

Excerpts from Reviews of *Mothers & Others*

“Hrdy’s much-awaited new book is another mind-expanding, paradigm-shifting, rigorously scientific yet eminently readable treatise . . . [*Mothers and Others*] lays the foundation for a new hypothesis about human evolution.

—Claudia Casper, *Globe and Mail*, May 9, 2009. Available [online](#). (Nov. 27, 2009, **Chosen as one of the *Globe and Mail's* best-reviewed books on science, religion and the environment**)

“Hrdy’s lucid and comprehensively researched book takes us to the heart of what it means to be human.”

—Camilla Power, *Times Higher Education*, May 21, 2009, **Chosen as “Book of the Week.”** Available [online](#).

"Hrdy is one of the most original thinkers in evolutionary biology . . ." **Chosen as one of the year's Best science books**, by Natalie Angier for *The Week*, November 19, 2009

“One of the boldest thinkers in her field, Hrdy believes that the ability to engage others in their care . . . is not an accident, but, rather, the result of evolutionary imperatives. Hrdy’s scope is huge . . . To build her arguments, she expertly knits together research from a variety of fields . . . Her book is at once entertaining, full of apt, often colourful anecdotes, sometimes culled from her own experiences, and rich with information and case studies . . . Hrdy is not only synthesizing her own research on female reproductive strategies . . . but that of hundreds of other researchers to create what amounts to a sweeping new meta-paradigm.”

—Michele Pridmore-Brown, *Times Literary Supplement*, May 22, 2009

"an astonishingly persuasive hypothesis that explains why extreme sociality and preoccupation with the thoughts and feelings of others evolved in our lineage . . ."

—Kristen Hawkes, *Evolutionary Anthropology* 18:228-9 (2009)

“The consequences of viewing humans as having a history of cooperative breeding are potentially profound . . . Her thought-provoking book will interest students, specialists and general readers alike and should focus attention on the neglected roles of mothers and others within human evolutionary theory.”

—Gillian Brown, *Science* June 26, 2009 [\[PDF\]](#)

"Hrdy's long, cogent and powerful argument is buttressed . . . by broad scholarship . . . this is a very important book and a beautiful one."

—Peter Ellison, *Evolutionary Psychology* 7(3): 442-8 (2009). See PDF for detailed chapter by chapter summary. [PDF](#)

“In this compelling and wide-ranging book, Hrdy sets out to explain the mystery of how human evolved into cooperative apes.”

—Alison Motluk, *New Scientist* (April 4, 2009)

“Beginning with her opening conceit of apes on an airplane (you wouldn’t want to be on this

flight) and continuing through her informed insights into the behavior of other species, Hrdy's reasoning is fascinating to follow."

—Michelle Press, *Scientific American* (May 2009)

"If Sarah Blaffer Hrdy were a male scientist, I might be tempted to say that her new book . . . arrives like an intellectual time bomb, or that it throws a grenade into accepted notions of human evolution. But those are aggressive, competitive metaphors and one of the essential points of *Mothers and Others* is that aggression and competition have been given far too central a place in the standard accounts of how our species came into being. *Mothers and Others* . . . is not only revolutionary: it is also wise and humane."

—Mark Abley, *The Gazette* (Montreal). Available [online](#).

[Hrdy] "argues that our human ancestors became emotionally modern long before the human brain had reached its current average volume of 1,300 cubic centimeters, which is about three times the size of a chimpanzee brain — in other words, that we became the nicest apes before becoming the smartest . . . To explain the rise of cooperative breeding among our forebears (she) synthesizes an array of new research in anthropology, genetics, infant development, comparative biology."

—Natalie Angier, *New York Times* March 3, 2009. Available [online](#).

"Natural selection selects the fittest, but the fittest need not be selfish . . . the most refreshing aspect of (this book) is the challenge (offered) to what we thought we already knew."

—John Odling-Smee, *Nature*, April 30, 2009

"For as long as she's been a sociobiologist, Sarah Blaffer Hrdy has been playfully dismantling traditional notions of motherhood and gender relations . . . (and) is back with another book, *Mothers and Others*, and another big idea. She argues that human cooperation is rooted not in war making, as sociobiologists have believed, but in baby making and baby-sitting . . . Hrdy paints a picture of a cooperative breeding culture in which parenting duties were spread out across a network of friends and relatives. The effect on our development was profound."

—Julia Wallace, *Salon*

See also: "Evolution Revisited: How Mothers and Others Make Us Human: An editorial Based on a transformational new book by Sarah Blaffer Hrdy", by Roberta J. Apfel MD, MPH, from *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 198(3):169-173. [\[PDF\]](#)

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