

Chimpanzee Culture Up-Date and Wrap-Up

“There are very few things we can learn about humans from studying apes that we can’t learn better by studying humans.”

-Jonathan Marks, *The Alternative Introduction to Biological Anthropology*, 2011.

“New information on ape and human relationships, chimpanzee ecology and behavior, and early hominid fossils reinvigorate our speculations about human evolution.”

-Adrienne Zihlman, *The Real Females of Human Evolution*, 2012.

I. Chimp Pedagogy

A. Mixed Methods: Stimulation, Facilitation, Instruction...and others still to be discovered?

B. *Implication*: Virtues of “Guide on the Side” pedagogies as opposed to “Sage on the Stage” pedagogies?

II. Chimp Technology

A. Latest research confirms:

1. striking similarities between the earliest human *stone tools* (i.e., Oldowan tools) and the tools that chimps produce today, and

2. structural and functional similarities between the *minds* of early humans and contemporary apes.

B. *Implications*:

1. The accumulation of technological knowledge over 98% of human history has been *glacially* slow.

2. Although early sticks-and-stones tool use for protein capture was likely crucial for human survival, and *recent* change in technology has been explosive and astonishing, we still live with *something* of a “Stone Age” Mind?

III. Chimp Agency...of the Female Sort

A. Mothers are technological innovators and mentors.

B. Females carry and transmit culture within their natal groups, BUT they conform to, and reinforce local culture when they assimilate into new groups.

→ Female inter-group mobility is an ancient human pattern: tooth enamel analysis of 2 million year old *Australopithecus* females (smaller bodies and teeth) from South African caves indicates “non-local” strontium isotopes, suggesting that females were born and grew up *outside* the area.

C. Females hunt and share small game; they practice “coalitional” behavior (e.g., female chimps are more social with each other at Tai than at Gombe and elsewhere...but not as social as bonobos).

D. *Implications*:

1. The ancient, original human pattern of social organization *parallels* that of the contemporary apes.

2. Human female subordination (among other human inequalities) is a *contingent artifact of history*, not an *inevitable condition of nature*.

3. Female agency is socially (and politically?) crucial to the expansion of *moral circles*.