Your Questions Answered - Bret and Heather 41st DarkHorse Po...

Sat, 10/9 12:22PM • 1:25:32

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

question, gamed, system, people, fact, sense, molecules, point, works, neanderthal, effect, carnival, find, racism, problem, mitochondrial dna, good, instance, holiday, progressive

**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:13

Hey folks, welcome back to the Dark Horse podcast live stream Q and A section I realize I've left my hat in the background. It was drawing from yesterday's kayak. All right, yes. And there's a cat next to it. Well, that's wonderful. All right, so we're gonna answer your super chat questions starting with ones from the previous hour. And at some point in the middle, we will migrate to questions from this hour.

**Heather** 00:40

Actually, we're going to start as we have been with a few from Episode 40. I started with just a couple of comments that I found particularly nice, and then a couple of questions, and then we'll go to those from the last hour greetings from Denmark. You guys provide a litmus test for the information we get ever since we got 24, Seven News. And after 911, we have slowly been divided to a point where even a family dinner feels like walking in a minefield. So thank you for that. And the second comment is your discord is my new social media just voting with my dollar here, call it a paid review by me worth the buy in. Awesome. Thank you for that as well. This is one of two questions, then that I will that we will address from Episode 40 that we didn't get to last time. In what way? Are you progressive? You guys seem very liberal. What are some progressive policies you want? What is your ideal progressive leadership?

**Bret** 01:38

Well, that's a tough one, I have to say, as much as people swear that the distinctions between leftist liberal progressive, are clear, I've never understood them. As somebody who's been on the left all my life, I certainly remember a point where the term liberal had been stigmatized so badly that I started referring to myself as a progressive just simply to not have the conversation bogged down immediately. So at least at that point, I think the distinction was an aesthetic one at best, I would say, the thing about the thing that causes me to say that I'm a progressive is that I believe we have to change, we have to make a kind of progress in order to survive that our system is on a fatal trajectory, short term that it contains many of the right elements, but that we have to introduce some new structure. And basically, the founders didn't know about, for example, evolution. And so they didn't build a system that was robust to the evolution of, let's say, mechanisms of capture. So I would just say, I derive the meaning of the word progressive from the fact that we need progress. I believe that progress is essential. But I don't believe almost any of the things that many who would call themselves progressive claim to want or say that we need. So I believe we have to make progress. But that's about as far as that allegiance goes. I wouldn't be surprised to find others in that movement who had a similar feeling. But in general, what the progressives claim to want is dangerous.

**Heather** 03:20

Yeah, I guess I would, I would just add that many have noted that we often talk in terms that sound like putting a lot of weight on individual responsibility. And, you know, personal responsibility and such. And, and we do, but that is not contradicted by also seeing a need for collective action for those problem problems and issues in society that will be gamed by individuals if you don't have a mechanism by which you can prevent them being gamed. And so systems like, well, like healthcare, we can do better than what we currently have the united states in which you have insurance companies vying for the dollars of people without actually seeing any increase in the quality of the health care we're getting.

**Bret** 04:17

I would just add to these two things already on the table that in general, I find that liberals are more likely to see inequality in the current system that is worthy of and demanding of a solution. And I do believe our system has many biases in it that are worthy of a solution. Conservatives tend to see the system as more functional. And ultimately, as you've probably heard us say, are Middle East. The aim of a liberal The aim of a progressive opt to be to create a society that is so functional, that one wouldn't be a fool to attempt to change it to make it better. In other words, perfection is impossible. A system that works really, really well is something that you should leave functional. And I don't believe we're there yet I believe we have a long way to go.

**Heather** 05:13

But the aim, the goal of everyone should be to create a society that is so good that they now want to conserve it. Thus, the goal of everyone should be turned to be able to turn everyone into conservatives, not for a pass that that already exists, but for the future that we would like to create, and then can try to conserve. And I think, as has been noted, across many domains, now part of what is going on with this movement, not so much what we see on the streets, although I think there is some element of that as well. But for instance, on campus and campuses and incorporations, where you have the creation of a whole swathe has told divisions devoted to diversity, equity inclusion, these officers are these diversity, equity inclusion officers are creating a world I have have inherited have themselves created a world that then requires that they never actually do the job that they're pretending that they're claiming to be trying to do. Because if they did, so they would put themselves out of work. And so, you know, what, what we should all be doing is, you know, those of us who, you know, have jobs that are specific to activists, and you know, di e officers and such, should if if they are in any way, being honest about their stated goals and aims, they are they should be trying to put themselves out of the particular kind of work that they're currently doing.

**Bret** 06:31

So I think this also now that I think about it creates a taxonomy of conservatives that I think I had not formalized yet. On that there are three reasons in light of what we've just said about progressives and liberals, there are three reasons that you might find yourself on the conservative side. One of them is that you believe that the system is in a place where change is likely to be more harmful than it is desirable. Yeah. The second are

**Heather** 07:02

not inherently opposed to the idea of change, you just don't think it's necessary, right?

**Bret** 07:06

And so that's, that's what we should all be shooting for is that state. The second is that you might be insensitive to problems that might be solved in the system. In other words, you might regard it as fair than it is, because maybe you're not in one of the categories to which it is routinely unfair, or something like that. And the third are people for whom the system is biased, who might like to conserve those biases. And so I sometimes think that liberals when they talk about what they see wrong with conservatives, imagine that it's all that last category, right? And it isn't, right, I run into all three of these types. And so anyway, probably worth keeping in mind. It's really good three types of conservatives. And you know, one of those types is a type that even honorable liberal should be aspiring to join. That's right.

**Heather** 07:56

Okay. What is the evolutionary explanation of drug addiction? Why are there withdrawals for something that slowly kills you? Lovely, love you. Thanks. And you're ready for a win.

**Bret** 08:06

All right, you ready for the win? You want me to start? Sure, yeah. So first of all, I should say that there's an old model of addiction, which I'm convinced has some truth in it, but has been replaced by a new and better model of addiction. So the old model of addiction was based on heroin, primarily highly addictive drug that mimics the molecular structure of endorphins. And the idea is that your body produces these molecules to keep you For example, from being overwhelmed by sensation by pain in particular, so you have all of these systems across your body that are detecting damage and pain. And they don't, they are, you are under sensitive to them. So you are not, for example, constantly paying attention to what's going on on your arms and all of this so you can pay attention to what you need to focus on. So these molecules that we make that limit sensation, are something you can trigger artificially with a plant made molecule of molecule of the plant makes in order to keep herbivores from eating it. And the thing is, your body is monitoring how many of these molecules you need. So to the extent that you are supplementing those molecules, your body starts making less and less of them. So if you overwhelm your system with these molecules, maybe you get a pleasant sensation of numbness or whatever it is. But you're also sending a message into the system that causes a reduced production of your endogenous molecules. And at the point that you try to remove the supplement, you don't have enough of these things, and you're suddenly overwhelmed by the sensations that you were blocking out and it takes time, right, the withdrawal period, it takes time to go back to producing normal levels of these things. So kicking the habit involves basically a kind of dysfunction and so the idea was to To get off heroin, because it's very painful as a result of this imbalance, and that keeps people who do heroin doing more heroin, the new model of addiction suggests, and there's a great deal of truth in this to that creatures, all of us tend to make these bad choices about ingesting these molecules, when we don't have things that are rewarding, available to us, right. And so, you know, a rat in a boring cage may press the cocaine lever again and again. But a rat that has entertaining things to do is much less likely to get addicted to whatever substance is on offer. And so you will also recognize that this mirrors what you see in the world that people with bad options often do get addicted to drugs. And this goes to one of my philosophical principles, which is, you shouldn't hold people responsible for bad decisions when they only had bad decisions available to them. It's easy

**Heather** 10:57

to conflate cause and effect. And it's also quite possible that you have sort of an exacerbating effect where someone with bad options was more likely to become addicted. And of course, becoming addicted, it reduces their options further, which causes them to be even more prone to addiction perhaps of greater a greater extent, or have more substances, etc.

**Bret** 11:19

Total. So I would say a number of things, I'm going to try to make sure we answer the exact question we were asked, I think that there's a lot, there's a lot in there, there's a lot in what we've said that's relevant to the question. But you know, so basically, you have a physical system that you're disrupting in some sort of pleasurable way. And the removal of it leaves a disrupted system, which is not functional, good options, defeat bad options, which suggests a, that, you know, the thing that makes me angriest about what I was told about drugs, when I was young, is that drugs was even a category, because drugs isn't a category, right? Drugs are many different substances, some of which you may, you know, if you're trying to cope with certain things, these may be absolutely the most powerful tool in the arsenal, right? In the case of things like psilocybin, right? It's a very powerful tool, I would say, Don't, these, none of these should be treated recreationally, though, you should potentially have fun in the context of many of them. But

**Heather** 12:18

but just I mean, you mentioned psilocybin, and that and other hallucinogens, slash entheogens. Slash psychedelics, you know, they're all of these words mean slightly different, but largely overlapping things are interesting in that almost none of them actually have physically addicting characteristics, right? That you actually don't, there are no people who are physically addicted over to experience withdrawal from not taking mushrooms anymore, they might well miss them if they might, and especially if it's if it's someone who is micro dosing regularly, and it's helping alleviate anxiety, for instance, they might see a decline in mental health as a result. But in terms of physical addiction, the model that you laid out, Brett, for what happens with heroin, is just it's just not the same effect. And so this is this is exactly why we we object to this idea that, you know, drugs is a category that makes much sense, you at least have to include no caffeine and nicotine in in the drug category. And frankly, caffeine and nicotine are a much better match for the model that includes heroin, than Are any of the entheogens or hallucinogens.

**Bret** 13:35

Yeah. So I guess I would just say Finally, that basically all of this argues that there's some sort of matrix of characteristics that you ought to be thinking of before you decide to engage one of these substances. And, you know, in the case of heroin, probably just too frickin dangerous to be worth toying with it at all. On the other hand, that molecule taking in another another way, might be something that is manageable, right? What you don't want to get into is a situation in which the solution to the degradation of the function of the molecule is more of the molecule, when you get into a positive feedback situation where in order to deal with the loss of effectiveness of the molecule, you become addicted to greater and greater amounts of it or something like that. Yeah.

**Heather** 14:27

And that's, I mean, I think that is an answer to the question about withdrawal, right? Like you don't, you don't expect withdrawal for, for something like mushrooms, but anything to what your body has become accustomed to, and as therefore, either downregulated production of the thing in question in the case of heroin and similar opiates, opioids that the body itself produces or is otherwise accommodating. Here I don't actually have a good model in my head. I want I was going to say your body is other As accommodating for the intake, and therefore if you start reducing it, your body's gonna go out of whack. But like with alcohol, I actually I do not have a good model for what, like alcohol withdrawal. And and such as about I don't have I haven't seen it. I don't know any close stories and I don't I don't have a good model of what that is.

**Bret** 15:21

Yeah, I mean, I think we can say something general. And it's possible that somebody else knows the specifics, but the body is capable of applying some kind of resource. So to the extent that alcohol disrupts your ability to accomplish something, maybe you know, it numbs your senses, some part of you can ratchet up heightened sensitivity, right? It doesn't negate the effect, but it may compensate for the effect to an extent. Yeah, so

**Heather** 15:51

it's gonna be compensatory, somehow, it's

**Bret** 15:53

gonna be compensatory in some way. And it also, you know, I'm no doubt there are just simply costs to producing the detoxifying equipment. And so any way that it may be that withdrawal has to do with the fact that if you if you drink a lot, very regularly, and then suddenly you're not drinking, but you're ratcheted up, and you've got all of these molecules that have no job, no job that may be costly to in some way.

**Heather** 16:26

Yeah. Okay, let's move on. Do you think holidays have an evolutionary component to them? About every culture has them Do you think a holiday like Halloween might act as a way to teach our children to control their fear when they see something scary. So that's, that's really two different questions. And certainly, they have an evolutionary component. And if we, if we take it a little bit larger than holiday and make it, you know, an annually or otherwise reliably repeating celebration of some sort, it It acts as a calendar, it can act as a reset, it can act as a, you know, an often an actual reset, you know, like this is this is where we, this is the moment before, before which we will forgive our debts, we will forgive our insults, and we will move forward, we

**Bret** 17:16

apologize for the things that we've done wrong over the past year,

**Heather** 17:19

exactly. And we will speak to our ancestors and tell them what has happened. And going forward, we know that anything that happens, we're gonna have to tell our ancestors about that next next year, again, there, you know, these these are all things that are present in celebratory, reliable holidays across many cultures, and almost all of our modern ones in the in the weird countries in the western educated, industrialized, rich, democratic countries have lost so much of their contacts that they've become mostly about markets and buying shit. Rather than, you know, Thanksgiving, which obviously has its root in some, you know, not so terrific. original founding myths of America, however, remains one of the one of the holidays that is least touched by the market, you know, other than turkey farmers, there's not a lot of people who you know, explicitly benefit and profit from, from the holiday. And it really tends to be a time when at least some form of friends or family come together and share good food and break bread together. And, and hopefully, to some degree, discuss some of the things that they are, in fact, thankful for.

**Bret** 18:29

So um, so you and I, for years have been tinkering with holidays? Yeah, feeling that many of them, maybe not up to date. And we have, in particular, modified both Hanukkah and Christmas, to modernize them, or to update them in some way. I'm wondering if actually, now that you mentioned that. Thanksgiving doesn't need to be modified to I've been hesitant about Thanksgiving, because since it is effectively the only important holiday that hasn't been captured by the market captured by Yeah, by market forces. It seems like don't touch it. On the other hand, I'm wondering if it doesn't fit a little bit with the question of unity and why it's breaking down. Right. In other words, there is some aspect of thanksgiving which is about breaking bread with somebody on the other side of something. Yeah. And if that could not be made, if it could not be made into a healing holiday if, in effect, I would say, sitting down with people across some unbridgeable divide and breaking bread with them is inherently positive and it is inherently American.

**Heather** 19:42

Oh, absolutely. That's, that's wonderful. To the second part of the question about Halloween, all right. I've been thinking a lot about Halloween actually, which is never It was never a holiday that I was particularly into. I just you know, cosplay wasn't my thing. And so much of what is happening on the street. Is that right? It's, it's, it's caused play and unfortunately, a lot of what's happening in some of the, some of the fringe elements of your, for instance, trans activism is actually caused play as well. And, you know, we're not allowed to say that, but that doesn't make it any less true. And I think, you know, Halloween is pretty ridiculous in its American form but you know, much beloved and you know, we encouraged our children as long as they wanted to to do it, although our elder son Zach resisted the market part of it from a very early age, and we can tell some stories about that at a different time, perhaps. But I do think that we are missing, you know, we have in some parts of the United States Anyway, there's some celebration of Mardi Gras, which is, again, just as bastardization of carnival. And Carnival is a depending on where you are in Latin America, originating from, you know, a combination of the sort of, you know, animist spiritual traditions of the original people with the Catholicism that came in with the Spaniards and the Portuguese. And you have for a few days, before lenses to start before you have to give up something and basically live your best and most pure life for a lot of time for 40 days, I guess. You get to just party, right? And so that's the way that Americans understand you just to your party, and you drink and Well, that's a ridiculous bastardization. And I've been lucky and unlucky enough to be present for several carnivals in, in Panama and Ecuador on I guess, three different occasions. And some of them have been ridiculous. And some of them have been amazing. And what you see when it works, is exactly what Carnival actually with. For the first time before I knew I was going to be in all of these cases, it was with study abroad classes, so I was there with my students. And before I went down, and you know, I hadn't planned for us to be there for Carnival, you just find that when you're traveling for weeks, and you happen to be there during Carnival, everything shuts down. And there's nothing else you can do as you just thought, okay, we'll make it a learning moment, we'll make it a learning few days, we're gonna, you know, go in effectively as participant observers as ethnography is and see what we can learn and yes, participate. And so I went back to my, actually, my professor at UC Santa Cruz, who had taught my Brazilian society and culture class when I had been an undergrad, and who would, who had taught me what I knew about Carnival, which was entirely at that point, and abstraction. And who himself worked on the, on the Atlantic coast of Brazil near the exit to, I think, near the exit of the Amazon near Balaam. And one of the things that he said that was most impactful to me, which I then shared with my students, before we went and experienced this thing firsthand was that it's an exploration of liminality. It's an exploration of borders, and which borders are there and you can touch them, and you can push them and they deform a little bit, but they're always going to bounce back, and which ones actually can be reversed. And which ones can be reversed for a day, and you can experience life as the other and that you're definitely going to go back. And so the exact the three examples that I remember, he gave were male, female, and parent, child, and employer employee. And I'm sure that last one had sort of slave and owner manifestations in the past. But you know, that's, that's not what is going on now. And just being able to, to switch your position, you'll choose one of those or some other dichotomy or not, it could be something with something with more roles than two, and try on a different mantle for a day for a few days. And know that at the end of it, unless you are gripped hask unless you do something truly awful, you're allowed to explore space that you wouldn't otherwise explore. And then you get to go back to your life and and think on it and learn from it and and have a better sense of what the other people in your life are also living like.

**Bret** 24:07

Alright, two things to add to that. One of them I have some trepidation about, but we'll go there anyway. But I wanted to just say that time we were together in Ecuador for carnavon in klinca, and 2016, and quagga in 20 1630 of our students and we were going to China for 14 days.

**Heather** 24:28

Yeah, we were that was the longest place we were in our 11 week trip through Ecuador. We were in Quantico for 14 days.

**Bret** 24:34

So this was a place where the students were all living in their own states in their own homestays and you know, they knew the town they'd been walking around it and so Carnival happened and you know, we would intersect with them walking through the square anything but we weren't all together as a group in the same way 34 person mob going through Carnival right so anyway, it was very interesting. Some of them got themselves into trouble and you know, all sorts of stuff happened, but We were able to observe and participate. So in Cuenca and in Ecuador more generally one of the things that goes on during Carnival is that people buy this bottled foam and they shoot it at each other so you know boys might shoot it and girls that they are fond of or whatever, but people are spraying other people we got sprayed for being gringos and that was just all in keeping with it. But one of the things I remember being struck by was that there was a police band

**Heather** 25:31

oh and you took a beautiful picture Yeah,

**Bret** 25:33

I got a nice picture fight No, we were going to talk about this I would have found it but anyway a little girl on her dad's shoulders looking at a police brass band marching down and being covered in foam people are just attacking the police with this foam and I was thinking at the time that actually this was a really healthy phenomenon the band you know the police were not freaking out they were continuing to play was all something you know by Stephanie but

**Heather** 25:58

one guy's trombone maybe it was like filled with foam even Yeah,

**Bret** 26:02

so anyway, imagine how healthy it is to have that relation. That is the opposite relationship with the police. All cops are bastards, right? All cops are bastards, you know, to interact with them in any human way is unacceptable. Versus Oh, you know what, there's one day a year, I'm going to shoot that cop that has been giving me trouble or whatever, shooting with foam with foam. Right, exactly. So. So that's one thing. The other thing also involves a cop, the DHS officer that I mentioned on the stream and have taken so much crap for talking to it, how dare you? Yeah, how dare I talk to a cop. But anyway, among the many interesting things he told me is about the training that he and his fellow DHS officers had gone through in order to deal with riots and protests and the like. And it involved all kinds of things like enduring tear gassing, they, you know, they had they were themselves tear gassed, he did it on multiple occasions. And there was also some sort of thing where they traded off basically playing at being protesters and all of these things, and he describes basically these war games between DHS officers playing the DHS role and DHS officers playing the protesters role. And he,

**Heather** 27:26

my goal is not how better to harm the other, right in federal is how to be a better DHS officer how to be a better policeman. And those better, better policeman better DHS officer does not mean, how can I hurt other people

**Bret** 27:41

the most? No, in fact, in fact, the thing that struck me the most was that actually, a he saw his role as protective that the thing that he feared was that he was being boxed into a situation by protesters in which violence would be the only way to protect the buildings in question. And he didn't want people to get hurt. his point was, we're not going to allow them to take the buildings, we can't. So anyway, there was that, but also, you know, he described his own how much fun it was to be on the other side of this line. And, you know, he basically it was clear that he was into it, and he understood something about, you know, and that's not to say that what is motivating these protesters is entirely about fun, but there is some aspect of it in which they do clearly enjoy their role. And it was interesting to hear, you know, I hear one side demonizing the other day, I did not hear him demonizing the protesters, as troubling as it was to have them launching ball bearings with slingshots and things like that,

**Heather** 28:45

right. Okay, next question. Is there an evolutionary explanation for how something like placebo would come into existence? Is it may be a side effect of some other feature that was naturally selected?

**Bret** 28:57

Oh, you're gonna hate this answer? You just I apologize for it in advance. But that placebo effect that you think exists, it doesn't. There is a placebo effect, but it works like this. If you have a condition in which the manifestation of the condition is subjective, like I feel pain, or I feel anxiety, then placebos will actually address it and you will feel less anxiety or less pain. But this does not manifest itself. in things like longevity. If you have a condition that reduces your longevity and you take a placebo, there is no evidence that supports the idea that you will live longer, or that you will eat basically anything that's objective rather than subjective does not respond to this. And so you are absolutely correct and asking this question that if placebo existed in the form that people think it exists, that would be an evolutionary paradigm. of major proportions. Because why is it if you have the capacity to heal, that you don't just simply heal if somebody by lying to you about some treatment they've given you could trigger an endogenous system for healing on the endogenous system should trigger itself. So anyway, I am already anticipating a great deal of hate mail that I will get over this one, I will be told that the placebo effect does exist and that I will be pointed to 1000 things that will not reflect that. And I appreciate all of them. Let me tell you, and I don't know, I suppose that's where that's where it lands. So from the point of view of, can you feel better by being told you've been given some treatment that? Yes, you can, if it's subjective, I think the interpretation for why that would be is somewhat obvious, right? In other words, how focused on something subjective, like pain should be, is a question of what situation you're in, right? If you're at home, and you've damaged your limb, and you need not to pick stuff up, maybe you need to be focused on that pain. If you're still on a battlefield, maybe you need to ignore that pain, so you can survive to get home and focus on the pain. And so we have systems that are modulating For this reason, that are subjective, and the ability to modulate them. Makes sense from an evolutionary perspective.

**Heather** 31:24

In the spirit of truth seeking, can you Bret to clarify a statement that you have made several times Black Lives are undervalued? By whom? Brett, are they undervalued specifically,

**Bret** 31:36

by us collectively. And I hesitate to say I think that includes black people. But there is a degree into which there, there is an almost an expectation of misfortune befalling black people that has just been, I think, absorbed into the culture. And what it means is that, you know, I mean, this has been pointed out in certain contexts, like the degree to which people freak out when a white woman has disappeared, compared to a black woman, I'm not sure if this has been quantified, but there is a tendency for society to empathize more in certain cases than others. And I think it really does have significant effects. You know, a crisis is less of a crisis when it happens to a black neighborhood. And, you know, that's something we have to address. Now, I don't think you can address it by wagging your finger at people that's not going to work. We can address it structurally. And, you know, I find myself in a very different position than many of the people in our social circle with respect to things like, you know, do we need, you know, black focused hero narratives, right? actually think we probably do. And I've gotten some pushback from black people on this, right? That is a concession I shouldn't make, but I really believe it. It doesn't mean that you can't empathize with a character that doesn't look like you, I think you can, and I hope that we will all do that trick. You know, I certainly empathize with female characters. And I empathize with black characters. But to the extent that for, especially for younger kids, that there might be some tendency to more easily project yourself into the role of somebody who, in some superficial way looks like you, I think it would be healthy. And the great thing would be that we get society to a place where those superficial characters characteristics matter so little, that all of these narratives become available to all of us. Right. And the really important thing is, well, suffice it to say it should be about the content of their character, rather than the color of the scanner. Yeah, protagonists.

**Heather** 33:57

I mean, I think I think you're demonstrably right that the younger the child, the more suggestible they are, and if they only see narratives of, of people being heroic who don't look like them, it might be a conclusion that at least some of those children come to that they therefore, you know, art aren't made of the right stuff to become heroic. What we see 100% is this recognition being gamed, and I don't know that it is being gamed. racially, I hope not, I don't even actually know what that would look like, although I'm sure we'll hear from people who can point me to some examples, but it's 100% being gamed by the by the trans rights activists. And the idea that you put in front of little children, the idea that they are maybe, you know, maybe maybe not the sex that their parents say they are, when in fact we know this to be an incredibly rare condition that is not created by reading a book, or from wanting to cosplay as a kid or wanting to play around with gender norms because that's in part what childhood and adolescence is about this, this in part, this successful gaming of, of narrative and playing on the suggestibility of young children and the gullibility of parents as part of why we are in the bad position we're in right now, with the rise of so called trans people among teenagers.

**Bret** 35:22

I also wonder if marketing culture has exacerbated something terribly, and that basically because marketers profit by making people insecure about something that they then can be sold a solution to, that we have been sold archetypes that are far narrower than they might otherwise be. And in fact,

**Heather** 35:42

when you want to play it, sorry, but it plays to on the insecurity of parents. I mean, if for people who aren't parents, you won't necessarily know this. Parents are expected to be uncomfortable and unsure about what they're doing in in modern culture. And those of us who are like, Well, no, we don't necessarily know what we're doing. But let's figure it out as we go along. And let's not look to authority for answers, but try to deduce from observing our children and ourselves and what works and what doesn't, how best to interact and always do so with love. We found ourselves rare among parents who we interacted with, in not feeling it necessary to look for authoritative sources on how it was that we were supposed to be doing what we're doing. And given given that and given that, you know, the market is everywhere, and it is bullying people into suggesting that they have no idea what they're doing. And they really need to do something different. And they need to buy this in order to fix the problem that there's that they're causing that I think, actually it's not just the suggestibility of little children, but the gullibility of the parents who are buying these products, because they're being told by some number of forces, some of which are not good at all. That if they do not affirm their child's gender identity, for instance, right, this very moment that they are being bad parents, well, that's that's gaming of parents, not just destroying children. And obviously, the destruction of children is far more important. But hey, parents, try not to be gamed, if there's some chance that this is going to cost you some money to be gamed, there's a good chance that that's what's going on being gamed.

**Bret** 37:22

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, then many people are trying to sell you one raw idea or another for various different reasons that you know, in the case of marketers, it's the most obvious, but there are all kinds of bad ideologies with respective to parenting that have been floated. I was just going to add that when when we have traveled especially Latin America is the place where I've been most systematic about this. But I have frequently gone into the cosmetic section of supermarkets and, and I've discussed this before publicly but the wall of for example, haircare products, you know, or eat baby products, too. They represent an archetype of what people should look like, and it's far it's definitely latinized but it is a very light skin. It is very often

**Heather** 38:21

a blonde white woman, right?

**Bret** 38:23

Well, no, I see more. It's it's Latinas, but very, very light skinned, leaning very much towards the the North American aesthetic, which is itself being pushed by an advertising industry that obviously is using desk dissatisfaction to to sell people stuff. But anyway, the difference, you know, the supermarket's a great place because you're right there with the actual people. And you're right there with the image that they're being sold. And the two are not a match. And anyway, it's very striking once you tune into it. Because at home we don't we ignore what's on the shelf we try to because it's an attack on us. Yeah, it's, it's something that we learn to ignore. But tuning back in is very useful. I mean,

**Heather** 39:11

this actually, this, this will be totally not obvious to people who, to most people that one of the things that we find value in in travel is precisely spending time when we're not deep in nature when we're actually in a in a town exploring, like, sure we explore the you know, the churches and the museums and, you know, whatever it is that you know, hang out in the squares and eat the local food and you know, see if we can talk to local people, but also going into hardware stores and going into markets and just spending time in the space with the local people or buying the things that they need to do the stuff of their lives. From a hardware store, you can figure out what kinds of problems they're having to solve. And you know, in in we started doing this when we were both doing graduate work in would have been Costa Rica and Panama and so you know, I would I find myself going into a hardware store because I really needed a bunch of netting and a bunch o cords and like, Okay, how am I going to make this big enclosure that I have to make with what's here. And so it was driven by my desire to solve a problem. But you, you learn a tremendous amount about what problems were being sold by the local people as well. And, you know, because because it's never it's not a Home Depot or Lowe's, probably I mean, it is in the big cities down there at this point, but you know, the local hardware store tells you something just like, you know, the local feed store, in a small us town will tell you something about the local economy and the local people in local culture in a way that the lows at the city 30 miles up the road won't.

**Bret** 40:41

Yeah, absolutely. And if you're in a very hot place where you can't escape the heat, you can also go into a supermarket and pretend to be buying cheese, which is something I'm not proud that we've done.

**Heather** 40:52

We did that in Venice last year.

**Bret** 40:55

There was hot, it was really hot, it was hot

**Heather** 40:57

and the cheap, but sometimes you just have to actually open the cheese case in order to figure out if you want cheese,

**Bret** 41:02

that's a bridge too far, but but pretending to buy cheese is it's well within your right as a North American. I see.

**Heather** 41:12

Okay, um, imagine sometime within the next year, you stumble across your ideal website for consuming general news. Are there any characteristics and its content or structure that come to mind that would make it stand out to you?

**Bret** 41:27

Yeah, I mean, I think you're, you're getting such a large dose of this, if you're a fan of this channel that this will not come as news. But I mean, actually, you know, the way to do it is

**Heather** 41:37

yeah, I don't actually know, I feel like I have lots of answers. And none of them are pithy enough.

**Bret** 41:42

Here's the thing. We were popular as professors, you were top level popular, for various reasons, right. One of them had to do with the fact that we actually leveled with our students, which meant that there were several things that were unusual in other contexts that our students found with us one was, we told them things that were uncomfortable, and then we help them sort through it. Also, when we were wrong, we told them we had been wrong. And so a news channel that pretends to be just simply accurate and a factual level and does not behave properly in the case that it is revealed to be otherwise is obviously a dangerous structure. So I would just say, a newscast that was honest about what it didn't know. Right? That was honest about the fact that there are biases that impact coverage no matter what you do, right? It's not like there is an objective way to report stories. But being honest about perspective. And tracking, I think maybe the most important thing would be how well did the viewpoint and the report stand up to what followed? Right? Was it borne out by what followed or not? So the predictive capacity of the approach is important.

**Heather** 43:13

Yeah. And for some reason, as you were talking, what came to mind was a class that had ended before we showed up. But when we started graduate school at the University of Michigan, we were told that there had been a long standing course taught by correct me if I'm wrong, Don can call and take Alexander. I think take Alexander, who was your major PhD advisor, and he was on my committee, and Don tinkle was was dead by the time that we were there. And this to people who aren't in organismal, biology space, this will seem like how different could they possibly be. But the two of them taught this course in which Dec was basically the evolutionist and Don was the ecologist. And they went at each other, because very often evolutionary approaches to questions and ecological approaches to questions are dissimilar enough. They that they just look like ships passing in the night, they can't even see each other, they can't even see that they're addressing the same question in some cases. And so this class, which run for many years, at the graduate level at Michigan, was apparently incredibly powerful, also incredibly popular, but incredibly powerful, precisely because, because it had two people who were both giants in their field who like really were excellent scientists, and also had great personal respect for one another, and also really deeply disagree with a lot of what the other person had to say. And so I mean, that was one of the things that that we also did that was successful in the classroom that we would disagree and yet we like it was clear we were married and we appeared to be happily married and so we you know, we were doing, we were doing we were doing and we're perfectly willing, if one of us was up on the stage, the other one would raise your hands like no, I think you got that wrong and The students could see the the disagreement in real time with no animus. And this is what Don tinkle Indyk, Alexander did. And I know, it's been tried in various ways in the news over over the decades, sometimes successfully, some very often not. But I don't even know if anyone is attempting that at this point. So I would, I would like, you know, what do you say, an ideal website, you know, like, I would like some some things that don't just have one person trying to take, you know, try and, you know, go watch the, the Democratic Convention, the republican convention and report back, but maybe even, you know, fairly, you know, polarized and trenched people, but good faith who actually can admit when they're wrong, and who can see the wisdom of the other side, going at it over ideas that they really disagree about?

**Bret** 45:50

Yeah, it has to be. I mean, the funny thing is the iconic example of this was Crossfire, right? And I must say, Tucker Carlson, when he was on Crossfire, I found to be an incredibly troubling human being right. In his later incarnation, I frequently find that I've this weird fact of him talking about things that are traditional, left of center territory, like class warfare, he's very honest about class warfare, about the fact that it's bad for average Americans, that his class one, and he's frustrated that there's nobody on the other side properly articulating the CounterPoint. So it's almost like what Crossfire didn't quite manage to be is something he has taken up doing later in life. And you know, I alone Yeah, yeah. It's it's an interesting it's an interesting transition. But I do think we need a version of that it has to not be driven by whatever Crossfire was driven by and it can't be phony. But there's real room for something Lincoln Douglas debate style where people with honest disagreements but respect for each other tangle Yeah, and you know, this is what I dw is exploring,

**Heather** 47:05

right? And maybe you know, not, you have sort of the extremes of like, two hosts that are always the host and always will be and you know, after a couple of years, probably, you know, for many people, it that dynamic may start to get stale, or you may start to get entrenched, because that's what people are expecting now. Yeah. Or always guests, which don't necessarily, you know, they're trying to just get their leg in your foot in the door. And so they won't be take as many risks they should etc. But you know, something like a rotating stable of 1620 people or something who come to understand each of those other six in your 20 people and our, you know, always rotated in and will have, I'm sure you would end up with, you know, all I really like, you know, I really like being on stage with those three guys. And not those three, and here are the ones that I don't know, as well. But that at least keep it it would keep it a little bit more surprising. And would I think, avoid some of the problems of both the extremes? Yeah.

**Bret** 48:07

I'd like to see it happen. Yeah.

**Heather** 48:12

Boy, we've only we've gotten through so few questions. There was only racism or lack of racism, there is no reverse racism or anti racism. Racism can exist in degrees, it is not dichotomous. So I think I basically agree with that, although it is not dichotomous would appear to be contradicted by your initial statement. There's only racism or lack of racism, but I think No, no, no, I think I know what the point is here that it's a continuum.

**Bret** 48:42

Yeah, it's a continuum. And it may not even have a discrete starting point, which is why you're hanging up on there is only there is no, there is only racism or lack of racism. So the lack of discrete starting point is a challenge to that. Yep. We know where it is. We're going to have to define some level below which it's not racism. Yep. But I'm going to push back slightly. I actually think racism naturally is a term that just simply stems from a race first view of well being. And so I agree to an extent, there is something different when a powerful group engages in a race first view, it is different in some way, then when a disempowered group engages in race first thinking so I think the problem is that is not a match for racism, right? That whatever racism plus the oppressed condition is some other term And it was the CO opting of the term racism for this, that is so very confusing. It doesn't mean that the addition of the two characteristics isn't some unique entity.

**Heather** 50:11

Okay, we're gonna try to get through a number of the rest of these fairly quickly. What is the evolutionary justification for allergies? Given how many grasses and molds I'm allergic to, it seems maladaptive.

**Bret** 50:22

Yeah, allergies are maladaptive. So a lot of them seems to stem from the, so the immune system makes different kinds of antibodies, antibodies, or immunoglobulins. Id. And there are different classes of them. And the i g e system seems to be triggered by allergens, but not useful against pathogens, which makes it perplexing. Why would you have an antibody system that is reacting to things that aren't actually hostile to you? Now, there is strong evidence that actually this system was adaptive against things like worms, and that the absence of worms in modern life has left it idle, and that it is somehow responding to molecules that it shouldn't be. And so you're absolutely correct allergies are in and of themselves. maladaptive, why we experienced them has something to do with a mismatch between us and our modern environment. And that mismatch may be in whole or in part, the absence of the pathogen to which those those antibodies are targeted.

**Heather** 51:31

Okay, the next two are comments. It doesn't matter what the action or token is, which is shown by the fact that it's made up on the spot. It is a symbol of pure power, which states we're now in control, and there's nothing you can do about it. So this to our discussion in the last hour, that's right. And second comment from someone else. love and support you both and Brett I hope the Unity project works out eventually we will need it but it's become clear to me that a firm hand is needed to deal with the banning of donkeys Trump has my vote. We've heard this from other people. Yep. I think you should I think you should cool criticism of people wearing masks outside. Some people feel safer with them on even if they realize the lack of utility and don't judge others it can help psychologically Yeah, I think this is right I'm I'm I'm concerned that people are increasingly going to be so completely covered that they're not going to get any exposure exposure to the sun at all. And this is just obviously one of the drums I'm banging lately. But I do agree. I mean, I think I would rather they not look with fear or hostility at those of us who will not wear masks outside. When we understand when what we believe to be true about the virus now means that that keeps us safe and that we are in fact doing just fine without masks outside. But but but I hear this

**Bret** 52:58

I feel slightly misunderstood. I have no criticism if you want to wear a mask outside and if you feel you know you're taking an extra step, what I feel is a I want to alert people then you know, the fact is you could do everything in your power not to encounter any human beings you could also wear of full body hazmat suit right, there are all sorts of things you could do that you're not doing so you are drawing a line somewhere. And my point to people is a winter is coming as we keep saying now is the moment to take advantage of the fact that you have daylight you have UV radiation giving you double protection outside and to the extent that you're going to feel oppressed when winter arrives back here in the Northern Hemisphere This is a moment to drink in as much contact direct contact with the outside world as you can so I you know somebody feel safer wearing the masks that's fine but I want them to know that they have a choice about where they're drawing the line and that I firmly believe you have an obligation to wear your mask indoors to protect others even if you don't believe it. Just the chances that you're wrong are so great. You have that obligation but the data itself tells us outside for the moment at least is quite safe and you know if you're standing talking to somebody maybe you should put your mask up that's probably right. But yes you just walking along the chances are minuscule and you might as well take the advantage of good weather and reduce the level of oppression because you're going to feel the opposite six months from now.

**Heather** 54:34

Yeah. This is another comment interesting Starship Troopers is on the army officer reading list. This is this Highland book. I actually read it for the first time sometime in the last couple of years. So he says Starship Troopers is on the army officer reading list. It gives the closest account to what it feels like in basic training. Christine gives you insight into how soldiers are conditioned to not buckle under pressure.

**Bret** 54:56

Interesting. It has also been recommended to me by Dave who made the Knife behind me.

**Heather** 55:03

What should one do if they feel like they're in a group with some wolves in sheep's clothing? And some sheep? I spared myself the struggle session and walked away. Does that make me a coward?

**Bret** 55:14

No, but I would certainly if you can identify who the sheep are and who the wolves are, you might begin to create spaces that are safe enough that you can explore this with the sheep so that they are at least aware enough that

**Heather** 55:26

it will free spaces. Wolf free spaces.

**Bret** 55:29

Yes. That's what your wF SS Yes. What free spaces are very good for sheep. So anyway, you might explore it with them such that even if they can't hear you right away, at the point the wolves begin to reveal themselves, they will think back to what you say. And potentially it will trigger something that's

**Heather** 55:48

large, something that can they can show back up in people's memory. Are you familiar with the Soviet defector Yuri bisman? off the current movement on the far left seems to be closely following a strategy somewhat similar to what he outlined for a Marxist takeovers of society? Do you have thoughts?

**Bret** 56:04

Yep, I'm familiar a bit. I've done a little bit of listening, somebody recommended in my drive somewhere I was listening to it. I get something from it. I'm a little concerned that I'm not exactly sure enough, what is being said in order to? Yes, this is now showing up in in dialogue about this strategy. But I'd like to understand better what it is people are seeing at the moment, I think the alignment between it and what we are seeing is too loose to actually have any useful sense about it.

**Heather** 56:40

Okay, two more here, and then we'll switch to the to this hours, switch at hydroxychloroquine. And zinc combo is not dangerous observational studies show it lowers mortality and severity of COVID. Why not take it since there are no downsides and there's a chance of upside? So this question reads to me quite different depending on whether or not I imagine that some people would argue want to just take it to the prophylactically like a multivitamin. And some people and and maybe that's what you mean here? And maybe what you mean is if you have COVID, why not take it?

**Bret** 57:16

That's what I think that's the application. I

**Heather** 57:18

think so too. Although I want to address the first possibility first, which is, again, the first possibility of what is being said here is why not just take the sort of hydrochloric hydroxychloroquine, the zinc combo prophylactically. Since there are no downsides, and there's a chance of upside. We don't know what downsides there are. And unless you actually understand yourself to have COVID-19, the fact that you're in sync probably is you probably going to have a hard time overdosing on zinc. But anything that you take in excess has a chance of affecting you badly. And hydroxychloroquine. Yes, originally, it's boy, what? I can't remember what botanical chloroquine originally

**Bret** 58:08

quinine from is that

**Heather** 58:11

tree. Like what it is at the moment? Yeah, I mean, leaf, but it's, it's synthesized in the lab with a whole bunch of other stuff. And, you know, for instance, we know and I'm not saying that is at all what's going on with hydroxychloroquine. But one of the big health effects of the opioid addiction in in the us is that there's a whole lot of other stuff that comes with the pills that people are getting the opiates from. And so the fact that Tylenol has been part of the opiates that people are becoming addicted to, and the Tylenol has known liver toxicity and causes hearing loss and you know, all of these other things means that some some, by no means all and probably not the majority, but a large fraction of the the downstream health effects of the opiate epidemic is because people are getting their opiates through pills that were produced with other things in part as a measure to reduce people's reliance on opiates. So you know, it's a it's a vicious circle that is causing problems, because of the other things in the pills. So you know, I don't know what else is in the hydroxychloroquine or how it's synthesized, or even just what the effects of hydroxychloroquine long term on a body are. But if you're talking about the other thing, which is if you have COVID-19 does this does this cocktail seem to be effective and low low risk? It does, especially if you catch it early. Seems like the lighter you are in the progression of the disease, the less likely it is to do any good. We talked

**Bret** 59:53

previously about a situation in which I briefly thought I might have COVID and it turned out I didn't But at that time I certainly was of the mindset if I wanted to get hydroxychloroquine could I? I think the answer is it's actually difficult in Oregon to do so. And that troubles me because I do think as we've tried to articulate COVID is less deadly in the acute sense than we thought but it is more destructive than we thought and so anything you can do to reduce the effectiveness of the disease once you have contracted it is probably worthwhile it's probably even worth taking a significant risk the brain damage and the heart damage that seemed to be regular products of COVID-19 are serious and so I you know, I hate this as a political question. I hate that people will take my answer as political but if I came down with COVID-19, I would be interested in sourcing hydroxychloroquine quickly because that's when it has maximal effect, and I think I would be very likely to take it Yeah, okay.

**Heather** 1:01:10

I finally know why like you guys, even though we don't totally agree politically your movie list is my movie list, including Fellini and gallium. gallium. Yep. Terry Gilliam. Okay. Let's answer several of the questions that came in this hour. To what extent would you say you to espouse objectivism, Allah and Rand favor? individus individualism to collectivism? And feel these philosophies are missing from the American conversation?

**Bret** 1:01:37

I would say not at all in the randian sense, but there is, you know, we've we've tried to lay this out a little bit. I think the thing is, society should endeavor to deliver a fair structure in which people can take personal responsibility that has the maximum possible effect. In other words, you want as much of this shunted over to personal responsibility landscape as you can. But a fair landscape in which people's personal responsibility function is best is desirable. And so I feel like the problem with the the and randian view of the universe is it just focuses entirely on one side of a two sided truth, and is very unsatisfying in that regard. But that said, the world I want to see is one in which personal responsibility works.

**Heather** 1:02:35

Is Neanderthal mitochondrial DNA no longer present in current humans. Why did Sapiens mom's supported by Sapiens culture survive better than Neanderthal moms and we're dancehall moms never integrated into Sapiens culture. Wow. Interesting. I don't, I've never, I don't know the answer. I've never thought to ask the question before. And I have not I know that I have not seen any papers that specifically mentioned Neanderthal mitochondrial DNA. The the just super basic, genetic molecular biology underlying the question is that mitochondrial DNA, because it is in the egg and not in the sperm, can be tracked entirely through the maternal line. And so we would expect to see Neanderthal mitochondrial DNA, and any descendants of Neanderthals have dinner tell females? And if there are no Neanderthal females and our descendants, of course, we know that Europeans have a fair bit of not a fair bit some Neanderthal in us. Does that mean that it's entirely from the male line?

**Bret** 1:03:49

I don't think so. And I think this actually treads very close to a question from our last livestream that we ultimately chased down to bedrock. I thought, yeah, no, I think you're right, actually. And so basically, the idea is a you. You know, you don't see it similarly.

**Heather** 1:04:07

No, actually, it's not going to be the same. So well, and we should we should clarify. The question from last time was about the Y chromosome and do all the male descendants of Sega Angus Khan have his Y chromosome? No, unless it's an uninterrupted male line, right, right. Because the daughter of the daughter of Ganga is Khan would have 2x chromosomes and her son would still be a male descendant of Angus Kahn, but would not have his Y chromosome. Whereas the son, son, son, son, son of Angus Kahn would have his Y chromosome because there was only one place one y to be transferred, compared to the egg is present. It's okay, maybe, maybe, maybe it's the same. Yeah, so the son of a Neanderthal mother No. Yeah, the son of a Neanderthal mother could have a daughter, who would have a daughter who does not have Neanderthal mitochondrial DNA, even though he is Neanderthal. Well, the son of a Neanderthal mother who has a homosapiens. Father. Yeah. Actually, that doesn't that part doesn't matter if he is married is he is having sex with Sophia Sapiens female than their son would or their daughter, my God, their daughter would have Sapiens mitochondrial DNA. So that explains why we don't inherently that doesn't inherently mean that there are no maternal ancestors in Neanderthal line. But it is interesting, isn't it? That at least I have not heard any mention of mitochondrial DNA from the Neanderthal line?

**Bret** 1:06:03

No, I mean, I think this I think this seems straightforward, because a, a tiny selective advantage of Sapiens mitochondria would be expected in the scenario that we just painted. Why? Because the point is that selective advantage, what you have is a decoupling of the genomic DNA from the mitochondrial DNA. And a slight advantage of Sapiens mitochondria could account for the total absence of mitochondrial winners, that would be Oh,

**Heather** 1:06:41

it absolutely Could I just asked you why you expect a selective advantage? I don't. But

**Bret** 1:06:45

the fact that you don't find these other mitochondria small it takes

**Heather** 1:06:48

the only assumption it takes is a tiny selective advantage of Sapiens mitochondrial DNA, right over Neanderthal. I was just asking you what, what you think that might be, but it actually isn't necessarily for

**Bret** 1:06:58

just proof of concept that something simple could result in this. I also think that a, just a simple law of large numbers, if you could be sufficient in this case that the question of an unbroken female line might be very unlikely. And so, you know, I could imagine hybrid advantage to Sapiens Neanderthal hybrids that would account for certain bits of genome being transmitted through time. Yeah, I can imagine a neutral comparison between the mitochondria of Neanderthals and sapiens, resulting in the loss of the Neanderthal DNA for no selective reason. Just because it would have been small in percentage. Yep. And I could also imagine a small advantage of mitochondrial DNA from Sapiens driving out. Yeah, the other end. So I guess the point is, I don't think this is all that surprising, because there are multiple routes that you would get there. Okay.

**Heather** 1:08:05

Next question, we're gonna do a few more and go a little bit since we took a long time on the early questions. We have 21 plus senses, Ryan argues, but only test if the main five are calibrated properly. Could some people be sensing reality in dramatically different ways than others? What are the adaptive advantages and trade offs? Well, I I'd love to see the reference on 21 plus senses. But certainly, we have we have more than the five that are usually talked about including several different you're basically touched needs to be dis dis disaggregated is aggregated into several into pressure into temperature into at least one more, I can't quite movement. And pain. Yeah. And, and you know, they're in their senses that we don't seem to have, but other organisms do. And so is it possible that we have any latent, for instance, Magneto reception, or electroreception or vomeronasal sense? What you see when, you know, when, when a horse or your cat seems to smell something on the wind, but opens their mouth a little bit? That's not actually smelling. It's a sort of a it's a chemical sense, like smell and taste, but it's taking in larger odorant molecules than smell can take can assess and supposedly our vomeronasal organ is turned off at stance, it's not hooked up. But it's it's a question. So you know, there are definitely other senses that we have that are possible. And there are ways to disaggregate the census that we do know we have in ways that might be more useful even like we know vision, you know, coloration versus black and white lines versus pattern. These are all, you know, interesting and useful ways, I think, to actually talk about the senses.

**Bret** 1:09:58

One, Jacobson's Oregon Which is the vomeronasal organ in people? I believe it passes the Adaptive Test. If it was rapidly shrinking, that would be a different question. But if it is persistent, I don't think it is size, then it passes the Adaptive Test. And that means that like the appendix, we will likely discover that it is hooked up to something or it's another some other way useful,

**Heather** 1:10:18

let's just let me just add a little bit in there, I actually don't remember the size of it in, or maybe I never knew in all the other primates. But one thing we see with the origin of primates, so mammals are mammal history has a strong move towards smell as one of the dominant senses that is going on in mammals, and we see the primitively smell part of the brain becomes actually the cerebral cortex in in us and so that's the part that gets really big. And then, and so you have, you know, oh, well over 100 million years, maybe over well over 200 million years of basically smell forward evolution in mammals. And then you get to the origin of primates. And smell begins to take a backseat to vision. And you see basically the, you know, the visual cortex is getting bigger, you have eyes moving from more, it's more on the side of the head to more, more binocular so that you can end up getting depth of field. And you're the bigger relative to the face. So primates in general are becoming more vision focused. But it has been a sort of a pat answer, of course, and I'm not telling you anything that you don't know. But there's been a patent ads that Well, like I will promise just don't smell well. And of course we are, we are a primate and we smell even less well than everyone else, because we are so vision driven. And that's that's not actually how it works.

**Bret** 1:11:42

Right? Are you saying that wrong? primates don't smell good? And this is Miss apprehension,

**Heather** 1:11:47

especially bamboos.

**Bret** 1:11:49

Yes. Well, you are about to tell me something that I don't know. I hope Okay. How far back is the vomeronasal? Oregon supposedly on hooked?

**Heather** 1:12:02

Oh, so I don't I don't know. I my right. So are there I'm trying to I'm trying to think as I'm just filling space with words here. Are there any primates? That was the dog, not me thinking, Oh, are there any primate species that are understood to have active and functioning vomeronasal? organs? I can't think of any.

**Bret** 1:12:29

So what that says then is that this is a slam dunk. It's an organ remains adaptive, at least has until very recently in our line, because we're talking about many millions of years of it persisting with no value, which makes no sense, of course. So take that as a challenge. Here's the other thing. What happened? You were talking about vomeronasal organ, this was the perfect opportunity for you to invoke lizards, which you have been talking about doing and you just like blew right by if

**Heather** 1:12:59

I'm done, I'm done with lizards. What happened?

**Bret** 1:13:01

I'm done. Okay, well, final thing. 21 senses, I'm not sure what that refers to, I'd love to know, I know that there are 16 different kinds of awesome, and there are actions that there would be a sense for each of them. 21, though, seems a stretch, but I'd love to know,

**Heather** 1:13:16

maybe there's 16 kinds of awesome plus the five, Sr and other kinds of senses, plus the main five senses that he's named here. So 16 plus five, there you go.

**Bret** 1:13:24

You've got the 12345 senses, working overtime. And with that, we'll move on to the next

**Heather** 1:13:31

question quite well. In one of Oh, this is from Bill Maher, apparently. Wow. In one of Jordan Peterson's lectures, he lists off careers and the IQ needed to succeed in those fields. I find this discouraging. Can a person with an average IQ succeed in complex fields? Can hard work compensate for being average? Thank you. I'd like to see I'd like to see that lecture. I'll bet he does a more nuanced, I bet he has a more nuanced take than that suggests,

**Bret** 1:14:01

yep. People take IQ to mean, heritable, and they take heritable to mean, hardwired by the genome. And it doesn't mean these things. Here's the thing, expose your kids to stuff that enhances their ability to calculate, right? I don't mean calculating the narrow mathematical sense, though, that stuff is quite good. But the basic point is IQ is amenable to intervention as much as the literature cast out on that in some contexts, but I just don't think this means what we think it means. Are there ways to compensate? Yes, the earlier the intervention, the more likely it is to succeed. And the question really is can you find puzzles that exercise the relevant circuitry in a useful and self augmenting way

**Heather** 1:15:00

Okay, good. If conscience is an adaptation, does that mean that our life choices that go against our evolved nature even detrimentally are as well? For instance, modern diets and excessive internet use?

**Bret** 1:15:14

I don't get this question yet, do you?

**Heather** 1:15:16

Not? Not quite, I think. I think basically, if you had I think the question is, if the ability to make choice is an adaptation, does that mean that every choice that you make is therefore adaptive? And no, the answer is, is No.

**Bret** 1:15:32

Well, the I think the this surface is a really important thing, though, which is that you can have two adaptations in opposition this this is the same thing. Oh, this is also true. Yeah, talking about with foreskin and circumcision. Yeah, right. For Skin is a is a morphological adaptation. circumcision is a cultural adaptation. Presumably, they are responsive to different environments in which different top values are reflected. So what the person is getting at is basically and you should frequently expect this to be the hierarchy that a cultural mechanism will interrupt a deeper adaptive mechanism, right? So for bidding yourself access to something for some reason, is two things in opposition. And I think, if I'm reading the question, modern life choices that go against our evolved nature as well. Yes, totally. If you are prone to seek sugar because sugar was so scarce in your ancestral environment that you were in no danger of toxifying yourself with it and any amount you could get was a win and now you're forbidding yourself sugar because you're making yourself sick or fat with it. That is your ability to detect a pattern which is adaptive overriding and more basic pattern which is

**Heather** 1:17:06

but the middle level might be adaptive but that doesn't mean that all the choices are

**Bret** 1:17:09

not there's not going to be is all in there

**Heather** 1:17:14

does that mean that our life choices that go against our evolved nature are as well?

**Bret** 1:17:18

Okay, then the ambiguity is in the question. The problem is if you say all then the answer is no, if you say some then the answer is many are but not all.

**Heather** 1:17:34

The woke YouTube channel was useful last night in Wisconsin, it's multiple live live cams of all protests and quotes. I want I am it looked like a scene from Terminator with all the burning cars and buildings if that's a protest, I never want to see a riot. Yeah, I don't know this channel. But that's a that's a useful.

**Bret** 1:17:52

I saw many of the videos though. Yeah, there is no way we are going to get out of this if we don't find some way to arrest that impulse.

**Heather** 1:18:01

Yep. Let's do three more. The last of which is a comment. I have recently encountered a flat earther at my workplace who was actively trying to convert and brainwash younger, more impressionable staff members. I find it hard to address this individual without losing my temper. Do you have advice? I assume here that flat earther is metaphorical, though. We know that there are actually some flat earthers out there.

**Bret** 1:18:28

No, no, I think this is literal.

**Heather** 1:18:30

Well, I think it's more important than the moment to answer this as if it's metaphorical but you wouldn't want to do it. Little if it's,

**Bret** 1:18:39

if it's literal. Yeah. Then timezones are the key to tormenting this person into seeing the light? If it's metaphorical, it's more difficult. Yeah. So what is it? What do you think we're being asked?

**Heather** 1:18:56

we're being asked about the the creeping ideology that is taking over about that. I mean, I don't I wouldn't have exactly put it in flat earther terms, but it's, it's everything we've been talking about. It's it's these people who have adopted the woke thinking. I mean, I may be wrong.

**Bret** 1:19:21

In which case, you know, we've talked about this, you know, it's a problem because it's the game theory and the fear of being stigmatized that drives people. And so you know, it's going to be very hard to create enough safety that people can actually see it. I guess maybe I would ask if this is really about that woke ideology, I would ask to hear what system it is that they envision, and how is it going to function? Because Yeah, doesn't seem to answer any of those questions.

**Heather** 1:19:49

You know, actually, it might if this really is a flat earther like I've never met one in real life, as far as I know, that it strikes me as sort of unicorn ish. It might be It's your workplace. And so you have to be careful. But it might be really useful to try to develop tools that could also be deployed against the kind of woke mob. But because in the case of flat earth, there is you're simply right. And he's simply wrong. And there's there's just no end of evidence in support of your position and no end of evidence against his, I presume I may be wrong, maybe it's a her. So seems like you could consider all the evidence and, you know, try, you just try in a number of different ways to in engage, engage your co workers, you know, see if you see if you put a good piece of evidence in the heads of a couple of your co workers if it comes back to you through someone else's mouth. The other it seems like an interesting way to see how such thinking can spread and how you might arrest it, in what is in one way as high stakes as it gets, because someone who actually believes that the earth is flat can presumably not be reasoned with on any number of subjects. But in other way, the stakes are incredibly low. Because what actually does a totally ludicrous belief in a flat earth. How will that manifest in such a way that anyone is less safe as a result of, you know, sharing a refrigerator with them? All right. Okay. Do you have thoughts about the unfortunate connotations of light as good and dark as evil? See, for instance, Biden's DNC speech, as misapplied to skin color? What other simplistic associations have we not shaken off evolutionarily?

**Bret** 1:21:38

Yeah, my thought is, we all need to just grow up, and that you can go around policing these little things, but I don't see that as it's not significant, right. It's significant. If you imbue it with power. Yeah, even if it has a racist history, if we all just understand that this is, you know, it's like, gender in romance languages. The fact that the table is female is really not troubling. Yeah, you know, and take it as troubling, but it just isn't.

**Heather** 1:22:14

And, you know, see, my earlier comment about the origin of primates, which is probably more than 100 million years ago, saw our ancestors moving towards a vision, vision forward life, and that meant becoming less nocturnal and more dire, and I'm relying on photons and being able to see things literally. And of course, our English, like, every language is filled with metaphor. And most of the metaphors are actually hiding, like almost every sentence that we use, even ones that we think are very, very straightforward to fill with metaphor. And so of course, we have come to associate light with goodness and dark with with places where things can hide, because literally things can hide when you cannot see them. The unfortunate coincidence that the group of people who have been most frequently who have most recently suffered racism have darker skin than those who have most frequently been the ones enforcing that racism is actually just a coincidence. It's just not related in any way. Like there's just nothing there that makes that a correlation. And so we have all these metaphors in English language that result of us being diurnal and, and, and then vision focused. And then we also have melanin as an adaptation to living near the equator. And add to that is sort of a guns, germs and steel style argument around which peoples were most likely to be taken advantage of. And it's just not the same thing. And so yeah, you can map those on. And it's really unfortunate, because there's no mapping that should be happening there. What are their simplistic associations that were not shaken off? I'm sure there's many, many and we should come back to that question. But at the moment, I'm not thinking of them. Yep. And finally, just to comment, grateful for your podcast, you model so much decency, patriotism, a great personal and professional relationship and intellectual fun. Thank you, Diana.

**Bret** 1:24:17

All right,

**Heather** 1:24:19

thank you. Alright, so that's it for Episode 41. I believe we will be back on Saturday, we saying this really are going to drop, somewhat less frequent. In fact, we won't be back a week from now. I think. We'll be back on Saturday for Episode 42. And immediately following that will be the next day will be our private q&a that's available to people who subscribe to my Patreon and you can look at either of our Patreon go to either our patrons and become patrons to access the private Discord server and

**Bret** 1:24:55

and unity. We'll be having a campfire tomorrow, Wednesday. I've forgotten whether we moved the time so I'm not going to say a time check out our channel and you will find out that 4pm pacific time a voice said to me 4pm pacific time So anyway, that should be great tune into that. And oh, we released the Brendan O'Neill episode of dark horse that is now available on the channel. You can go check that out and we will see you next time. Anytime be well