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Stream E: Cultural Change and Creativity in Science and the Arts

Title: Evolving creativity: homologies and analogies

Abstract: There are sure to be interesting connections between the evolution of language, musicality, and creativity to be investigated. These capacities are often viewed as characteristically human--sometimes even distinctively human. However, in this talk I will explore potential homologies and analogies in the animal kingdom, and the prospects for integrating lines of evidence in a comparative evolutionary research framework. This is one in-road into evolutionary theorizing about such capacities in the hominin lineage. Take, for example, the vocal communication tradition of humpback whale populations (sometimes called "song"). Humpbacks are vocal learners--and the evolution of vocal production learning in the hominin lineage is a key constraint for evolutionary theorizing about music and language since no other great apes are vocal learners. Better understanding the social transmission and cumulative evolution of whale vocal traditions, and the effects of novelty bias and production (that is, including effects of creative novelty and plasticity), has the potential to shed much light, since convergent traits in general can inform our understanding of underlying mechanisms, allow identification of constraints or mechanisms required for the behaviours under study, and test certain hypotheses concerning the evolutionary pressures that may have selected for them. This agenda provides for a rich evidential framework for evolutionary theorizing about hominin minds and cultures.

Bio: Anton Killin is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Philosophy and the Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language at the Australian National University. Anton's postdoc research focuses on the evolution of music and the evolution of language. He also has research interests in philosophy of the arts and philosophy of the sciences, more generally. He is currently engaged with a project on the intersection between philosophy and archaeology with Sean Allen-Hermanson & Marilyn Johnson (Florida International University), including co-editing an issue of *Topoi: An International Review of Philosophy* on this interdisciplinary topic, and a project with Adrian Currie (University of Cambridge) on creativity in art, science, and mind.