Your Questions Answered - Bret and Heather 34th DarkHorse Po...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:07

Hey folks, welcome back to the Dark Horse pod cast 34th live stream q&a, we are ready to go you have filed many ACU Yes, you have. All right.

**Heather** 00:18

So we will start by picking up Wow, I just moved the entire operation. I did not even know that was possible. We're gonna start by reading a couple of questions from number 33 that we didn't get to and that seemed particularly worthy of going back to question one, is there truth to the loss of one sense strengthening others? I am a near sighted deaf person, did I get cheated? Or have I used my eyes too much and worn them out? Actually from our friend Holly,

**Bret** 00:53

there's definitely truth. In effect, the mechanism may not be what one imagines it would be but let's say for example, that you are not using your visual processing power for vision because you're not getting inputs that allows it to be used by other senses. And so and they're in fact, some extraordinary cases of this in people who are musical servants who are typically blind. So anyway, we could talk about that at greater length another time, but it's very interesting.

**Heather** 01:29

And, for instance, we know of people who can actually who appeared to be echolocating, right, who are who are blind, and who echolocate, and the echolocation, the the actual processing of the sound in some of these cases where it's been looked at. And I think it's never not true when it's been looked at. But in some cases where it's been looked at, the sound processing is actually taking place in the normally optical processing part of the brain.

**Bret** 01:54

Oh actually didn't know that. That matches. The hypothesis I've advanced for the savant was that they effectively had a graphics card that wasn't occupied with graphics, it could be utilized for the next closest input, which was music, because music is although music comes in through the years, which is linear. It's multi dimensional. So anyway, yes, that's very interesting that it works with echolocation in people that way.

**Heather** 02:20

second of three questions from last time, it's just a comment that I thought warranted mentioning here, someone has sent us a Super Chat donation for the cat. The cat appreciates that very much. Thank you. Which cat? Probably the one who made a cameo last. Fairfax walked away from the camera. Yes, he may, he may show up again. Any advice on winning your liberal friends back? All my friends were liberal,

**Bret** 02:43

if you lost them, because they couldn't stand reason, I would say upgrade better friends is what you need.

**Heather** 02:51

Well, I mean, that's I just wonder if we can do a little bit better? And I don't I don't know the answer. But probably some of them could be reasoned with that, you know, fret friends may depart in a group. And some may be wondering if there is there is anything to the critique that this person presumably was offering up? So

**Bret** 03:18

I mean, look, if they come back, and they say, Well, I blew it. That's one thing. If they don't you really want to invest your time recovering people who were so blind that even though they knew you, and they knew what you were made of that they assumed that because your perspective didn't match theirs, that you were inherently wrong or bad. I mean, some level who needs it? You know, come join the free thinkers.

**Heather** 03:48

Okay, I like to come back here, but maybe not now. Okay. It turns out that the first question for this live stream is from the same person as that question was, which I didn't notice until I just put them right next to each other. And he's asking he, I assume. It's asking Yes, because he gave a lot of money to read a question that he put into the comments somewhere was forwarded to us by our moderator. And I'm not gonna read the whole thing, because this will take several minutes. So I'm gonna try to summarize. So this is basically an analogy he he is proposing an analogy to what we proposed in the last in 33, the garden the new the sort of what he says in the new neoliberal movement, which is not how I would characterize it as a Ponzi scheme. He says I was considering a more viscous comparison would be the degree to which modern forecasting science mirrors 20th century religious logic as and why not believe in God because what if you're wrong, or the side is say it will get worse so fall in line? If you're wrong, everyone will suffer? Why are you trying to kill grandma? He argues, they're saying not only are you wrong for questioning anything we don't like but you're wrong as a person. worthy of degradation by virtue of who you are and are what you represent. He says Dr. King was aware of how to use good protesting forces and I can understand burning witches. They didn't know Darwin or Foucault. But what's grotesque about the current standards is the fortitude behind we don't we know that you don't have control over your demographic predicaments. And we know you didn't commit the sense of your forethought for others, but we are going to burn to the ground regardless.

**Bret** 05:32

I'm not sure I gleaned how all that fit together.

**Heather** 05:35

And I and I skipped some, but I read the whole thing before and I'm not totally sure how it fits.

**Bret** 05:40

So there's, you know, there's some Pascal's Wager stuff in there. You want to spell that out? Yeah. That effectively, you'd be a fool to face your death as an atheist, because what do you get for being an atheist? And what are your heading? Right? Yeah. So anyway, I don't subscribe to it. At that level, though. I think the logic is sound. I think there's something to be said for the courage of your convictions in that case. But the the real question is, how do you separate your What is my Bayesian analysis of what is likely to be true? And then how do I translate that into policy? And how do I translate that into policy involves a cost benefit calculation that is not strictly speaking to do simple from what's true? So right? Should you wear a mask if there is a 5% chance of its being useful, but downstream of you is likely to be several people who will die? If you don't wear it, then yeah, the point is, you may think it's not useful, but the chances that you save somebody's life are high enough, and life is valuable enough that you would adjust the calculation. Likewise, in the case of climate change, for example, a lot of us have become persuaded that to confront climate change is actually to create positive economic growth that in fact, we are retarding growth by obligating ourselves, not to change the mechanism by which we feel things, and that, in fact, we've been sold a false bill of goods that the thing that would happen if we were to confront climate change properly is austerity rather than prosperity. And so in that case, you should do it because modernizing what we are makes sense. And it's rent seekers who would prevent us from doing it.

**Heather** 07:36

Oh, man, can we just this is what needs to be shouted from the rooftops. Right, right. Right there. Yeah, rent seekers, who don't want us to address climate change, because they are the ones who are winning with the current paradigm. And we can see more prosperity and a more intact planet than the one we are hurtling towards. If we address what's going on.

**Bret** 07:56

Yeah. There's a cartoon that I'm very fond of, I think many of the conservatives who are doubtful of climate change or anthropogenic climate change, don't like the cartoon, but the cartoon is. Somebody says, What if climate change is a hoax, and we've made everything better for nothing? Yeah.

**Heather** 08:24

All right. I'm a federal judge ordered, a federal judge ordered documents unsealed in the Maxwell Epstein vs. GUI for defamation case to be released by July 30. frame by frame attack, don't remember goof goof re hundreds of other women have come forward with lawsuits giving deposition statements and contemporaneous evidence. This jury needs your voice.

**Bret** 08:48

Is there an incorrect modifier in there? Because it sounds like the records are being unsealed? That's got to be a good thing. Right? Yeah, no, I misunderstood. No,

**Heather** 08:58

no, i think i think i think he's saying, hey, this this thing has happened happening, would you you know, would you help spread the word kind of thing, and I feel like there are so many stories that need to be told. And certainly there are many that neither we nor any of the people sort of in our circle will end up talking about because they're just too many and especially because this is something that Eric has particular knowledge about, and has voiced his expertise on so many times I feel like he's, he's he's done. He's done the due diligence on that. But I'm not saying that you know, we won't we won't talk about it, but it's it's not something that I'm focused on. It's it's what they were doing is horrifying.

**Bret** 09:44

Well, the question though, and it's implied here is why right. What is it Why is the world protecting this

**Heather** 09:52

and so yeah, it potentially is related to the bigger the what what Goliath is this?

**Bret** 09:58

Yes. What what What is the kompromat doing in the story? And how would the world be different if it weren't there? And that's obviously a hugely important question. So hopefully we will find out.

**Heather** 10:11

Yeah. When do we get real news on unity? 2020 the news has been soon for about a month and you're beginning to sound like Blizzard Entertainment with their soon tm promises.

**Bret** 10:21

I don't know what Blizzard Entertainment is.

**Heather** 10:23

I don't either. But it's got to trademark. Well, is it a week, a month? Not until late September? When do we hear more?

**Bret** 10:28

That was just the question by now, I'm just telling this person. So what we have is a technological platform, which is going to be the first step in a larger effort that is literally less than 24 hours from being unveiled, if everything is continues on the current trajectory. So you're about to get a major change in the presentation of unity 2020, and the ability for people to interact with it. So I'm glad that you're excited. I'm interested in having this deployed. And I'm feeling as itchy as you are to see it in the world functioning. So hang on, hang on just a little bit longer. And you will you will see motion

**Heather** 11:11

brought us to zubi. For recommendations for interesting rap. I recommend Alyssa Marie, start with adorno for thoughtful and lyrical content that reflects this whole situation.

**Bret** 11:21

Oh, awesome. Okay, thank you.

**Heather** 11:25

Love you both been tuned in and with the ITW learned much about my own party trying to explain concerns with family and friends. Do you have a summary of concerns with supporting evidence that I could use as a primer to help them better understand?

**Bret** 11:37

I don't know which party we're talking?

**Heather** 11:38

I don't I think it's going to be the democrats given given that given that we have we have we have tended to be more pointed and frequent in our criticism of what who are supposed to be our own feeling that we ought to clean our own house first, while you know making no bones about the fact that we're not republicans and never have been and, and specifically don't like Trump. But you know, because we have, we have critiqued more often what the democrats are doing. I suspect that that is the party in question here.

**Bret** 12:11

Yeah. It's actually a very difficult puzzle, because I think people correctly into it that if that structure is as compromised, as many of us claim to know that it is, then they feel they have been left completely adrift, which they have. And so how do you convince somebody to consider the possibility that the structure that is the hedge against chaos, is in fact functioning in a predatory fashion that is going to put us into chaos? So I guess my point is, I don't think it's the evidence. I don't think the evidence is all that complex. I mean, the fact is, the Democrats, Marshall an absolutely appalling candidate in 2016, despite the fact that there was a very popular candidate. on the rise, they sabotage Sanders, why would they do that? They would sabotage Sanders, because Sanders was actually interested in change. Now, I don't think the change that Sanders was interested in, is the kind of change we should be pursuing. But nonetheless, there was an awful lot of energy behind Sanders, and for good reason. He

**Heather** 13:19

well, and I mean, so that was 2016. They, by my estimation, they've promoted what may be somehow an even worse candidate in 2020, from a much deeper slate. Friday night there was there, there. I'm not excusing anything that happened in 2016. But there was this heir apparent there was this, you know, we actually we have powerful families in this country, and we're gonna let the Clintons continue to reign sort of sort of thing. And that's not an excuse at all, but it explains a little bit of what they might have been doing. And it's not even it's not even as as explicable in this case to choose someone with apparently failing competencies. Well, when there was actually an incredibly rich and diverse in terms of ideology and experience slate of candidates.

**Bret** 14:12

So I agree with you, and that's where I was headed next is that they've done this to us two elections in a row is amazing. But here's the thing. People, their their minds will not allow them to make the switch, but it looks to me like it's quite straightforward. They prefer to lose to Trump, than to risk actual change. This is because this is an influence peddling racket and influence peddling racket cannot give up. Its saleable good, which is influence. If it decides to embrace a candidate that actually would stand in the way of corruption, then it loses its its profitability. So by putting feeble candidates up against Trump, who had claims is the great evil, right? If it really believed he was the great evil and the answer is who is is most likely to beat him. You think Andrew Yang would lose to Trump? I don't think Andrew Yang would lose to Trump. I think he would walk all over him. Right? The authenticity is there the insight, the decency, right? I, I've seen the polls, I still not right enough Trump, I don't think Biden's gonna go in

**Heather** 15:19

there. They're shifting actually, as of as of this week. Well, that

**Bret** 15:22

doesn't sit nicely at all. And I must say, in the few minutes between our initial hour and this, I saw an extremely disturbing, totally predictable clip, in which Biden walks on stage and says, I'm so glad to be at somewhere that he isn't, and then realizes he's made an error and dismisses it as a joke, which it wasn't. And it's like, well, if you can't get through the first minute of your, you know, I guess, me I am

**Heather** 15:51

no fan of Biden, as you know, I'm, I'm more willing to excuse slips, oh, god, what, if it's Tuesday, it must be Birmingham, sort of sort of things. But you know, what, once he actually has to start engaging real things in real time, like real issues, as opposed to die, remember where I'm standing? Oh, I believe we're gonna see this all over the place.

**Bret** 16:10

You know, any normal candidate could have made such a slip. That's not what this appeared to be this appeared to be a complete lack of awareness, and then a, you know, kind of a go to move to dismiss it. And the thing is, it's so regular that we see evidence of his failing mental capacities. Does anybody think that you elect this guy and he makes it four years in office? I think he steps down in one.

**Heather** 16:36

Yeah, so who's the VP going to mean, it's gonna be Kamala

**Bret** 16:39

Harris, probably. And so the point is, then we are signing up for, you know, a situation in which we got a stuffed shirt running as a stalking horse for the DNC is chosen candidate who will not have been elected in the same sense that the top of the ticket person is elected. Right. This is this is DNC rule, which I find utterly frightening even before you get to the partnership, they appear to be striking with the with black lives matter with the woke elements of the party. So you know, that's your party signing you up for an absolute disaster and potentially signing the country up for civil war. So how much more evidence do you need of the failure of the system?

**Heather** 17:29

Brett in q&a number 16, in about 35 minutes? Well, I remember getting you there. Okay. I'll just let you answer the question

**Bret** 17:36

that I will continue. All right. Well, I think I misspoke.

**Heather** 17:39

I think you probably know, you suggested that pain was not a prerequisite for consciousness, but might be a prerequisite for meaning. Can you elaborate on the latter half of that idea? I'll give examples. Thanks and loved you both?

**Bret** 17:54

Yeah, what did i mean by that? I think I mean, that. If you were to eliminate suffering, as I hear people advocate there, there's no idea I like less than this one, what you produce is a complete flatness of experience, either that or you take mild pleasure. And it becomes the equivalent of pain, which may even be what we are seeing in the streets. In other words, the lack of actual overt racism in the system, is now causing micro aggressions to be boosted to the level of violence.

**Heather** 18:33

Isn't this what, you know, very few people actually benefit from SSRIs, from selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors used to treat very deep and dark depression. But I believe, and there is some clinical evidence to support the idea that the vast majority of people who are on these things are simply experiencing a flattening of an effect. And that prevents them from actually learning how to control their own emotions organize their own mood. And that flattening of effect is what you just said is the it's one of the ideas that you that you hate most that you're scared of most, actually, and we're seeing society wide,

**Bret** 19:11

right? And the fact is, you probably not from your own life, that you know, the troughs give the the peaks meaning. And so I think the thing is, meaning is really important. If you if you gave me the ability to personally to be able to erase negative emotion sensation, and there's no way I'd push that button. No way that would be like death, right? It's the equivalent, it just removes and you know, the

**Heather** 19:39

calibration, it removes setpoint. And you know what, what it does is it moves all of your expectations just up and now you've got a new frame, but it's not going to make that there can be no utopia. I mean, it's the same error, right? It is exactly the same error. We're seeking utopia we're seeking into suffering. These things won't happen.

**Bret** 19:58

Yeah. And you Another way to come at it is if you just simply recognize that these things exist in your mind as a proxy to point you away from things that hurt you and point you toward things that are good, then do you really want to eliminate the map program that allows you to navigate because that's what it is, right? It's a map program that steers you towards goodness and away from badness. And if you think about it, that's the only reason that you succeed in anything. Yeah.

**Heather** 20:26

What do you think about calling for a public debate between D'Angelo and Kennedy versus any two from the black intellectual roundtable episode? For instance, I'd love to see hashtag Coleman vs. Kennedy trending. Love this idea. D'Angelo and Kandi wouldn't agree.

**Bret** 20:40

No, they wouldn't agree. But it's not to say that we couldn't find somebody on that side who would which would be great.

**Heather** 20:45

Yeah. Yeah, you know, who might? What's his name? Eric. Michael Tyson. Did I make that up? He debated Jordan Peterson at 1.0. MICHAEL ERIC DYSON. I'm just making up Yeah, you're

**Bret** 20:59

making up stuff and I'm not going to be able to now.

**Heather** 21:06

Go off girl. Love you guys. I think this probably came in when I was ranting about masks. Would you agree that conflating anti semitism with anti Zionism is a dangerous game in the UK criticism of Netanyahu and his far right state is also being smothered with the anti Semite club. Oh, yeah. So I said, probably two episodes ago or so I said something about an anti Israel sentiment on Black Lives Matter website being anti semitic. And I suspect that that is what this is in reference to. Yeah. I have seen and yes, it is. That's a conflation. It's not that that does not map perfectly at all. That said that going after Israel is often exactly the dog whistle that we're told it is, yeah, it is it is covered for anti semitism.

**Bret** 21:54

Yeah, there is a lot of that. So the problem is it's muddled. But you know, there's obviously critique to be delivered of Israeli policy. On the other hand, as Eric points out, very clearly, you have to do it in the context of the problem. You know, as with Portland, you have to do it in the context of the problem that is being addressed, which is a nation surrounded by hostile neighbors. And so anyway, yes, we would, I think, all of us, the decent folk would desire a humane policy that allows Israel to get along with its neighbors, but that the ability to have such a policy is predicated on neighbors willing to play ball. So anyway, yes, there is dog with all over the place. And the distinction between resistance to what's called Zionism versus anti semitism is an important dichotomy.

**Heather** 22:49

Apparently it was Michael. MICHAEL ERIC DYSON, not Tyson. Yeah. Dyson, yes. Oh, Zack sounds like the vacuum. I am pessimistic that critical race theory and postmodern ideas can't be beat. I think by which this person means I'm worried that they can't be beat because it appeals to the human desire to be virtuous and moral. Are you hopeful that these ideas can be beat? If so what are some signs of hope, Thanks for your hard work.

**Bret** 23:19

They can be beat. But you have to you know, it's about context. And the way they are winning is not because the arguments are difficult to beat, but because the sustenance is easy to deny to people. So to the extent that you can frighten people about what's going to happen to them, and then offer them a hand, they will tend to take it and so they're easily manipulated. If we are to successfully counter this, it requires that we provide people some place where they have the security that they will not be abandoned. And we should be working on that.

**Heather** 23:58

Yeah. And, and creating a counter narrative, which can grab the claim of virtuous and moral. I think that's going to be critical. And I don't know what that looks like yet. Oh,

**Bret** 24:10

I mean, the thing is, so many people mean,

**Heather** 24:12

it's true. It's just true, but I don't know what the catchy soundbite version of this actually resisting that thing that's claiming to be virtuous immoral, is in fact, the virtuous and moral path. It's it is I don't have the narrative on it yet, though.

**Bret** 24:29

I mean, it seems to me, unfortunately, it's not as catchy. But yeah, the answer is, do we continue with the project that we were on and finish it and make a fair society or do we unmake that society because it was so desperately unfair as it was, and

**Heather** 24:48

that is it is actually isn't it? And the classic framing up sort of progressivism versus conservatism involves a line without branches. Yeah, and there might be new branches, there might be forks to take, and some of those forks might actually take require going back a little bit and then taking a different different road. But this thing, this critical race theory, postmodernism, Black Lives Matter, the riots in the streets really explicitly is about burn it down. Yep. And so you're not just you know, I'm, of course, imagining a cladogram and evolutionary tree and it's like, you just you go back to base, you just go all the way back, and then we'll build something. We don't know what it is not someone smarter than me. We'll figure that out. Right? And there's that, that that is not helpful.

**Bret** 25:36

At all. Yep.

**Heather** 25:40

I am a public elementary teacher. I'm fighting for enlightenment values, reason, and American and American. Yet the postmodern culturally, relative anti racists dominate the conversation. They want politics to be greater than truth and emotion to be greater than facts. Think that's quite what that's supposed to say. They're all women. He concludes help. Yeah, there is, I am certain and I have not seen any analysis of this because it doesn't fit the accepted narrative. But I have long had a hypothesis based on a number of things that we won't go into in depth here. But there is most definitely a gender by which in this case, I mean sex element to this, that women's greater tents tendency to conform just by like the psychological meaning of conformity, and to be affiliative. And also to tend to have tools in their arsenal that are less likely to be physical and more likely to be linguistic and emotional, means that women are more likely to be the ones who are leading the charge here. And just, I never completed the analysis, I just did a simple, frankly, just a simple chi square. When I first thought about this, in light of what was going on at evergreen, I thought, Hmm, I kind of feel like there are a lot more women, you know, when a college with, I can't remember what it was, but you know, something like a one to one sex ratio. Among the faculty, I feel like there are a lot more women who are leading the charge here and going after you and it was true. So and then I actually began to look and did not complete the analysis on trying to figure out what the relative rates of of participation acquiescence in various cults are. And it's, it takes some doing to figure out exactly which lists to use and, you know, life got in the way, and I ended up doing a number of other things, but it looked at as sort of a, you know, this, like, No, I think this is right. Like, indeed, women were more likely to be participating in these sort of mass movements that require complete conformity from all adherence. And that's, if that's true, that's unfortunate, but it's true. And it's something that we can talk about. I don't know if I didn't really address the question, except that he ends with they're all women, which I think is a fundamental thing here. To end the pandemic, sequence SARS, COVID, two antibodies, write them into a plasmid, insert the plasmid into a viral vector, then inject the vector or aerosolize it, is there any reason this won't work? Why isn't this being done?

**Bret** 28:26

Hold on, make sure I get the whole plan here.

**Heather** 28:29

sequence the antibodies, get them into a plasmid, insert the plasmid into a different so some blank boxes here, it's the insert the plasmid and the viral vectors, the most obvious

**Bret** 28:40

why presumably, the person is talking about growing the antibodies in a bacterial culture. Now, Oh, I see. Maybe the idea is this person wants to gene therapy your way to an immune response, like gene therapy out in the world, I don't think it will work as a matter of scale of the immune response in the body. In other words, how many cells do you have to infect with a viral vector that carries the antibody sequence? And it is unclear to me if you can encode an antibody into a virus and get a cell chosen, let's say at random to make the antibody and I'm

**Heather** 29:33

going to guess if it were this simple, this would be how, how vaccines are always made? Well, I

**Bret** 29:39

think this person is asking why wouldn't this work and so at some level, let's say you've got a B cell, which is the cell that makes antibodies. That B cell has the machinery that takes the sequence that is unique to the antibodies that are encoded by that B cell, and it produces antibodies, which are then exported to the surface of the cell and spilled into the lymph For example, so that does not suggest that if you breathe it in a virus that contained the sequence that makes the antibodies, and you got it into a lung cell, for example, at that lung cell would inherently produce antibodies. And otherwise, the machinery is what causes the sequence to produce antibodies. So if it were true, that you could dump a sequence into any cell, and it would export antibodies, then potentially there's something down this road. But if it's not true, you're not going to reach the cells that have that machinery. So I think there's it's a very interesting idea. Yeah. But I don't think it works as described.

**Heather** 30:40

Great. I mean, unfortunate, but not great. Yeah. How can I help my left leaning friends who the danger in left wing authoritarianism, they're not extremists, just normal, reasonable folks caught up in the rhetoric. I love all the sandy from the live streams, parentheses, not sarcasm.

**Bret** 31:00

Yeah, see?

**Heather** 31:01

I mean, I feel like we, we we keep getting some version of this question. And I keep on really wanting us to figure out how to answer it. I don't think we figured it out. I

**Bret** 31:09

think the thing is, if it were figural, in that sense, then it'd be figured, yeah,

**Heather** 31:13

I mean, one level, it's obvious that there can't be a single answer. Now it's going to be context specific. Whatever the answer is, it's going to be particular to your friends, you know, but also, you know, we, you're writing that so you're here listening to us. It's not like we succeeded at this. When this when this first happened in our world, right? There were there were several people in our community, many of them we called friends. Who flipped on us. Yep, I'm one of our students. Right. But many of our colleagues are so called colleagues on the faculty and the staff. So we clearly don't, there is no, even we didn't have a complete answer, although, although I will say, however, that the fact that our students didn't flip on us, and it was the students, our students with whom we had a closer relationship, you know, we had we had, we had led every program with care and compassion, and, and, and an anti authoritarian way, telling them do not, do not, trust me, do not trust us simply because I'm the one up here with a degree and going to be reading your parrot evaluation at the end. Whereas the relationships that we have with adults in our lives, don't tend to tolerate that kind of thing, right? They, they don't tend to allow for that much. playing around with what actually are the boundaries of what you're supposed to push and what you're not. And it's rare that a friend can tell another friend Kwan, I want you to push me around, please push me around, I'll push you in response. So you know, maybe looking forward establishing as you're coming to know, people that that sort of an expectation. I mean, it's something I don't think you've ever been explicit about this, but it's something that you do, you just you push people around whether or not they want to be pushed, either they stick around like, Oh, I don't know what that was, but it kind of made me feel good. And not good. But now I know more, and it's better. So for, for most, for most people, who aren't you, Brett, maybe even being explicit, with people in advance, like, I hope you push my boundaries. And I, I'll try to push yours, too. And that's going to make us a more anti fragile, fragile relationship.

**Bret** 33:31

Yeah, I think there's also something to the selection process, where, you know, you kind of want to discover that people don't lose their minds when somebody tries to manipulate them. And what's really happening is that this ideology is manipulating people, and most of them do not have the tools to resist it. So in some sense, the friendship process tends to default too much to do we believe the same things, do we have the same interests when in fact, it's in many ways, much more important that somebody share your values, even if they see the world differently? And frankly, those are the more interesting friends to have in any case, because those friends often know something you don't but they're trustworthy. And so you do have more disagreements, but they're also useful disagreements?

**Heather** 34:28

Yeah. Should I inoculate my co workers to white fragility, by introducing it to them early and mocking it with them before the diversity trainers come? If everyone has already laughed in it together, social pressure might not work. Yes, spewed brilliant ideas. This is exactly what you should do. I'm sorry that you will end up having to read it. But this this, this is how we beat this crazy regressive racist ideology. That's exactly how you do it.

**Bret** 34:55

And I suggest over the top British accent sort of Monty Python style, you read it. to each other that could work very well.

**Heather** 35:01

Absolutely. Yeah. flying the flag upside down is historically used been used as a distressed single signal, not as a tool of showing disrespect. It hasn't been until recently that displaying it that way, became a form of protest. Interesting. I didn't know that. It is interesting. My college, my college, the Colorado School of Mines is interested in working with you. I have been tasked with reaching out. Check your Patreon if you want more info, depending on what that means. I mean, we're not miners.

**Bret** 35:32

Cool. I'm trying to remember who it is. Oh, I know who it is. Yeah, we know some of that. Yeah. It's Derrick Jensen. Is not there. No, he's not there. But he studied there. Oh, that's right. Yeah. Anyway, so that's interesting. So

**Heather** 35:45

he's in Far, far, far northern California. But he started there.

**Bret** 35:48

You're right. Yeah. Yeah.

**Heather** 35:51

Yeah, well, I guess probably you mean Brett's Patreon, which means it's going to be a lot of going through, but Yep. Okay. Where was I would love to see a long conversation between Heather and Lionel Shriver over the current state of fiction and the need for narratives? How do I have to talk to make this happen? Oh, I would. I would love that. She's fabulous. I actually, recently at our friend Holly suggestion, read Kevin book, what's it called? We have to talk about Kevin, something like that everyone will know it as Kevin, terrifying, amazing, brilliant book. And it just deepened my respect for her. And she is one of very few contemporary, excellent and successful authors who's just putting up with this shit in no way. Is this even free speech? How can trotting out pernicious nonsense and inciting riots where people are being killed? Not equivalent to yelling fire in a crowded theater? What are the implications? If you agree with us?

**Bret** 36:58

I think I understand the question, in which case it's like shouting fire in a crowded Republic. Which I agree it is, yeah, we're putting everything in jeopardy setting fire to credit Republic setting fire to the credit Republic, putting everything in jeopardy on the basis of a set of positions that are so dumb that I really believe essentially, no one is simple minded enough to actually believe them in a literal sense. And the whole thing is predicated on the pretense that the street is demanding it, which it isn't. The street is confused. Yep. So yeah, I would say it is equivalent, or worse.

**Heather** 37:37

37 minutes. Okay. Let's read two more here. And then we'll go to the other Super Chat. Breton. Hi there. What indicators? Are you looking for that we have reached the point of no return regarding social and political divisions? When is it time to head for the hills?

**Bret** 37:56

Funny. That's the second time in two days, I've heard that phrase. And I think I have said it recently. I don't know if it's catching on or what? Head for the hills for the hills? Yeah, I mean, I don't know about the point of no return. Because I don't know quite what the point of no return is from I think we have found ourselves in very dangerous waters. Yeah, it can get worse from here easily. And we'll if we do nothing. You know, increasingly, Eric has a phrase for this. Is it the don't bother to pick up your dry cleaning moment? And I actually think that moment, doesn't. That moment is not the one we are looking for. That that moment comes so late in a process that it is misleading. The fact that you haven't reached that moment yet. Shouldn't be nearly as comforting as it ends up being. So.

**Heather** 38:52

So do you have a replacement? suggestion?

**Bret** 38:55

I mean, the question is, you know, is this podcast a, from the hills podcast? I think it might be. Right, and we headed for the hills? I think we did. So

**Heather** 39:06

what do you expand on that a little bit? What do you mean? Well,

**Bret** 39:09

you know, you may not remember this, but at one point, we were tenured professors, and we had a day job and all of that. And so anyway, that was a plan, we could have attempted to stick with that plan which would have required us to to cut colonize ourselves in a way that we wouldn't. So we didn't. And that meant that we left some structure in favor of some unknown that strikes me as the hills from which we are now striking back at the thing that put us in jeopardy and it's not putting the republican Jeopardy So yeah, I guess I don't know what the hills looks like anymore.

**Heather** 39:45

Well, and you know, we're not. We're not equipped as survivalists. But we know better than most people who aren't explicitly in that camp, actually what it would take to to live to actually be autonomous unlike the the who's who claimed to be sitting autonomous owns and or rely on city water and lights and self service and all of this, right? Like we actually do have a sense having lived remotely in places like Madagascar and, and just having really, you know, taught a number of these these things as well. What would it mean for people to really start trying to disassociate from the services that we are all currently relying on such that if they fail, you don't immediately go down? The fact is that almost no one can really grow enough food and source enough water for themselves and their loved ones. depends where you are, it depends where you are, but unless you already have that setup, right, and some people do, but you know, heading for the hills from No.

**Bret** 40:56

Bottom, I was gonna say I'm not sure if this question is really about literal edits. You know,

**Heather** 41:00

it's it's both I think it's metaphorical, and it's literal. Yeah.

**Bret** 41:06

I don't know how to answer it. Yes, we are at some moment where some level of heading for the hills is warranted, as already happened. And then there's obviously a moment at which literally, you flee your home. And you know, there's not really food enough in the hills, right? For very many people. So

**Heather** 41:25

are you familiar with Dr. Bruce Lipton's discovery regarding stem cells and epigenetics? I find it to be very similar to your Brett lab, my steamers discover him?

**Bret** 41:35

I don't know him is weighing about, but I can't quite dredge it up.

**Heather** 41:38

I agree. I feel the same way. All right. Let's go to the next sex airline, there is a line Look at that. walk into a room of 100 people racially proportional to the US. Who do you most want to talk to? If you considered values and ability first? Are you still racist? I get maybe this is I don't think I don't think I get the question. I think I get maybe what the question was trying to ask, but I don't believe the premise of the question. Yeah, I

**Bret** 42:13

don't believe the premise of the question either. And, you know, it's definitely not my instinct, I want to talk to the person who is least like me, who is most ready to be candid, often the most interesting conversation in the room. That's

**Heather** 42:29

that's one of the main reasons that travel is so exciting for both of us, right? That you actually get to engage with people who have so little in common with you in terms of your developmental and geographic and political history, that you just really learned something about what being a human is about what the what the commonality is, and the commonalities shall shine through. But you but you learn tremendously. And you know, so sure, you know, if you walk into a room interested in, you know, where your goal is, I need to learn about virology. And there's two biologists and 98, non virologist, you should probably talk the neurologists first, although it might turn out that they're Yahoo's. And, and I don't I guess I don't if it weren't 2020 I would literally have no idea what racist was doing in this in this question, you know, and I, it just doesn't it doesn't belong

**Bret** 43:20

there. I think the question is asking if a prejudice is accurate, are you

**Heather** 43:28

so it's not racist? It's prejudice? Are you prejudiced? Are you a bigot? You know, are you a values bigot?

**Bret** 43:35

I think the problem is, you know, a prejudice doesn't tell you very much a prejudice can be accurate, like a prejudice. You know, if if you describe somebody as a woman, then I have a prejudice about the likely, you know, her height. Yeah. Right. It's based on an actual experience of women being shorter on average. So that's not a pernicious prejudice. Right.

**Heather** 43:58

But I mean, let's be a little bit more complicated. Everyone, I would pause it and there are only a few exceptions. I'm sure it has a prejudice for attractive people. Because attractive is the prejudice selection has built in that is an indicator it's what attractiveness is it's what it is right like it is it is actually what it is. So that's not that's, that's a tautology, and yet it sounds like a grievous insult to those who aren't attractive but but no, it's just you know, why is it that we find attractive what we do and you know, we can talk about how how, how cultural norms about what the most attractive body type for instance, have changed over time. But the fact is, that things like symmetry, and, and particular kinds of facial structures are, I think universally across cultures, considered more attractive than others. And, you know, put aside all the Things about makeup and costuming and tattooing. And you know, other things that people in different cultures do to themselves to make them more attractive and that is highly culturally specific. But attractiveness across the board is selections way of informing you of. Yeah, that's that's someone who's healthy on average. Yep. If moms are more related to soccer paws This is going to be this is an echo question. So it's gonna be interesting, but I have to, I have to give it some thought. If moms are more related to sons, and dads to daughters, so this is picking up on her question from a while ago. I'm just going to read it first if moms are more related to sons and dads to daughters, given that why codes for not very much, our systems favoring male line descendants, like aristocracy, really in favor of the matriarchal line in terms of jeans? I think I follow Yeah, yeah, yeah. So let's just because this is in reference to a question, we answered a couple of our last q&a, the idea being that the Y is a very small chromosome. And dads are going to be more highly more related to their daughters than they are to sons, because they have given an X chromosome, two daughters, and only a Y chromosome, two sons. And so they share just, there's just more genome there that they've given them two daughters meaningful dream more meaningful genome, but I'm not are moms to be stylish as our moms were related to sons? Yeah, I'm having trouble seeing I don't Yeah, I don't I don't see that because moms are just moms because they only have the X to give. Now, the idea is that it's a smaller genome overall. And the dad gave the smaller Bay empty. So the mom has contributed a greater fractional percentage of the total genome to sons. Okay, so we've kind of done the basic genetic relatedness part of this question. Is it possible if that's true, that systems favoring male line descendants, like aristocracy are really in favor of the matriarchal line? In terms of genes? So

**Bret** 47:14

I think the question is asking, Can it be a driving force? Yeah, my guess is it would be a very, very weak driving force. But

**Heather** 47:25

I agree, although it you know, it, what it raises for me is what all is coded on the x. And, you know, we, there's a lot of work on what's coded on the Y, in part, because it's understood that it sets so much important stuff in motion in a way that the x doesn't, you know, the x doesn't have sex specific instructions, because both males and females have an x females just have to in mammals. So I would be interested to know what is on the X such that, you know, moms can drive. Yeah, can can can drive the male line by virtue of contributing x. On the other hand, it's one of her what's one of two? And so you know, you may have basically competition between the two axes.

**Bret** 48:11

Yep. So there's also a question of bar bodies that you left over and activated? Is it. I'm trying to remember which one of these factors it is in somatic cells? Yeah. Females typically have one of their X chromosomes in activated to compensate for the dosage.

**Heather** 48:37

I think that one's barbati isn't. Remember, for sure. I can't

**Bret** 48:40

I can't recall. But in any case, what I would say is the much more dominant factor here, rather than the slight difference in relatedness is the certainty of paternity versus certainty of maternity. So the fact is, many fathers aren't actually fathers at the genetic level. That is a much more powerful force than the little difference in how much sequence identity there is between fathers and mothers and sons and daughters. So anyway, that's certainly to be true.

**Heather** 49:11

Yep. And that you're right. That's, that's highly explanatory. Okay, so this, again, would load if you dress my previous email. This this is about the question that I tried to read from email that we were having a hard time parsing. Thoughts on the third strand DNA model. many books are out on the topic and its possibility, some claim that this COVID vaccine will add the third strand covertly. I don't know what this means. Now, I don't know. I don't know what a third strand DNA model would

**Bret** 49:49

not. Only thing I know about is, yeah, this is certainly not what the question is about, but it's the one relevant piece of information I have. telomeres turns out are not just linear sequences. That stick off the end of a chromosome, they form something called a de loop in which there's a free. So you've got double stranded DNA that's looped over and one strand goes farther than the other. And the part that sticks out which would ordinarily trigger that DNA repair machinery is actually inserted in between the double strands at a particular place, you have this loop that as telomeres grow shorter with replication gets smaller and smaller. At some point. It's critically short and the cell doesn't divide anymore. But it creates this little tiny section of triple stranded DNA where that little free end is inserted between the two other strands. Oh, interesting. So let's name a triple stranded DNA or anything about Yeah. Alright, sorry. That's like

**Heather** 50:45

someone asking again, for updates on unity 2020. It's too late, right in what's happening?

**Bret** 50:53

Stay tuned, hopefully, 24 hours. Well, actually, that will be an internal test in 24 hours, but not not long thereafter, you will have a lot of new stuff.

**Heather** 51:05

Hello, love your work. I'm hoping to visit an interview Portland protesters and rioters in hopes of ascertaining ideologies and aims. Is that worthwhile? Also, do you have any coffee shop recommendations?

**Bret** 51:17

Yeah, there was a lovely place called Riot ribs. But apparently, it's not around anymore.

**Heather** 51:24

No, I mean, all the food recommendations in Portland are weird at the moment because COVID but I actually haven't been to a single coffee shop in Portland that I didn't enjoy. So there's really any place you go is great. But

**Bret** 51:39

with barbecue tacos is pretty good. If you're looking for food.

**Heather** 51:42

Yeah, that's not coffee shop. But yeah, Matt's barbecue tacos on Hawthorne is fabulous, just as one of many food trucks that plenty in the city. worthwhile to try to interview Portland protesters and riders? What do you think potentially? Nancy did it came into this? Yeah,

**Bret** 52:05

I find people pretty ready to talk. And I do think the discovery of the variants in what they think they're advocating is certainly worth documenting. That that is conspicuous and it is part of this feat, this leaderless movement, and a very frightening part because there are lots of people there marketing for something that sounds reasonable, but they're marching along with people who are advocating for things that are absolutely insane, right.

**Heather** 52:40

As someone considering going into research science, are there any alternatives to playing the grant writing game? Like starting a company perhaps? Yeah, that's that's exactly the sort of standard other thing to do. Although you're probably then looking for venture capital. You know, because it takes a while to to r&d is very expensive, long, long time that you need money before you end up with product if you're running a company Yeah, the grant writing game is the only game in town in academia. The one exception was his little college observing Northwest called evergreen, which as I understand it is rapidly going out of business. But it it explicitly

**Bret** 53:23

actually all they need is for Trump to suggest that it is failing which means that it will be succeeding

**Heather** 53:33

Yeah, now they should they should work

**Bret** 53:35

they shouldn't you know, what would they have to do to get him to declare them a failure because that would

**Heather** 53:41

donations would would? through the roof? Yeah. Oh my god. Don't don't help them game this. Yeah, so I scrolled way too far. I'm starting a company is there's a lot a lot of ways that can look but yes, that's a that's a good alternative. Do you think the social justice movement has morphed into a social eugenicist movement? I'm not totally sure what that means. I can't I suspect it mean something. But I don't.

**Bret** 54:15

Well, I mean, look, there are hints of this

**Heather** 54:17

nonsense. No, actually, I

**Bret** 54:19

do. I do think we're wired to find attractive and mate with and all this stuff, the cotton

**Heather** 54:24

ceiling.

**Bret** 54:28

So anyway, look, I wouldn't put it past them. I don't think they're quite there yet. But

**Heather** 54:32

no, and I actually know that it's had time to enter my brain and percolate a little bit. It was never about justice. Just like Black Lives Matter seems to have relatively little to do with black lives mattering. And it was as we have said many times many places about turning the tables of oppression rather than achieving actual equality of opportunity as much as possible and to turn the tables And to turn and to turn the tables in this way it appears to require that you take some demographics and blame them and and yeah, that's what's that's what's being done. Regarding losing liberal friends who think you're too centrist Peter Bogosian talks about disabusing friends and colleagues. And it starts with empathy for their concerns. unyielding die. ductus ism is a bad strategy. Yeah, I think actually in his in Jim's book, how to have impossible conversations. He talks about this. And and that's, that's right. That's a good that's a good approach.

**Bret** 55:39

So there's a difference though, I took the original question to be about what to do about friends that you have lost. And my sense is it's a very different puzzle than how to address friends who disagree with you, and are looking at your cross side. So that is not a hopeless predicament.

**Heather** 55:57

Absolutely.

**Bret** 55:58

So anyway, I did not mean to dismiss, I did not mean to say cut your friends loose at the point that they say something crazy.

**Heather** 56:09

Do you have a book recommendation on evolving ecosystems? I want to learn about their efficiency for a personal research project. Thanks. Well, ecosystems don't evolve. So that's going to be a problem with regard to any hypothesis that requires that they do. That's not to say that there aren't people claiming that they do. But they don't.

**Bret** 56:27

Yep, something they change over time based on the evolution of creatures within them. And somebody just pointed out on Twitter, this, this interesting process that happened in Yellowstone following the reintroduction of wolves, and actually they wanted our input on it, where there was an entire cascade of phenomena where the ecology changed radically, because this predator began not only eliminating deer, including elk and moose and things like that, but also causing those animals to behave differently where those animals predator, they are suddenly wary of certain places, which means that the things that they eat are now returning to places that they had been excluded. So anyway, a whole cascade of effects that has all sorts of yes downstream in some cases, literally creatures, you know, right beavers and

**Heather** 57:20

well that's I mean that's that's what community ecology is supposed to be. It should be it should be right. But but the ecosystems themselves aren't

**Bret** 57:29

evolving you and and ecosystem can't reproduce itself, right. So it's not evolving and

**Heather** 57:33

this I mean, frankly, and we've begun to hear from some honorable seeming and awesome seeming ecologists who are listening and taking issue with our occasional pointed Barb's at ecologists, and it is, in fact, a long standing. You know, this is one of our beefs with our field that many too many ecologists seem to stop what they're doing at the point that evolution shows up and say, well, that's not that's not my concern. Obviously, ecology and evolution should be understood together should be learned should be should we learn together should be there, they're directly interrelated fields. But there is I mean, just as there are many bad evolutionary biologists, but there are sub disciplines in ecology, that seem explicitly anti evolutionary. And the field of ecosystem ecology seems particularly confused on this front. And, you know, I'm not going to tell these stories. I'm not gonna tell stories at a school here now, but I have I have worked with people who have been so confused on this point that it rendered them incapable of doing basic science, and these are PhD scientists.

**Bret** 58:50

Yep, I would agree. And you know, there's dysfunction on the evolutionary side, too. There's a blindness to ecology, but it is less pronounced. evolutionary biologist, at least, those who study adaptive processes are well aware that ecology is important. Yes, they have little patience for it. In general. And in ecology space, there's actually appears to be a belief that you don't need to understand the evolutionary stuff, or that it's so obvious that we all get it and we can just move on, right?

**Heather** 59:19

I guess probably this won't be relevant to this person asking, but you're another brightener. I use textbooks hardly ever. But there was one textbook that I often made an optional text when I was teaching population level like animal behavior and vertebrate zoology and such, which is Eric Bianca's book that is literally called evolutionary ecology. And it's, it's excellent, and it doesn't it's not confused about whether or not ecosystems evolve or communities evolve. But it's it is very much both an evolutionary and ecological investigation into what is true of complex living systems.

**Bret** 59:59

Yeah, it's really In my opinion, it is an attempt to form a field that should have taken over the interface between evolution and ecology. And unfortunately, it's still singular. It didn't.

**Heather** 1:00:13

One pretty smart, small, it's, you know, it's a it's a small, private is expensive, of course, I'm sure. At this point, textbook that is, you know, it's also not highly technical, like even if you're not super mathy. You know, he, obviously there's some math there, but you can, you don't have to delve deep into the calculus to understand almost anything in the book. And it's terrific, and you're right, it's singular.

**Bret** 1:00:38

Yep. You contacted me after the Evergreen

**Heather** 1:00:41

did Yeah. What UT Austin, I think something like that.

**Bret** 1:00:45

And I had no idea I had a lovely interaction. Lizard guy. Yep. He liked lizards human. But he studies lizard sees that.

**Heather** 1:00:52

That's what he wants you to believe.

**Bret** 1:00:55

In this area, you have to be very clear now.

**Heather** 1:00:59

Boy, up, we're an hour. Okay, I'm not totally sure where we were. I'm going to pick two more that I see here. And then we will stop for the day. Could some sort of meta religion combat the current movement, or reverse engineered critical race theory wokeness centered around the universal soul providing a template that even a hardened atheist could support? What would that look like?

**Bret** 1:01:22

Yeah, in some sense, you have to have something that nourishes that part of the human psyche. I keep saying it can't be a religion, but you know, you've formulated it as a meta religion. And I agree it has to do something. And in fact, what we see in this movement is a malformed version of this. It's you know, it's not metaphorical. It's phony baloney, right? And that phony baloney stuff is misleading people because it promises them something. And an honorable version that promised them something attainable, based on logic and things would be much more effective.

**Heather** 1:02:03

Yeah. Okay, one more question. But there's two comments here that I'm going to read because they're nice. Just want to say I love you, too. Thank you. Thanks. And please remind people like your videos and streams more often the message of reason deserves to be boosted. Alright, yeah, neither of us likes doing it. But

**Bret** 1:02:20

now I hate it. Yeah. Well, we hit 200 subscribers today.

**Heather** 1:02:24

Oh, great. That's wonderful. That's excellent. Okay, final question. Kendi. That's ibram x Kendi argues that all cultures quote are equal in all their divergences. So all Thomas Sol, or seul, says Sol in Africa, right? says quote, cultures exist to serve people. And thereby a hierarchy is created. What are your thoughts? Wow, it's such two relevant quotes to put right by side by side. That's good. Yeah. So candy are are all cultures are equal in all their divergences. So all cultures exist to serve people, and therefore there is a hierarchy.

**Bret** 1:03:02

Yeah, I'm not a candy fan. But he's not really wrong in the sense that culture is adaptive, in the same way that genes are adaptive. It is a match for a set of problems. So all cultures that exist are valid.

**Heather** 1:03:24

But they're not all equally adaptive under all circumstances. In fact, they are they will be adapted by the opposite maximally adapted for a particular place in time in which they evolved. But

**Bret** 1:03:34

you know, can you say is, you know, are ants better than elephants? Right, right. That's not a legit question. People are dolphins quick, though, right? Yeah, you can't do it. So the point is, all cultures are valid relative to the problems they evolved to solve, to the extent that one wants to say, is there a hierarchy? Well, there actually is extinct cultures are inferior to the ones that replaced them. So

**Heather** 1:03:57

that's not to say that sometimes it wasn't chance. Right? Sometimes things will have looked at blinked out of existence, due to bad luck. Sure, but not always,

**Bret** 1:04:05

right. But in general, a sequential pattern is going to result in improvement relative to the problems that are consistent in the environment. So that exists to but Seoul is right, that cultures exist to serve people that these are means to an end, which is something that cultural anthropologists bought so badly, amazingly, right. They don't understand that these are means to an end. And the most frightening thing of all,

**Heather** 1:04:33

well, and this is I mean this, we don't need a cultural anthropology lesson here. But this I point at Clifford Geertz, most most strongly here and say, you know, he started this madness. That culture is basically entirely random that you could basically pick Yeah, it's arbitrary. You could say this culture, these people, or you could just swap them and it would just be just as likely to evolve. No, that is exactly not what culture is. Right?

**Bret** 1:04:57

So the punchline here is that culture evolves to serve the genetic interests of the individuals that hold that culture. And that has frightening implications. They're highly relevant to the puzzle that we find ourselves trapped in. And we really have to get this right as bitter a pill as that is, all the hopeful stuff lies beyond our understanding of it. Once we get that through our heads, then we can figure out how to democratize culture so that we all have access to the highest quality tools, and we stop going after each other because to the extent that it serves our genetic interests, our genes do not want things for us that match the values that we all actually hold. Right. So there it is, may want you to engage in genocide, but don't do it yet. Yeah. All right. I think we're there. We're there. So on that note, like, subscribe, comment, circulate all that stuff. And

**Heather** 1:05:55

all that and yeah. If you were interested in one of these conversations that Brett has with his higher tier patrons, they'll be happening Saturday and Sunday, so you need to sign up before them.

**Bret** 1:06:07

Yeah, bring your A game though. Yeah,

**Heather** 1:06:09

yeah, yeah, big games not accepted.

**Bret** 1:06:13

Alright, be well, everyone.