it ends up being completely, being completely useless.

Having said that, it really is impossible to say anything at all about so critically important and issues.

What does it mean to be human and how do we become human? You just can't say anything about that without arousing political controversy.

so perhaps I'd just start before Duren comes in by saying that we have a theory about the origin of language, which is, it's just social.

I mean, we, the idea that you could involve such, I mean, I mentioned language because clearly when people think about what does it mean to be human, I mean, we are the, we are the species that talks language is one of the things which most distinguishes us humans from all other creatures.

Although all creatures, of course have all sorts of very complex systems of communication language is really off the scale different from what other animals do.

We could go into all that. what's happening, Camilla? It's, it's, John Lock has got the, his phone in the zoom.

Can I chuck you out? John? Chuck me out. Sorry that it's a real pain to use the phone in the room.

Yeah, I'm sorry about this.

I've hearing an echo, that's all.

Yeah, exactly. But it myself, I was wondering what was happening.

Yeah, that's not, not good. You okay though? So, okay.

So just, it's, it's, you, it is really impossible to say anything about human origins without people having political objections and, and it somehow, it all gets very kind of heated and, and, and, and difficult.

So let me just say one thing.

Perhaps we think that language can only revolt under certain very unusual, actually social and political conditions and in fact, because words are cheap, and, there's nothing about a word that's in any way reliable for our ancestors to begin placing trust in these things called words.

They have to be extraordinary levels of, trust within the community because you're, you're, you're placing trust on things which have got no intrinsic reliability at all.

so something, something must have happened to the social dynamics of our ancestors communities to make it even vaguely possible for language to come into existence.

So now there is an alternative to the theory which Jerome and I are putting forward in our book and when I say an alternative, I mean a, a social alternative.

In other words, an alternative theory to explain how it was that in the distant evolutionary past, you had whole communities which had solidarity, whole communities, where the community as a whole banded together sufficient to overcome all the normal conflicts and divisions and all those things and band together as one community, it's sufficient for language to, to get off the ground.

There is an alternative to our theory, and it's called, the Warfare Hypothesis and it really is the, the number one theory these days.

I mean, you'll find so many very distinguished scholars, Michael Ello.

I could, I mean, sort of the best known, the most celebrated evolutionary psychologist, if you like.

There's so many others who have this theory and, and it runs like this.

It's how do you get a whole community to overcome their differences and band together? Well, you need an enemy and if you're fighting against the enemy and the enemy's trying to sort of kill you, you're gonna band together and forget your differences.

And, and the idea is that in the evolutionary past warfare generated sufficient solidarity, sufficient collectivity for language to evolve, that theory, go's gonna say a piece about that, that theory doesn't work.

and we could go, go to work.

I mean, for example, we in, if you look at non-human primates, monkey, the names, and we, we are a great take the, the major source of mistrust, the major source of conflict within the group is gonna be over sex.

so one of the things which is strange about human communities, right across the planet, every single human community has a thing called, whatever you call it, I suppose, sort of Ted kinship classification, kinship forms of kinship, which amount to a system of kind of moral regulation, regulation from below.

No doubt in many cases, certainly the plan to gather this, but, but you have group level morality.

You don't do certain things.

You don't speak to your mother-in-law like that.

You don't NCES isn't usually allowed.

Um rape clearly not allowed in any society to sort of but so those, those sort of things are how does warfare, but one group of men and another territorial warfare, how did that give you, sexual morality? I mean, just think about it. You all think not what happens in the war, not, not too easy and what happens in war, of course, is that that's when you do get massive amounts of right.

Rape and all those things.

So how on earth the warfare model supposed to generate sexual morality, which would be a condition for st that in group trust to even begin to think about language.

You know, you need some other kind of theory and of course, we've got another theory where I weren't gonna go go into the theory now, typically to say that, that the warfare model, is, is the major alternative and the, what I'm, what I'm trying to stress here now is that when people put forward the warfare hypothesis, it's not political.

It's not considered political.

but as soon as you have a different hypothesis, which mentions, for example, female solidarity, and everyone knows if you're a ian, that you have a thing called you have natural selection, but you also have sexual selection and modern down then expects conflict within the sectors.

It's just a normal thing that males and females have different different, likely to have different way of getting the deans into the future, different reproductive strategies.

But somehow as soon as we start to applying that absolutely standard element of dominant in theory to human evolution, it arouses huge amounts of controversy, which is, which is political.

just to sort of hand over to Jerome, I've, pretty much all my life really been thinking in terms of, gender conflict as opposed to territorial warfare as sort of engine of evolutionary, change and in the model I've been putting forward over the years, if you're like, women win that battle, and establish that some things are sacred, namely our bodies don't touch unless we let you, no means no.

Those sorts of principles of gender resistance establishing, um the, the, I mean, just that there are, there are such things as rules.

These are rules that come from below and anyone just thinking for example, about, I mean, it's a kind of well-known thing, this thing, I mean, Levetro, Claude Levetro know hugely influential structure list when people in and social anthropology think

about the NCES Brew, they think of Claude Levi TROs theory, of the emergence of the NCES brew.

He makes, its rather interesting point that usually in culture you find things which are sort of different from culture to culture.

If something's the same in all cultures, it's probably not part of culture.

It's probably part of nature and he draws attention to this paradox.

But all cultures have a rule against incest and so he treats the inces as a sort of mark of the transition from what he calls nature to what, what he calls culture.

But anyway, he's got a theory and, just to social antibodies learn this soon as they get into, into college.

I mean, but it's, the theory is that you have a group of men over here with them, with their sisters and daughters and a group of males over here with their sisters and daughters.

and, what happens is that the, the guys over here want to form a relationship with the guys over there.

So they sort of say, well, you have our sisters, for sex, but, we're expecting you to give us your sisters and because your sisters are, are confused as a gift to give to the other group.

You don't want to have sex of them or says.

But if you have, if you, you're a group of males who have sex with your own citizen and daughters, you haven't got any gifts through which to make an, an alliance with the guys over here and again, this still among socialized body, it is sort of accepted as kind of yeah, that's a, that's, that's kind of a theory, which seems to sort of work.

It's sort of still around there.

From a Ian point of view, it makes absolutely no sense, no sense, whatever.

So if, because if there are some genetic disadvantages to incest if over a long period of time, we kind of know this from the royal families of Europe, if you keep inbreeding strange shapes of nose and funny goings on are gonna be accumulating in your lineage.

But, but the cost of course will be born by the females because a, a, a male, you can have sex with your sister and then sex with somebody else and somebody else on somebody else because your, your, your sperm don't cost anything or, and you've got plenty of them and so, but, but from a female, you can only have a certain number of babies.

And, and, and so the, if, if, if there is some, um cost in incest, it's the female that will bear those costs and then, and then lo and behold, what we find, we find with all our primate relatives, it is the females that the chimpanzees, the female chimpanzees, but frequently harassed by their brothers, and maybe their, their fathers, but it's the females who resist because of course, they were the ones who bear the cause and yet, despite all that, despite that standard, you still get the idea that somehow, like everything else, it's the males who, invent these, these critical rules taboo and things which actually establish the, the, the cultural domain.

do you want to come in now? Yeah. Jerome? Yeah. Well, I mean, just to sort of reinforce a little bit the point that Chris was making about the, this patriarchal model, um it is based on the study of chimpanzees who are our closest relatives and so there's good reason to look at the way they do things to try and understand things about ourselves.

But, as Chris was saying the, the, the levels of intergroup violence within chimpanzee society are extreme, just as the levels between chimpanzee groups are quite extreme.

And, and it's really on that model that many of these mostly male, biological anthropologists and evolutionary anthropologists have developed these theories that give dominance to male in the process of what made us human.

And, and, and so it's very tempting to, to follow these models, but actually, if you look at human beings, we're radically different from chimpanzees or gorillas and part of that radical difference is speech, as we know.

But also here we are all sitting together in this room, and I can't see any of you males fighting each other for attention of the females.

You are all being rather well behaved actually, is quite surprising.

If you were a lot of chimpanzees oof, this place would be kicking and, a lot of you would be losing body parts to each other in the process.

and, and it is quite remarkable that, that the difference is so radical and so to explain the process by which that came about with reference to the way that chimpanzees behave is sort of actually not very logical.

It's not really very intuitive as a, a process.

And, so I've had the, the good fortune of working with these egalitarian groups of hunter gatherers, in the Congo Basin and so it's given me a very direct experience of how you can have a society where you don't have an alpha male who's bossing people around telling people what to do, or beating people up, who, who as, as they fancy.

where you have a system which operates without a central authority of any kind, actually.

and perhaps the, the, the, the authority that really does exist in most societies is, is music and of course, music is, is not, as we produce it, just by switching on a button, it's produced only if we all collaborate together to actually make the music and in that process of making music, we educate ourselves about different ways of collaborating.

And, and actually that's a really central way that these hunter gatherers who don't have leaders understand how they should collaborate and work together and that's very, very different from the sort of, ways that, different, groups within chimpanzee society will collaborate for a moment against another individual or in order to, to, to do something like Killer Monkey or whatever it might be.

and so starting to, to witness that much more closely, you realize that these metaphors based on violence, based on territoriality for instance, really don't, apply to the human, story or something radical had to happen to change that in the human pace.

So, for instance, the hunter gatherers who I worked with, I was often surprised how welcoming they were to strangers, even people who were there basically to do them harm.

Uh for instance, there were some really, aggressive poachers who were just accumulating huge amounts of meat to go and sell in markets, which had the result of actually impoverishing their own forests, making their own hunting, difficult.

But they would always welcome them.

They would always be open towards them and the idea of, refusing somebody of, of saying, no, this is mine, and you can't have any, is really alien to them.

Their, their economies are not based on, exchange or reciprocity.

They're based on demand sharing, which just means that if anybody asks for something, you have no choice.

You have to give, it's not your right to refuse and if you do refuse, you are like a social outcast.

And, and it is something which is, is really viewed very badly, can lead to violence. if you, if you refuse people, it's taken as a deep personal insult.

and, and so starting to, to see that actually there's a, a very different logic going on in these societies because what really led, me to look much more carefully at, at the political dynamics of these societies, and what you start to see is just as Chris was saying, that, that the real, political sort of, friction is between the men's group and the women's group and it's because as Chris was saying, women have different interests to men.

Men might want to go philandering around, but they're resisted by women who say, no, you can't go there.

When young girls are initiated, in the women's, secret society called Ying, when they come out of the sacred area that, is just for women, they sing a song, and the song is one woman, one penis, hey, one woman, one penis, hey and they just, these beautiful young girls, they dancing around camp or bedding flowers looking absolutely gorgeous, just singing that song.

And, and, and so, and, and it has, its in myth.

It's, it's, it's one of the songs that the, the elder lady, when men and women first came together and, and men discovered sex with women, they were just like, well, I want three of these.

I want four of these. And the old lady said, no, one woman, one penis.

And, and, and made that the rule.

and, and that was when society formed as, as we know it today, according to there an indigenous theory of human origins.

Yeah. And, and, and so, it, it really started to, to challenge a lot of those ideas.

So the, the idea that territorial warfare could have been a big issue for hunter gatherer societies who are demand sharers just doesn't make logical sense and so this, in discussions with Chris, Camilla and other people, has led us to, to thinking about this in a, in a, in a radically different way.

And, and so, Chris and I have had lots of discussions.

We, we have, play dates.

So my children, had play dates with their friends and so in order to justify me disappearing off an afternoon, I say, I'm going for a play date with Chris.

And, and we sit and have chats about these various things.

And, and, and that's how this book that we were just, preparing came about.

and, in, in one of these play dates, and where was I going with that way? Could be, we sort of had a disagreement. Yes.

Yeah, that's right.

So in 2019, the was the last time I was in the forest, with the particular group of people that I've been studying for the past 30 years, or living with, for the past 30 years.

I have been to other parts of the forest since then, but just for various reasons I haven't been able to go back to that.

And, one of the tragedies of, of, of time passing is that dear friends die.

And, and one of the, I just was giving a lecture, today to some students about this fun together and it's really sad because I look at the, the videos and the things I'm showing them of people talking and explaining stuff, and so many of the people have died, it really is very sad.

Mm-hmm. So when, whenever I go back, one of the things I end up having to do is organize end of morning ceremonies for my friends and it's a particular tradition where this spirit egen, which, the women gave to the men at that moment when they came together, and they first discovered each other, and the women used to, when they danced to Jenky, and the jenky begins very small, and they go, gets really huge and gets really small again and out of his, rapha, small girls would fall and that was how the women got new women in their women only society and when the men saw that and they discovered how much they loved sex, they said, look, we've gotta have a gen.

you can't have a gen anymore.

You've gotta come to us for babies.

And, and so, the women said, okay, you can have a gen, because they kept according to them much more powerful things.

So, yeah, go on, take the gen, no problem.

And, and, and we're very proud of the Genji, and, and because agen was what brought society together, when people die, and it causes a rupture in the social fabric of a group, and these are groups not like ours, where how many of you, really know the person sitting next to you, I mean, probably very few of you, whereas in a, if we were in a evangelic camp, you wouldn't just know that person.

You would've watched them probably since they were a small baby, and you would've seen all the stupid stuff they did.

You would've seen all the wonderful things they did.

You would know that person in a, in a, in a, in a way, which, which forces a sort of honesty between individuals, which we can escape from very easily in these urban

societies where we're constantly locked away and, and whatever, doing weird stuff in, in our own places, that we wouldn't do in public.

Whereas there, you really are known for who you are in, in a very profound way.

And, and so, when, when people die, you have to do these, end of morning ceremonies and what happens is that, the, the part, the people who died will have had affiliations to particular forest spirits, and these forest spirits, the forest spirits that you feed through song and dance, there are other forest spirits that eat blood and those ones you want to avoid because they cause lot the problems.

And, and so people are very clear that, you, you, when someone dies, if they were an initiator, if they're a woman, or if they were initiated of yli, then KO and Yli should be called to their lifting of m morning ceremony.

After they die, people stop cutting their hair.

They only wear old clothes, they just look really miserable and the reason is they want to, not make the, the spirit of that person want to come back or feel jealous, because if that person starts feeling jealous that they're still alive, then they could stop them finding food.

So, they make themselves look really miserable and their hair goes really bushy, and, and they wear dirty clothes.

And, and, and then that, and so, and so, after a year or so, it's felt that if that, that spirit's probably left, now it's fine.

We can start returning to normal.

So we call a geni, all the different spirits that those people were associated with are also called, and they're danced in this three or four days of celebration.

And, and, and at the very end of the celebration, a geni, is brought, and he takes those people who are affected by the death and washes them of their grief in the river and when they're returned back into the community, they can go and put on some nice clothes and start relationships with other people and, and do whatever it is they need to do to carry on.

So, because of this unfortunate thing that we come back once every year or two, so there's always people that need the lifting of morning ceremony, and it's quite a difficult thing for a hunter gatherer to organize, because you need to be able to, invite lots of people in and they, they need feeding.

And, and the big work of these rituals is, is, is actually feeding everybody.

So when I come with the resources I have, it's a good opportunity to do these rituals because you can tax me, for food and things that we need to feed everybody.

And, and so, we began this ceremony and, one of the people who had died was a woman who was a very famous, spirit, guardian of ku, which is a, a women's spirit, which is extremely, well, it represents the, the sort of fundamental power of women.

And, and that power is the reproductive power and gelian men really are in awe of, of women's ability to produce children.

I mean, we can do everything we like, but we can't produce children.

It's only you women who can.

And, and it is a remarkable miracle that this process of, of bringing new life into the world.

And, and so Goku embodies that.

But the way that when Goku comes outta it, it's got its own, its own secret place where the women go and, and, and do their whatever it is, they do that.

And, and then when they come out into the community, they often have very rude, songs that they sing to the men and they, so the women will dress up in flowers and, and look absolutely gorgeous and then they come singing out things like, let's, well, you'll have to excuse my language here.

Let's f**k yeah, yeah, yeah, let's f**k. Yeah, yeah.

And, and, and these gorgeous girls are all dancing through the camp singing this and then, they'll start insulting men.

And, and they'll say, ha, yo, your penises, they're just not up to it, are they? Hey, ha ha ha, your penises are always wibbly wobbly and flicky floppy.

You know, we need some, we need some proper, and then they'll start doing even little sort of sketches where they'll imitate men, drunken men trying to have sex with women and things like that.

And, and, and all us men were all sitting there thinking, Hmm.

As well as it being very sexy.

It's also your daughters and, and your sisters, and, and your mother and your grandmother, and, and it all get very messy and, and emotionally complex.

And, and so you just quickly quiet, really.

And, and if it's really too much the only thing you can do is just go away and they're often men go into the forest, or they take their sons down to the river and have a swim or something like that, get away from these riots at swimming.

But, but in a sense, in, in that moment, the women take over, and they really assert their authority, and they assert their power in the community.

And, nowadays, there's a lot of change in the forest there, loggers coming, building roads, and there all sorts of alcohol has, has become really widespread, and alcoholism has become a big problem, but also other drugs and there's this, one of these manufactured, opiates, that, that have been such a problem in America.

Fentanyl, it's not fentanyl, it's, tramadol, tramadol, it's a painkiller.

Anyway, so, to my astonishment, I, the young kids were, were selling these 10 pence each, during the parties, during the, the celebration and a bunch of young boys had, taken quite a lot of this and, and drinking as well and so the women were doing their in and really insulting the boys and, and trying to educate them about how to make love properly and how to treat a woman properly.

And, kids gonna help.

Well, yeah, I mean, I'm no expert on the thing, but, anyway, and, and so, then because the, the women had so imposed themselves in the community, it was now the men's term to impose themselves and there's a dance book, short and in shore, the

men all put their arms over each other's shoulders and, and stamp up and down the, the, the, the main area of the camp and they sing these very deep, basic songs.

And, and you really feel a male power come out.

And, and actually, when they're all stamping in, in the synchrony, it rocks.

You can feel it in the, the soil.

If you are lying on the ground, you can actually feel the earth shaped.

And, and, and for women it is something which is quite, intimidating.

It's intended to be intimidating, but because those are also the men that will protect you if, some dangerous animal comes along or some, very nasty person from a neighboring, farming community or something, it's, there's some comfort in knowing that your men are that strong and intimidating and powerful and so it's a, it is a, many of these dancers play with different qualities of joy.

And, and there is a certain, sort of quality of joy in, in knowing that the people who are gonna protect you are really scary and powerful.

And, and so it's somehow nice to see them being scary and powerful.

And, and anyway, so these young boys, they wanted to start doing short and so they started dancing up and down the, the camp and the women, because they had had such a nice angle, were still sort of chatting and, and just hanging around in the central space.

And, and these boys started to get a bit annoyed that, the girls weren't, or the women weren't moving away.

So they started insulting women.

Oh, your holes are all too big.

Oh, oh, your holes aren't tight.

You know, just really being rude.

And, and, and I could see the women getting quite angry and, and, and these, these boys were just sort of lost in their inebriation or whatever, and just immature and so they were just carrying on and as they got more frenzied, cause the women started to get more resolute about not moving, they started to get even more insulting.

And, and it just really deteriorated into this real, and some of the girls were getting so angry and trying slap the boys as they were coming by, dancing by.

And, and it started to get really, pots and heated, and one of the boys had an empty bottle of some alcohol, and the women was standing under a palm tree, and he just banged the, bottle against the, against the tree and the glass battered everywhere, and no women were infuriated.

And, there's a very lovely, dear friend of mine, and she's a, she, she, she, she doesn't come beyond my nipple, but, she is so strong and, and, and she just stood up and she was furious and she said, right, ladies, girls, come on.

Take your vaginas away. We're out of here.

We need to, and come on, come on.

And, and all the women just stuck and as one, they started to leave.

And, and of course for, for us men, it became really serious because what, what they were doing is basically saying, no, we're not gonna, we're not gonna support your ritual anymore.

You're gonna have to do it by yourself. And we can't do it.

Genji needs women. Genji doesn't have women seducing him into the camp through their sexy, beautiful singing and dancing.

He won't come. And if he doesn't come, he can't wash the morning away.

So the whole ritual we've been doing for two and a half days just will, will fall apart.

And, and so as all the women started rising up and everyone's cycling, oh s**t, this is really causing a problem now.

this old man, he quickly came up and said, really? we understand. We've all come through you.

We've only come through you.

It's, it's true, you women that we come, we understand those boys.

They don't understand what they're saying.

They're just talking outta turn.

They, they really, they've just lost it. Please, please and then the other men and all look from, oh yeah, really? Come on ladies, come on. You can't just run off like that.

We really do understand. We all came from, from you.

You are the source of light.

And, and slowly the women starts to calm down.

And, and, and so, came back in and, and we proceeded with a more orderly, ritual to completion.

So I told this story to Chris on one of our play dates.

Didn't we hear the story when we were doing some dark moon singing under the trees with ing, with Ingrid? Didn't we? Yeah. Well, 2019 maybe not exactly.

No, we heard it from Ingrid in the calf after that event.

Yes. You were telling us Ingrid, Ingrid was telling us.

Okay. Sorry Ingrid. So deserves a clap of that one.

No, I meant, I must say as well, I mean, that was the most beautiful, brilliant, version of that.

sure. That, that, that that event, that, that, it's, I've never heard it quite so beautifully expressed.

Thank you. It's beautiful.

So, what I get from that, I'm gonna summarize, it's the sort of the conclusion of almost the conclusion of the book, the way I wrote it, which is as follows, all human culture, all kinship, all morality, actually all the trust needed to generate language, everything actually, which makes us human.

All of that was born on the world's first picket line.

Now, you might think it's a little bit of a jump.

Yeah, well, I did. And so I read conveyors, it's almost instructions to the younger girls, right? We're taking all your vaginas, whatever word you want to use.

We're we're sorry, Carol can Vagina About that later.

Okay. All your c***s, take them out.

I interpret that as strike action.

It's called sex strike.

If you men don't know how to behave, they're not gonna get any sex and any kind of strike action is more than just solidarity.

Solidarity. You know, you can have all different forms of resistance, different kinds of solidarity, but a strike has particular qualities and one of the things about a strike is that somebody can be doing damage when they're not apparently hurting anybody.

Two people can be having sex and who are they harming? Well, hang on. It is supposed to be a strike.

You are breaking the strike.

So even when people are doing things, which, which may seem to be like space value, not really harming anyone, they are harming something, which is the, the particular form of solidarity which strike action represents and that's a partic, that's something which applies to all the worlds communities, that there's certain things which you just don't do and fundamentally, those things within all the world's religions, I mean, what, I mean, obviously I'm an atheist, but I do find something very valuable in every single one of the world's religions and that is that some things are sacred.

Not everything has a price.

and above all, if the body is not sacred, then nothing is and you're not gonna get, if you don't have rules about sexual behavior, you're not gonna have grammatical rules, table manners, all the other kinds of rules that sort of make up what we call, culture.

and in order to defend a strike, you need something like, the picket line, because you've gotta prevent, somehow prevent people from, I mean, in the language of taking any movement from scabbing and so I, I sort of have that as a model and I realize, of course, you can see, ah, and I have been criticized.

I mean, even my friends have said, Chris you're, you are coming from the seventies and eighties, you are using cloth caps and picket lines, and you're sort of projecting that all onto the distant evolutionary past.

And, and it was, it was actually Jerome who said, said, well, it's a metaphor, Chris, you are using for what? This little, this vignette that, that Jerome's given us.

You're using the idea of a strike.

but it, but you've gotta remember that it's a metaphor and I was thinking, well, I suppose so it's a metaphor, but kind of, I mean, it, it, it is, it's strike.

It's the word strike action itself.

I mean, I'm sure it is a metaphor.

I mean all sorts of, you can actually go, you can look at the etymology of picket line and find it actually has a military background and the strike of course hit and so on.

But, so, but, but all languages metaphor and I was trying to sort of work out in what why is, why is my metaphor I'm more metaphorical than all the other words that people used to describe things for and of course I was, I was very well aware that, um

and as I wrote in my book, *blood Relations*, that, I mean, all over the world, women use strike action.

I mean, it's just a normal thing.

And, and, and more than that, actually the form of, organized, sexual relationships that all cultures have, I mean, in no culture, the people just like do exactly what they plea.

There's always some kind of level of morality and hunter gatherers don't really have weddings.

I mean, they don't have marriage in the sense that you don't know with hunter gatherers, egalitarian, sorry, I must be clear.

Immediate return to be technical, people pun together, you don't practice story to egalitarian.

The institution manages us the wrong word, wedding's the wrong word.

It's called bride service. and bride service is almost another word for sex strike.

Because bride service means women with their backing of their mother and sisters and other relatives, at any moment, they can say no to the young man who wants a relationship with them.

So bright of wouldn't work, bright of just means a young man.

If he wants a relationship, he's gotta kind of earn it.

He's gotta prove himself generous, modest, a good hunter and any, any young man who's could sort of got a relationship but starts to starts to be disrespectful, show turns out to be a bit lazy, shouts at his partner.

I mean, he's likely to be just out.

So what, and that's, and, and when he's, when he's kind of dismissed from the relationship, it will be in a way collective, the woman herself will have the backing of a mom and has says that may be her brothers as well.

So what I'm saying is Brian has already got within it, what I'm kind of calling sex strike in the sense that no, this is a critical point.

A young man does not on forming a relationship.

He does not acquire this thing called Al Rights.

It's not that a woman like said yes and from then on, the man can say, okay, you said yes, you're my wife, I can have sex with you at any time.

She can say no, she's got a right to say no and that's intrinsic to it.

So I'm just simply saying it from my point of view and a sex strike isn't just a metaphor.

But having said that, thank A couple of steps back. Yes.

Yeah. So just to return to this primate world, where there aren't those rules about sex, where might is right in a very literal sense, you have the females fleeing, as Chris was explaining at the beginning there, their brothers and their fathers because of this random sex that can be imposed, forced on them at, at any time and so they flee to another group where they can at least have sex with people who aren't their relatives

and by contrast, hunter gatherers in these egalitarian societies, the women stay with their mothers, and it's the boy who has to leave his home to come and stay with her.

And, just from a, if you think about it from a simple PowerPoint of view, the, the, the, the, the girl, she has the support of her female relatives and her male relatives, because there she is in that community and that puts a, a very different balance of power into the relationship, to the one that primates have.

So there, there are certain very deep fundamental differences in the way that we organize ourselves to our closest relatives that really do require some explanation.

And, and, and so Chris was talking to me about, oh, sex, strike this, sex strike that picket line here, picket line, that, and, and sorry, we'll get to the end and then we'll have questions.

yeah. and so, um and I was saying, look, Chris you're taking something which is a, a practice from industrial relations, and you're applying it all the way back to, to these people who have no idea of industry, have no employment, motions, salaries, and all these things.

And, and it's you've gotta be a bit more specific.

You can't just bandy this word around without being, more particular and so what that did is it forced Chris to start thinking, okay, well, what do I mean by picket line? And then of course, he goes into the, the mechanics of how picket lines work, the, the, the power relations that are evident when people make a picket line or when people go on strike and it's that which is really illuminating.

The thing about, the thing about most social institutions that we have, think about it any kind of institution, it sort of gets, starts getting a little bit bigger, and you can even get bigger and bigger, and you can even have empires or whatever it would, but you can also have various companies and the, the sort of, as they get to a certain size, they start to fall apart and, and begin to sort of break up.

The weird thing about a picket line is that in principle, the it should have no end. and kind of in principle, the bigger, the better.

And, and so see, if you just have a local picket the scabs can always get around it and if you're thinking about sex strike, imagine, imagine something like the vignette we heard from Jerome that those boys were, were, were threatened with, and the community was all those young women, their their bodies gonna be taken away from us.

Well, maybe those boys in the evolution of us would, oh, well, you seem to be on strike.

We'll go and find some women who aren't on strike.

So the way around that is, of course, to have, again, metaphor, a general strike.

Now, have you organized a general strike? Well, what about using a clock and having a strike time for a certain point within that clock? What do I mean by a clock? Well, in the deep evening, you pass, you didn't have watches, you didn't have Big Bend, you didn't have pendulum, all that stuff, but you had two big clocks up in the sky.

One's the sun one's the moon.

There are really, really powerful reasons why the human female menstrual cycle evolved under natural selection to be compatible with the pity of, the moon.

I mean, the, the, the short version of it is just that we evolved in Africa and, we formed large groups under pressure find safety for, in numbers from predators.

The predators being the most dangerous ones being lions.

Lions are lunar animals.

In other words, lions have brilliant night vision.

and they, like, they rather laser creatures.

They don't like chasing too far.

They like to, they like to see you in the middle of the night when you can't see them and so they're very keen on hunting at dark moon at full Moon.

They kind of give up and, that is completely just standard science.

I could, I could show you Craig package statistics about humans being eaten by lands in tons of here over the last, I find the paper I can, I mean, you can even find the paper, but that's not so much the point, the point I'm trying to make now is that a picket line is best when it stretches on coordinate.

It's co you've gotta coordinate it.

There's a number of things about that picket line.

First of all, a picket line which uses violence.

That's not gonna work if you're trying to get people to join the strike, do any kind of intimidation or coercion.

No, you, you've gotta use kind of moral persuasion.

You've gotta, you've gotta persuade your, your brothers and sisters if you like to join the pick line, because it's their long term, no long term, not immediate, long-term interest.

and so there are, there are features about the pick line, which are sort of characteristic of that particular institution.

If you hold your picket line or you organize your strike at Dark Moon, it would be possible to do that because as I say, the human female of cycle would be compatible with that around the time administration for those women while menstruating.

Your, your, one of the things about menstruation, there's of course, I mean I what all this from Martin, but many other people, of course, your a woman's tolerance threshold tends to be a little bit lower as you're building up to menstruation, you're prepared to put up all sorts of crap from guys around, around ovulation.

But when it come to menstruation, no, no, no and it, and it's when you are not allowed to go on strike, there is de Martin's marvelous work when women are just told, right? It's just like any other day, nine to five, off you go, go to work.

When you come back, make sure you give your husband a supper.

You may watch sex in the evening and hang on a bit.

It is my menstrual. No, no, no, no. Just like any other.

So we have a, we have a, you have periodic you humans in a non periodic world, which is what we, what we've got now.

So unless you have, like unless you have a a a, a, I mean, this is Emily Martin's point.

She said this thing called an illness called premenstrual syndrome.

I mean, it's an, it's, it's described as an illness that she was arguing that the problem is the non periodic nature of society.

Society is made by people who don't have periods.

You know, modern society is made by men, of course dominated by men so we have this, this sort of construct called conventional syndrome.

We have to leave all that more.

It's completely aside, I'm simply saying that this theoretical model is very, very precise.

If you just say solidarity, if you just say resistant, if you say language evolved when we had cooperation, I mean, that's just nothing that all animals cooperate.

If you talk about solidarity that all animals threatened with a threaten, like birds threatened by predator or I dunno, they'll mob the enemy.

So that, that's kind of solidarity. No, no.

The picket line is far more precise.

Why is it important to be precise? Because a good scientific model is improbable.

It's kind of unlikely.

It's, it's, and it's therefore because it makes, cause it's surprising, unexpected, and it makes very specific predictions.

You are giving your critics every chance to demolish the theory that there should be all kinds of evidence.

For example, if something you find around the world, traditionally the time to have the, the, like the classical time of the appropriate time for menstruation is full moon.

Well, that would disprove the model.

You'll find, by the way, everywhere around where if there is some sort of cosmological rule or statement or, or ideal time for menstruation to occur, you will find it is always darmouth.

Well, okay, well that's one, one prediction, which is validated the most difficult ones.

Other, other words, the, were those which are directly concerned with, a picket line and shall I go on with David Lewis Williams and the Sid Red line? Well, I Mean, just Jeremy, I think we can go there, but Yeah.

Yeah. But I mean, just to return to what we were saying at the beginning the, the, the sort of the metaphors that are being used to try and make sense of the evolution, the ones that are dominance in the, in, in, at the moment, these ones that are basically male bias will focus on warfare.

and, and, and those are the metaphors that are used to try and say, oh, that's how we generated that solidarity or that cooperation.

And, and what I think is really powerful about, the, the, the, the, the idea of the picket line is that this is a, a, a series of relationships between people that go well beyond industrial relations.

And, and actually what we can see, and, and this is I think what, Chris is going to talk about now is how in, in, in lots of traditional societies, but particularly in those that have left some traces, we can see what really does look like picket lines.

So Chris, do you wanna talk about it? Okay, so, as I say, I ended one of the chapters and, and we've now agreed on that.

I think between Jerome and I, we're making sort of finishing touches.

We all everything that makes us human language, culture, religion, cosmo, punitive morality, always born on the world's first picket line.

And, okay, now how do we test that in the light of all the different levels of evidence? Well, 1, 1, 1 realm of possible evidence, of course is rock art.

If you want to sort of go really back to reasonably early times in, in, in terms of human history and prehistory, rock art is pretty good.

So, we, we evolved in Africa, of course, and, rock art in Southern Africa is pretty ancient.

Not that ancient doesn't take me right back to human origins.

Of course, when it goes back, we think many s years, perhaps up to 8, 9, 10 and there's a marvelous article by the rock art specialist who actually, init inaugurated modern rock art studies.

His name is David Lewis Williams.

and one of his early papers was called, the Thin Red Line.

Now, my model would predict that what made culture, what established the divi gender division of labor was a line of women, if not actually menstruating, at least acting out that they menstruating by covering themselves in blood or red vegetable dye or, or, or red ochre.

But it's a thin red line, and it's, and the line says like, don't cross.

and David Lewis willing is discussing this.

I mean, he, he just describes how ous, sorry, ubiquitous.

Alright. Okay. He uses the word ubiquitous.

The, the, the motif in Southern African ancient rock art, which is most ubiquitous or widespread, is the motif of a thin red line.

and it's, it's clear that this red line is sort of supernaturally potent.

It's kind of linked with blood, it's sacred and what you see in the images, and I've just got one little image here, but there's plenty of them, is that this line runs between women's legs.

here we are. That's a big example.

It, it goes here, but it actually, this line is endless and it's, it's, it's, it's being read.

Okay. And I, I mean, we went, I went.

Can we just, well, okay, this One is just to say that that's, that's an healing and it, and there is this persistent kind of equivalency between the experience of the potency of healing and the potency of men.

So obviously I'm, I'm sort of, I mean, jumping a few steps, I'm saying here we are, that's the picket line.

But you might think, okay, well I've just cherry picked a few bits of rock up to make my point.

Well, no, not really. think about it.

What is the most probably familiar motif in fairytales? I would suggest it's the dragon.

I mean, what is the dragon? It's a line, it's a snake.

It's often got many heads.

it's very fond of maidens patriarchy in order to make the world safe for marriage and the family under patriarchy, heroes like St.

George had to chop it off, chop it up, rescue the maiden from this thing.

I'm, I mean, it's a bit of an argument.

It's all in my book God relations.

But, the dragon now, one of the reasons I came to the understand the dragon was because if you look at aboriginal, aboriginal, Australian rock, art and ritual, you'll find that this divinity is called the rainbow snake.

Again, the rainbow snake is made of blood, it's actually made of menstrual blood.

What happens is that when women dance together, there's their menstrals, flows connect up into a river or snake or rainbow or the mother of it, all of us.

This is a source of potency and he just go around the world and he'll just find sacredness linked to serpent snake.

But this serpent snake has always got a magical quality of it and very, very often you actually see inside the snake, whole bunch of women and children forming that state by linking arms, linking their blood.

so I'm just saying this theory makes predictions.

Any decent scientific theory would be testable.

It should be way, I mean, okay, SPOs supposing this dragon or rainbow state, or whatever it is, supposing that thing engaged in marriage, supposing he had a, a, a dragon that married women, that would contradict my theory because the, the dragon is the antithesis of marriage of such strike is women's solidarity against, um so, and of course, and, and of course it could Be that it married all the women and kept All the women. That's right. It doesn't, it's a bit of a different one from woman one penis.

It's not exactly wedlock or marriage.

I can understand this exactly.

So I mean, I, I, we've, we've spoken for a whole hour.

it's obviously our theory is a little bit ambitious.

but it's different. It's exciting.

A lot of people like it. It's, it's, it's, there's no other theory.

I mean, if anyone thinks there's another theory, if Darwinian theory you a language, please tell me because I haven't come across one.

and the warfare, the only social alternative is the warfare one that doesn't work.

why not give this one a chance and see if it works for you All.

Culture was born on the picket line. That's it, John.

First of all, apologies, my phone, I couldn't get the volume down.

I, I listened to your account loan and it struck me very much that it, it's like what goes on in Big Metropolis in, in the town center Friday nights that you get the same sequence.

You get the two sets of turning up the light, nice to run another, well, doing their sort of little displays.

Then gradually the, the input of, alcohol, narcotics, all kicks out.

You end up with lot of bad things happening.

But what goes on initially is that you, you have the females sort of, sorry ladies para raiding themselves.

Yeah. in often a, state of, relative unrest in front of the males.

You have the males dressing themselves up for a certain extent and so you have this, these two displays going on to start off with and result of it is not mass forties at the end of the evening.

No. Is quite the opposite.

You know, that, that that's what the thing happened Saturday night that, where they sort of, settled down and decided what they liked would be were week.

I, is that a fair analogy? So did, zoom, did zoom hear what John was saying? He was comparing what the beautiful story from Jerome to a, like Friday night, Saturday night Shenanigans.

Newcastle. In Newcastle.

But, but what's so interesting, Jerome, you say something.

Yeah. I mean, so there are some similarities, but, there isn't the same structure.

So what, what's different in the case I was talking about is that it's not just the young women.

It's all the women. It's the old women.

It's the, the, the premenopausal women too, girls.

and so it's everyone coming, all, all the females coming together, to, and exercising their, their force and their power.

I guess the difference with the Newcastle students is that, they're a particular age, you won't see all the grandmas hanging out with them as they're displaying away.

so there is something fundamentally different going on and then there's the, the, the moral force that those women can marshal against the misbehavior of the, the boys and I dunno if that happens to quite the same extent, in the evenings and Camilla's dying to say something.

I'm dying to say something because I think that those Newcastle girls in their best list with showing the most are doing female cosmetic coalitions.

Absolutely. Abso f*****g literally and they are absolutely co They'll go to toilets together.

They'll go wherever they're going to drink together.

They will stick together and, and even display their capacity to get drunk together and, and do that cosmetics, of course and the cause and the process of the cosmetics,

of creating the bonds of are you bond, are you bonding with someone 'cause they lent you the lipstick or cause they showed you how to lose, use the lipstick or whatever and they create these coalitions that even they kind of all wearing something a bit different, but they meld together.

I'm not sure that this, and, and to say that they don't have moral authority, that those girls that aren't able to suss out what's going on with the boys and, and which one is okay, their moms don't.

Yeah. But the moms and the moms are saying, you are home by what? Are you going out like that? Are you, I think yeah, there's a whole layers and layers there that it needs proper field work, Proper economic, it's actually much stronger.

Okay. When they into their label, of course.

Yes. But, they do engage it.

If you were a chap and you think you pull, you haven't because, because goes, they have a big discussion on your good points and bad points.

Exactly. Your suitable.

Do you, do you relate that to this theoretical question of the origins of human culture? That's what we're trying to, we're going beyond describing Liverpool on a Saturday night on Newcastle actually made something like what we've described made us human.

Yes. It really point. Is it made back? Do we I go back with, with Cox, the people coming. Yeah.

I feel Like so not to. Yes. The parallels were there.

It's cool to pick up on this and yes, the pointed out that there is no agency and these women are doing something and there's, they don't have no power or something like that.

And, and yes, we go into the lu and the side dogs.

Is that, but, but I think the, one of the key differences, the key difference is the point about the strike.

Like one of the main thrust of the whole argument and one of the main points as I understand it, is the unanimity, the capacity for collective una unanimous action that has decisive effect.

So yes, the key point and the difference in the sad, tragic difference that from this lens is that right now, if I'm looking to take care of my girlfriend, we're all drunk in a bar on Saturday night.

I go up to her and I say, I stand next to her and I say like, oh, I create an excuse for her to leave.

Like, I try to find out if she's safe.

The ladies are gonna know what I mean, we have our little codes.

We're not sure if she wants to be, my girlfriend wants to be hit on by this guy who's all over her and so we go over and we say like, oh, buddy's calling you and give her an excuse to walk away and then we get her away and yes, there's female solidarity going on there, and no, I won't, we won't have it then.

We don't have any agency.

But the di the key difference between what we have to do and what we do on a Saturday night and what these guys are talking about is that like the moment some guy would be misbehaving at all in the club, the moment a single guy rope somebody, we don't want that to happen.

Or tries to put a roofie in so string mm-hmm.

Every single f*****g woman in the club turn around and be like, what the f**k? And kick the guy's ass right in front of everybody. Exactly and that doesn't happen. Exactly. Unfortunately.

On a Saturday night today. Oh, well done.

Well, and so that's, I just through that, like I go Okay.

Okay. I mean, yeah.

Christine, Subject of what you were talking about, I just wonder the boy that broke the bottle against the tree, did he have a girlfriend? And what happened to the bride service department who picked up the glass, who went around picking up the glass on the ground? Yeah.

So is the question, did zoom hear the que? Can you hear the Questions? youth are very, they have very, voracious sexual appetites, and they don't worry too much about, being necessarily always with the same person.

and so there's, there's quite a sort of, I mean, there's a very tolerant sexual freedom in young people, and they're encouraged to experiment and experience as many people as they like.

And, and, and they can experience same sex relationships without any, insult or, or people getting crossed with them as, people sometimes dress up as cross dress.

Um there's, there's all sorts of experiments that go on and people are encouraged to, to know what you like and it's, it's felt to be something that's good, that as a young person, you have, you're sexually experienced the sort of relationship you like and so when you meet that person that really hits your, your spots, that's first probably the person to go with and, and then have a monogamous relationship and once you are committed and you start doing bride service, then you remain committed and it's different to these young lads who, who will go and visit all the different bucca they're called buka, these ceremonies and when they hear of one, they're all dressing themselves up, cleaning themselves beautifully, just as of course the girls are, or the young girls.

And, and there is lots of sex that goes on.

I mean, that's part of the, the attraction of these events.

You know, Just in the context of, speak up discussion for the zoom context and Slowly for the zoom, The discussion about strike and use the word and I, I was wondering whether maybe another word, a more encompassing word, like conditionality or enforceful conditionality or I'm recognize conditionality enforce, so it is just a different word, which might be more Got, It does, it does.

It's stating the same thing in effect. No, It doesn't Really conditions.

It's just a condition. I'm not going back to, I'm not going back in that factory until I get my condition Met. Yeah. But it's the collectivism isn't there, the, the fact that you can, you can really, it's totally upset absolutely everybody by just having a little bit of a snug with somebody and always think aren't in there.

I think what I'm trying to get away from is, is the objection that you are bringing, culture of the eighties, nineties, or western industrial society to bear on this, which is more universal and so maybe working around a different word might help open that up, but It's just suggestion On a minute. Okay.

Spoken otherwise, Otherwise, but speak line enough that they can hear you here or come and speak. I think so It's true that we, it's a particular political vocabulary strife, general strife being used to discuss something that might be much older and broader and in some ways there could be an argument for, well, let's work back from that and pick a more universal word.

But in some ways, and you pointed out like all you could say, all anything we pick at or language we use could arguably be understood as some kind of metaphor and isn't it interesting that it's women's solidarity that we're looking for a more natural word for it? Like it's, it's significant that it's that where women are denied political action in some ways and need to be understood as natural, organisms as opposed to political subjects.

That is, in a way, maybe it's tricky for us to understand it as a strike.

Like 'cause or you think of a word or you think of a word.

I don't think conditionality might be it, but I feel you, like you think of a word that seems more broad of like a typology of which strike is now an example and you, and you say, well, and you could say it's social solidarity.

You could say it's unanimity.

You know, we don't have to, but, and then you could say, well, strike is an example in the 20th century of something that is broader and older and then you start working with that broader and older category.

I mean, that would be fine with me if we could think of a good one, but if we can't think of a good one, then there should be no reason that we can't use stripe to talk about it and if we can't, I really do think it's because we're not allowed to like, kind of, if it's seen as, synchronistic, it's because we don't like to think of women as political subjects in the first place. Exactly.

Thank you. Thank you. Yeah.

No, but I mean, it's true and I think we, we have spent some time thinking about what alternatives and, Chris has persuaded me the line is a very good, when they used the warfare model, they're thinking of the blitz.

Yeah. Oh, here we are all in together, all the blitz territorial that it's a, it's a metaphor.

I mean, it's a, but of course, part, a lot of our book is about the ordinary language ethics and of course, we're aware that the whole of language is metaphor, everything creative.

I mean, the thing about language is that it is extraordinary creative, but that's one of the brilliant things that, Chancy pointed out.

You kind of, when you beginner a sentence, you never know what's gonna come next, ? So it's hugely creative, but all the creativity is metaphorical.

You're saying something which is false, but there's an honest intention behind it.

I mean, when, I don't know, obviously this sort of cliché is Shakespeare, Juliet is the son.

I mean she's not the son. She's a woman and her son's a huge bold ball of hydrogen up of the sky and this is the person with two legs and she's, so you, you're saying something evidently false, but behind the falsehood is an honest intention.

So I, I, I, to me, I can't act, I've been trying to think of another word than strike a Pickett.

And, and of course, I mean, if he am a D for example, he writes about Hebrew.

That's a beautiful example.

I just really briefly, she describes what happens among the Ebo when it's known that some man has nested a, a girl along some path and so the goddess Imi, who takes the form of a python, she just calls out, they all have a secret meeting.

They they call of, of women, women.

They call out all of the women and all the women converge on the house of this person who's committed this crime.

Mm-hmm. And he gets, and he gets his, I don't know.

I mean, he's all right. It's sort of, he won't be, he won't be damaged. He won't do that. He Won't be All, well, he may not be all right, but I'm just saying it is, but it's, but if, if he calls it a strike as, as she calls it, a sex strike, and she's not using a metaphor.

She doesn't least, she certainly doesn't think she is.

She's just describing in the any language she can 'cause she's writing in English and what, what happens when a man messes with a woman in this rather patriarchal society of ego.

But this women have enormous amount of solidarity, and they maintain it through periodic sex track action, organized by a kind of Trae in Congress called the serpents called, Yeah. The Kind of like, there's what, how people are about say count menstrual love and stuff.

It's almost like we're having the same conversation about the worst strike.

Yeah. Right? Yes.

To say, I mean, there is a long history of sex strike and its reality that goes way before industrial circumstances.

One, we can think of the great, play of Aristo as the example.

Now that may not seem to be real.

It may seem to be the ra may seem to be all made up outta the head of, and, and it was meant to be a sort of joke against women, but actually Aristo wrote a number of these Gino Illa, women ruling comedies and it was a particular structure of matriarchy

that almost surely, and I know because I've analyzed this play in its original language, referred to women's ritual actions in Greek Athenian policy society, where they were indeed engaged in ritual strike act strike effectively, where they were out of the, the, the Ikea, the, the home in a kind of political space, says more suicide.

Very interesting. Another, oh, Chris in his great book Blood Relations First Book, and this is the next great book, well, there was another one in between, but this one's the end, introduced sex strike through, well, it didn't even start with the, the chapter in blood relations, if you've never read it, to read the sex strike.

Chapter four is a huge introduction to this whole area where he starts with primates and he starts with female gelada baboons, making decisions amongst themselves.

Are we gonna go with that new male or keep this old one? And they have a vote and there's a, and they vote, they literally do vote kind of with their feet or by pulling, no, don't go that way.

Come this way. So it's a political barney amongst those, that alliance of they're related gelada females.

So this is just per the sort of monkey, this is monkey level.

It's an even great ape level.

In fact, the monkey's a bit more sophisticated because they're female relatives, whereas great apes, the females can very have harder time to get the solidarity.

but then went on in the second part of that chapter to illustrate the cultural depths of sex strike, including if is one, if, if he was very much politically understood everything that the, and there is so many examples in West African cultures, not only ibo, but I talked about the Ang movement from Cameroon.

Is just, that is, I mean, Wow. Just do this from you just said.

What other way could, in the course of evolution, sexual morality have been studied? Just think about it other than by some form collective action, as soon as you serve collective action, will it be men who would be in favor of restraining their sexuality, or would it be more likely women? And I mean, just think about it and it's like, it's a no brainer.

What is extraordinary actually about the articles and the contributions on the evolution of morality is how much verbiage gets spilled by usually older white males, usually academics on moral evolution of morality without even talking about sex.

Sex. Exactly. And you think It's about philosophical questions about a train running down a Yeah. The three Problems, it's gonna go this way, gonna kill, kill three people, kill three people.

It go this way. It kill 15 people.

So should they really go in that track? It's Like they do anything to avoid the question of sex.

I mean, anything. Because if you talk about sex, you're gonna need two genders, and they, oh my God and they want to use you the X language and they wanted us, yeah.

Trained us for supermarkets.

Sorry. Zoom, you're very quiet.

Is there anybody on zoom would like to ask any questions? Is, is anybody before John if John's had a go and, but go with you and then go with Graham? I don't think, I just had a, maybe it's a very basic question, but right at the start, you said that language could only emerge when there is trust.

Yeah. Mm-hmm. And I was curious why trust as opposed to collective goals or a shared idea of reality.

What is it about trust that makes it so important? Well, I mean, it is just that I'm a Darwinian and there's a thing called Darwinian Signal Evolution theory, which is the study of how signals evolve among animals, or actually plants as well.

But anyway, 'cause all, all living creatures communicate well, way or the other.

And, and it's just that, okay, chimpanzees are perfectly capable of not just symbolism, but actually metaphor.

So if you, if you raise a chimpanzee in your family as they're human, Roger, fruit as a human family, they, Roger Fruit's raised these chips.

Many other people have done that in, in the eighties.

And, so, so I mean, so I, I won't go into all the details, but if his, what his particular chimp, started saying you s**t to his carrot, well, he didn't give him food because, I mean, so he knew the word for s**t because he done toilet, he wanted food, he didn't get the food he wanted, didn't get the right kind of banana, said, you sip.

Well, that's a beautiful metaphor. Metaphor, okay.

Because, because his carrot is actually not literally a piece of s**t, but, but metaphorically with a, he was a piece of sip and he wanted so I'm just saying that now, I I, well, you got the chimpanzee can do that to the human, the chimpanzee can do.

Well, I'm studying that dream.

I'm saying as soon as, I mean, I I've, I've, I've got friends, we have worked summer here.

We have, I've been, and far I been so many people now, I've spent I, years and years and years of their lives living with chimps, living with gorilla and they will just tell you all, none of those capacities for metaphor and even for conventional signaling ever get used in the wild and the reason being that there's always, certain element, even between sisters, brothers, friends, well, there's always an element of mistrust.

There's always an element of possible, possible trickery and so what happens is that anything which might be a trick is rejected and the only signals which get responded to are signals which are connected causally to some aspect of the real world, connected to the emotions, to the body, to how big the animal is where it is.

So chi like, when they see food, like a food call, it's like, it's like audible salivation.

When a chimp makes that sound, it's like when you hear a cat purring, that's the sound of happiness.

This is the sound of saliva.

So unless the, unless the signal's connected in a causal way with its reference with what it means, the animal will just reject it.

So you can, you can teach, um chimps sort of ru rudimentary form of American sign language, put 'em in the wild, absolutely useless.

They'll go straight back to using that body language.

So human language is head language.

It's not connected to the body at all, actually.

I mean, John is easy to please, and where things center as Choky so proud of, they, they're not connected with emotions or anything at all, but they're, they're sentences which are the same sentence, whoever you are with your male female, big, small here, none of that happens in nature and we've gotta explain how it was possible to happen with us and we need a theory.

I I, we're not gonna go into the theory of to see there's nowhere near enough time.

But, but, but very briefly, we needed a form.

We need ritual, ritual sufficiently powerful to, to generate sufficient bonds of trust for within the, the ritual, the structured community, these cheap things we call words that become, worth relying on.

So that it's a theory, but it's, it's a good theory.

I mean, and I, when I say it's a good theory, what I'm saying is that a number of very key colleagues of ours in linguistics Del Goldberg, c Brook, and people, I mean, they're beginning to see that actually this theory brick that actually does work.

But it's the only theory, theory there is actually, Graham, do you wanna Go? I just, I mean, I'm just bit coming back to your spike, what what you're describing is a, is a theory of society being, which has developed language, for example, based on a tremendous act of female solidarity in collect act.

Yeah. which is fine.

But, there's plenty evidence for I, and, and I don't know how controversial it in the world around anthropology, but it It's very controversial there. Yeah.

But it doesn't that, that act itself, but it creating a society in which this is the rule, and you can't break it because we, the women will impose it doesn't require many strikes.

It doesn't require many graphs and so to, to, I mean, I don't know what your evidence is for saying that's how it began.

Because if you think about any aspect, I mean, I'm going to stop through it all my life in various places, and we really we're might have been on seven or eight strikes over a 40 year working life.

Mm-hmm. But actually every day there is a struggle going on between, as people will know who work management and the work that's, for example, this a small example.

Recently, you must all come back to the office five days a week.

So we can keep an eye five days.

Well, we're not coming back to the office.

There's a spike on that anywhere.

People are just not going back to the office because management there, which is almost unspoken.

Yeah. May not even have the tribunals involved in it.

It's just, no, we are not getting up at six just to get to work past eight on sort of smelly crane, ? But is it working? That's, if the strikes haven't occurred on the train, but I'm just giving a to narrow your argument down to a ticket line that is, is perhaps underestimating, I'm just suggesting what's actually going on, which is a really powerful societal chain, which is a daily occurrence and your story.

So can you repeat The essence of that? So what Graham Durham, who's long term nt of mine, I've, what we see as is saying that without even a picket line or a strike, there's forms of resistance, which are happening all the time.

Like, for example, since Covid people started working at home management are saying, come to the office.

A lot of people are just not just without any union or industrial action, just not turning up at the office, not much management can do about it.

Why don't I take that sort of model instead of, cause you don't actually need to have a full blown strike to have sufficient resistance to make a huge difference and the reason I'm, I, I won't, I won't spend at all long on this, is because I, as I said earlier, I'm interested in testing the model.

and, if you go the whole way and think about how would you, what was the most powerful way that the evolving human female could signal No, you could make a prediction.

You wouldn't just use a consonant, an V like no darling, not tonight.

All that sort of stuff. You'd use the body language you'd do to the body language collective and what you do, you reverse the biological signal of Yes.

So it's when, when, when a when a chimpanzee female is an res and available, she's signal to the male that she's of the right, the right species.

She's another chimpanzee. She's at the opposite sex.

She's a female of a male, and she's in her fertile period.

Rous. Now we just think about it.

How is the evolving human female with's sorts of things about concealed tion? We need to think about before that we go into all that.

You just reverse the signals of Yes.

So the bad of the signals of yes is, is right sex, right time.

Right, right. Species reverse them.

You've got wrong sex or piece of wrong.

Now, you might find that a bit weird, but I'm interested in all the details of world mythology, all the details of K bar, and you'll find this thing called totemism, for example.

You'll find that in all fairytales men are turning into frogs, women are turning into swans.

I mean, changing your, changing your sex in your streets.

The world's oldest known ritual is probably El Bull called Ellan Bull Dos.

What happens is that a girl comes of age, she starts to bleed, her mom grabs hold of her, she puts in, in her heart, surrounded by other women, and she turns into, what does she turn into Elland Bull.

So the girl is turned into, first of all the wrong species.

She's an Elland, then she's the wrong, the wrong sex, she's a bull, then she's the wrong time, she's bleeding.

So a bleeding bull eland, and you see the rock out.

So I'm just saying, do we want to explain fairy tales, myth, art, ritual, the whole damn lot from a nice, simple parsimonious city or not? If you use, if you just use a little bit of resistance here and there, you're not gonna get wrong sex long, speak at the wrong time, and you're not gonna get the beautiful detail of the world's oldest known myths and structures of fairytale and rock out university.

The only reason that works is cause I'm not, people do it, do it into the office.

I'm unemployed right now. I'll, I'll, that's another No, no.

But there's a lot of people now, and people complain about it.

They, ah, they're able to pull us back into the office because some people are Willing to, But also with a, the point about the strike, everyone has to be part of it.

That's the point. Yeah. Yeah. That's a great idea.

Everyone got anyone who's not part of it is a scout. Yeah and that's the difference. Yeah. That's, and there is Jo John, you do you wanna come and, and Stan Yeah, no, Stan and then John, I came tonight because I've never heard Jerome talk before and that, that story was so down to earth. Yeah. Real.

Because you had experienced it directly.

So 'cause I, I've read Chris's stuff before and the Camillas so I, I know the theory, but, hearing it firsthand right, is lovely.

I, I thought, when, when you talk about the warfare thing, of course there isn't there's an element of truth there.

But when there's an enemy, you can unite against the enemy.

And, and that of course is today's politics, isn't it? You know, ting needs to have an enemy, and so does Trump and so does, yeah.

Britain needs to coherent enemy in order, if there's not one, they're inventive, don't they? Mm-hmm. but, but then that kind of solidarity that you say, the, the origin of it, military so there's a military myth as well, military, metaphor, origin in some way.

Soldiers fighting together, of course, the comrades, aren't they? Yeah. but they're against the other, whoever the enemy is.

but, when, when the cat trust, because it why, why trust the, the, the animal thing is, is, as Chris said it's gotta be, it's gotta be expensive.

It is, you, you have to use all of your, all of your body to make a signal.

and you can't help it, ? Whereas we can whisper we can whisper to That Powerful Yeah. With human words. You, you, you put your whole post together, it, digital conversation very different, isn't it? To a big, loud, heavy signal across the lot.

So it's very cheap.

When by changing the syllable, you can change the meaning.

So you have to be on that, in that relationship.

I think reasonable, Very, very common. All All animal signals are costly.

Not necessarily hugely costly, but the animal has to invest its body in the signal.

When we say, make the difference between, okay, we'll meet you tomorrow, okay, we'll eat you tomorrow.

It's a matter of life and death, but it costs nothing.

So it's just a tiny little switch, like switch you on the voice or opening your lips and study them or something.

Because absolutely nothing to make a life or death difference in, in speech, animals wouldn't allow that.

They would, they would demand some reliability by insisting that the signal invest their whole body in some thought in some way in, in the signal.

John? Yeah. Go back to the, al topic.

Can you come and be quite loud so they can hear, on the al side, I remember some time ago there was a lot of work going on ation of menal cycles, a monthly more group.

I think the example is that you usually give non, but I'm looking that diagram rock on and I just wondered whether that could be interpreted a menstrual cycling going on ic, That that particular art is probably more not so old as palli.

It'll be a bit more recent, but I think it's still idiomatic of something that The, the, the, the dragon, the rainbow snake, the, the, the NGAs, I mean, all those powerful mates often with wings and many heads, they are images of ritually organized menstrual synchrony.

But, but it's, the, the, the sort of biological reality of ventral sinny is much more sort of uncertain.

I mean, it's like, it's not like in real life, it's easy for women to, it's clo where persistent synchronize sation, as long as they do enough to create a, an impression that the men believe that they're synchronized, that will give you your dragon, your snake, and that, and that will be in the rock arts.

So there's no, I completely agree with you that, that there's, that, that red line that's in red line is an image of yes.

Of it's a representation of culturally organized, ritually organized menstrual sicky.

Actual biological menstrual sicky is much more iffy.

If, if you think of a hunter-gatherer camp with, with a, that was a burg picture.

So mountain bushman, only very few girls out of the camp because most of the women might be pregnant or breastfeeding and not necessarily menstruating.

So we happen to be a society where there are a lot more menstrual cycles going on, means we overlap a lot more cycles and therefore the idea of synchrony is much more like, is, is in some sense that actually occurring.

but there is no question that the idiom that synchrony is there belongs in hunter-gatherer cultures, whether it's Australia, James. Yeah.

Well, Ian is Ian, are you here? Yeah.

Why didn't you say something? Okay. This is Ian. What Ja, James Woodburn was working with the Hada.

He'd been started working with them in the late 1950s and by 1974, he, he was quite totally convinced that that, the men at least, and, and virtually all his information came from men, shared this belief that there was a level of synchrony, menstrual synchrony amongst the women, timed with the moon.

He, he, he drew on two particular informants.

One, one of them was much more precise than the other.

He, he said at the beginning of dark moon, one or two women might, might start to menstruate by the appearance of the new moon.

All the women would be menstruating, and by the full moon, no one would be menstruating and Is mu is more, cautious informant was basically saying the same thing, but more cautiously.

and James didn't, and, and this was three years after, a woman's scientist first introduced the topic into the scientific literature.

McClintock, I've forgotten her first name. Martha Ock, The McClintock effect. Martha, Martha, Martha McClintock Mcoc.

And, and James wanted to run with this, and he, he, he, he, he, he'd written a seminar paper on it.

He tinkered with the paper for 20 years, and in the end he just decided it was too, too much.

objection To that paper says, it is a very difficult thing to write about because the taboo among academics is very strong, not, I'm not quite sure how to do it and he, he ended up being paralyzed with a feeling that he can't quite get away with it and so he didn't publish. It was critically important, the whole of symbolic culture among the headset.

So Eric, who Can just add one more thing to that. Yeah.

Ian, Ian wa has rescued this paper was buried in a kind of coffin after the best being James Woodburn.

But Ian Watts has worked was he Has a new sort of ambivalent respect for James Woodburn.

Now. Like, I always kind of like, I really liked him, but also like always wanted to bother him about this and I'm like, oh, okay.

We bothered him persistently for years and years and years.

But posthumously Ian has gone in there like he's through, through the Ring of fire, getting, getting the thing 1974. Yes. But it was, The notes were taken in the sixties. Yeah.

Or fifties. Yeah. Yeah, a Long time. But the, the, the only date on the actual unpublished could, Could, Can, can I just add a final Yeah.

A final bit to this story, which of course is what James did do very well, was to, de describe Hads a ritual and the main thing that came outta the hads a ritual was

that their most important ritual is timed for the dark moon, the time when women was believed to be menstruating and this was a, a ritual of solidarity, of, of celebrating joint shared parenthood.

But, but also it was designed to help ensure the success of forthcoming hunting and that to this day, or until very, very recently, the hadler's most productive form of hunting was in the Knights leading up to full moon.

This is particularly in the, in the dry season, and this is true not just for the hazer, but also in Southern Africa amongst various Bushman groups as well.

So these were things that we, Chris, when he wrote blood relations, he wasn't predicting any of that.

His predictions were all, he, he, he, he just didn't think any extent society, any existing society would still be behaving in those ways.

His predictions were at the symbolic level.

But, but, but what's remarkable is how, how time resistant if the, if there is enough abundance there to sustain collective big or big game hunting, how time resistant even the beha at a behavioral level that this model could be.

could I just just add a bit, Ian, just the fact that, women's, menstruation linked to the moon and an idea of synchrony has been recorded by ethnographers with the hadza almost for a century with Dorothy Blake.

Yep. James Woodburn, myself, ENA Maki and, Catherine Fitzpatrick.

Oh, yeah. Really importantly, for a thesis for Cambridge, which was of course where Jameson's thesis, but on an evolutionary site, she was doing it, but she had very good, information too.

So it's like, it's, it's just a persistent theme through those.

But I mean, just to, I mean, the point about this, the, the duration of these systems, and I think it's just really important.

We're not claiming that somehow these communities are primitives fossils who've just remained the same.

But it's just that because we live in a society with so much inequality, you, you are having a constant friction between the oppressors and those being oppressed and that constant friction, of course, the people who are oppressed, resist, and the oppressed seek all sorts of new ways to, to reassert their oppression.

And, and, and that friction leads to all sorts of rapid change constantly in societies.

Nothing ever works where, because of course, people are unhappy, with that situation.

Whereas what you have in societies like the haa or the Bamb jelly, the people I've been working with, is a system where that friction isn't present.

There isn't an oppressed group.

you, you have the dynamic relationship between genders, but as soon as a child can walk in the baba and jelly, they can stay where they like.

So if your parents are constantly arguing, the children will go and stay with their auntie.

They'll go and stay with their best mate.

They'll go and stay with somebody else, right? And, and parents can't tell their children what to do.

They can ask them nicely, but they can't force them to do anything and so, in such a context, the sorts of frictions, I mean, you just think about the quality of parental child relationships in that context.

It's quite different to the sort of patriarchal, finger wagging way that, many men like to imagine they couldn't be fathers.

and, and, anyway, there's lots of work on the relationship of men to their children in these societies.

Men spend more time, in by ACA groups, the, the group of ney, hunter gatherers I'm talking about with their children in any other society, and this has been quite carefully documented, children up until the age of about two spend hardly any time.

I, I can't remember exactly.

It's something like 90% of the time in the arms of somebody, they, they're not left alone.

They, they, they aren't put down.

and this creates a, a completely different context for living.

and, and it's something which is high quality childcare, the major aim of the whole society, ? Yeah. And, and the focus of activity is on, producing abundance and joy.

It, it really is an explicit focus of so many activities, of the most valued activities.

So it is very difficult for us where it's all about work and becoming somebody and proving yourself and, and resisting or becoming the dominant one that is a, a situation of conflict.

It's hard, it's stressful.

and, and so you want to change and so we have this thing we call history constantly.

and so we've given it nice word progress, we call it, but look what it's brought us, where we, we are now in this sort of suicidal movement to destroying the very basis of our existence.

so anyway, just if, if you can change your, your, your, your view and, and look at it from the point of view of hunter-gatherers like this, it really doesn't mean that these people are fossil primitives or whatever.

They are changing and adapting in all sorts of ways.

One of the things we say in the book is that it's just possible that humanity has a future.

but if so, the hunter gather the extent, extent gathered and hunter gather important.

They're already, and they won't have to change much.

We all have to change a lot, obviously, in, in terms of scale.

They're not, they're not, no one's talking about going back to bows and arrows.

No. Okay. But in terms of social dynamics, like with values, which between no borders, no, no, rich and poor, whatever you've got, you share and, and your major aim in any project is joy, reach are comforting.

That is, if you haven't with your singing, you haven't got to joy.

That's the standard. I mean, they're, they're in the future.

so, but, and the rest of us have gotta catch up.

So we, we make a quite an effort to explain that, that the future is hunter gatherer kind of thing.

I mean, that's one of, by the way, that's one of the slogans of the rights movement is that we are the future and we want for that future Is indigenous, The future indigenous in, sorry, that's the exact phrase.

Oh, we got one more C Kevin.

Yeah, I can for jer it on that topic.

I, I have a question for Jerome.

because at the start we did emphasize this the difficulty of refusing, the denying or request demands, basically.

Yeah. but on other occasions, I have heard you talk about this, this other, this sort of thing, which is perhaps more rare, but it seems to be conflict with that, which is that there are times when they say this bit of forest is sort of everyone can come in and kill the elephants, all the elephants dead.

And, but, but they do have the kind of a system for saying this area is forbidden deep out.

Well, okay, so Explain.

Yeah. So, the, so the question really refers to, there are, so in previous talks I've talked about ways that areas of forest are closed off.

So if people are walking in an area of forest, they have accidents, things go wrong, they stop finding food or things that they expect to find, they don't find, if it happens persistently, each clan is responsible for a particular area of forest.

They don't have a sense of ownership.

they have a sense of, of, of responsibility, I guess is perhaps the way we might translate that and so, people will go to the clan and they'll say, look that area of forest, whenever we go there, someone has an accident we never find what we're looking for and so what one of the conclusions that may happen is that that forest is Aquila, and aquilo can be translated by many words, and one of those words is prohibited.

And, but what, what in, in their way of talking about prohibition, it's not that there are enforcers in the way you might have a national park and, and, and eco guards going around shooting up anyone who happens to, to come across.

what they do is they take the little, cones of a particular leaf called bass acidic, which is very fire resistant.

It's very, it's, it's a very thick leaf.

It, it, it lasts a long time.

They fill it with earth and they make little cones and the clan who's responsible for that area, forest, will then go to every path into that forest, and they put the cones on the path and you can tell by the direction of the cones where the, the, the, the wide part is pointing is shows you the forest that you should avoid.

And, and, and what it tells people is that this forest is Aquila.

That doesn't mean that they can't go there, they can go there, they're welcome to, but they just are warned that things may go wrong, that they may not be as they, as they find them. Just perhaps Mention another word that goes with Aquila.

in addition to prohibition, Quila means menstruation. Well, Blood menstruation. Yeah, that's what, yeah. Okay. Sorry.

We can't, can't we can't say prohibition without menstruation being part of it.

Yeah. Just, yeah.

Have you written something about the I have, yeah.

Talking, Yeah.

Ala, it's in the JRAI, journal of Royal Institute.

It's a marvelous paper. Everyone should read it.

Jerome Lewis, Quila Han. How do you spell A-E-K-I-L-A.

Wanna give the whole title Jerome? Is that paper? JRA Blood egalitarians About blood and egalitarianism.

It's almost the only thing published.

I mean, Jerome's thing wasn't published.

Jerome's published in the JI paper on essentially on menstruation.

Menstruation, let's say. Okay. Yeah. So, and he got it.

It managed to get it published. Amazing. I mean, Probably was the last thing JI published ly.

I mean, . Yeah.

But, anyway, so those areas of forest are not prohibited in that way that we think that you can access, you can walk through them, but you're just warned by those signs.

Yeah. Brilliant. So we just about got through the end of a quite fantastic discussion and questions and everything.

Questions on this subject? I think.

So we should definitely say thank you to Chris and Jerome for The book's called When Eve Laughed.

That's the laughter that Gerome was talking about.

Eve's laughter quite shocking and possibly even intimidating to men and when they've laughed as, and the subtitle is the original language, and we think it's gonna be year, about February, not this year, next year, 26 to be out.

The Ted K Archive

Jerome Lewis and Chris Knight

Modern metaphors from political resistance movements applied to human evolution
(Seminar)

Dec 3 2024

<www.vimeo.com/1036820897> & <www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELf1Gn0GI1k>

www.thetedkarchive.com