Your Questions Answered - Bret and Heather 51st DarkHorse Po...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:09

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast, live stream Q and A cat infestation, we are going to attempt to address your questions with answers that hopefully you will find suitable if they are not suitable. I don't know what we can do about it. But perhaps we'll set up a process. A process. Yeah, process.

**Heather** 00:33

Yeah. All right. So we will start with a few questions from Episode 50. And then we're going to pull one that was sent in from the discord server and then begin with questions at the highest monetary level from last hour, and then finally, answer questions from this hour that come in, in the order in which they come in. Although we as always reserve the right to pick and choose since we never get through all of them. Question from last time is the hi friend. Is there an SS that is an evolutionarily stable strategy, less likely to evolve over time as in decades, after sufficient number of oscillations of power between right and left that will eventually result in policies that are not polar?

**Bret** 01:20

Yes, problem being there is nothing that guarantees you don't go extinct before you get there. So the tendency will be to go in that direction. The danger is that we won't make it. And the solution, of course, involves us consciously thinking about our desire not to go extinct, and blueprinting, a prototype that might replace the system. So anyway, I think there's a lot to be said about what we might do to stop that dangerous oscillation, the stinkiness of the right, the utopianism of the left and the hazard that they repeatedly place us in. So the way to fast forward the process is to talk about the hazard and what might get us out

**Heather** 02:10

of it. Yeah, and I mean, the process itself is going to be dynamic, just like it will itself include oscillations, it has to there's not going to be a set point, there's no it's an it won't be can't be static.

**Bret** 02:25

Well, it can be a little bit like the temperature of one's body where it is maintained within relatively tight tolerances. In other words,

**Heather** 02:36

I don't think it can be I think it's more like say Latika Volterra dynamics between predator and prey.

**Bret** 02:42

That's the problem. Is that dynamic? And the question is, can you build something that recognizes that that dynamic in this case, places you in danger, something that serves the function of basically homeostasis? And does the the job that that oscillation does,

**Heather** 03:02

can you make the body politic act like an individual organism? Right? And I, I'm surprised to hear you say that you think one can I don't think we have a choice? I really, but I mean, not having a choice and it being possible or not the knot? Just because you don't think we have a choice doesn't mean that it's possible? Well,

**Bret** 03:22

clearly, you can at some scales. And the question is, can we scale it up so that the job is done, but clearly, the hazard of oscillating back and forth is so great, that the long term well being of the body politic depends on us taming that dynamic? So I do think there's a way there

**Heather** 03:49

may be a domestication process, rather than imagining that a group can act like an individual.

**Bret** 03:56

Well, I think we are beginning to have the conversation that recognizes that the tension between right and left is a navigation mechanism that I think we work for the first time I believe we know where we want to go. Right. And we humans know, we need the West. Okay. I believe we know what the end state looks like. And then it's already been spelled out and what we differ over is, how close we are how quickly we could go further in that direction. But, you know, a society in which the tools to compete are available without bias and in which one's misfortune is hedged out by a protective mechanism and therefore people are liberated to try to bring benefit to humanity. That is the liberal West, right? The fact that deliver liberal West has never gotten there that they've always been populations that have been excited. booted from access to the market. And all means that there's a lot of work to do. But it doesn't mean that there's anything we need to learn about where we're headed. So I would say it's a little bit like the discovery that a sphere minimises surface to volume ratio. Right? You could have a sphere, and you could say, well, what's better than the sphere? Nothing's better than the sphere. And then we can look at all the things that looks vehicle, and we can say how close really are they. So in this case, I think we know what works, we're in danger of taking it apart and having to rebuild it because of some utopian nonsense about some equitable thing that would be better than than the thing that the West aspires to. But if we can, if we can survive the, the allergic reaction that people are having to the goal of the liberal West, and figure out how to measure where we actually are and how to keep going in this direction, which we've been successfully doing for hundreds of years. It seems to me that we can do that. And the recognition that a system in which the right things, we want to do X and the left thinks we want to do y is actually a hazard. And that therefore the left and right should be interested in taming the dynamic so that they can each play their roles. But with respect to getting to a common goal is clearly the right answer.

**Heather** 06:28

All right. 44 states of science, add standards based on the next gen cy standards, these standards require a shift in instruction and learning that might surprise you, would you be opposed to doing a special series with separate episodes discussing each high school science standard? So I had this came in last time, and I looked at it I didn't, I forgot to pull it up again, for this hour. And it is it is a little surprising what it is they're proposing i don't think i think it's unlikely that our time is going to end up being spent going through a new set of standards. I in general, I don't I don't want to spend time on the particulars of the moment. On on any number of topics. Because looking for the patterns that are that are larger are just for a number of reasons. Just what are more interesting to me. But I did look at these. I don't know if you've heard of them at all. And I was pleasantly surprised to see that. Some of them. The the new science standards do seem to be about inquiry and actual science, as opposed to wokeness and shutting down. Questioning.

**Bret** 07:43

We'll see if they survive. Yeah.

**Heather** 07:46

has done a paved the way for a flat earth president. Is it feasible to flatten the earth to meet the bounds?

**Bret** 07:54

Yeah, I'm I don't even know what to do with that. You know, is it Donnie is the dynamic that left the door open to Trump? I mean, I just don't understand why we're having this conversation as if he emerged out of nowhere and forced his way into the system.

**Heather** 08:13

What conversation Do you think we're having that you don't understand?

**Bret** 08:17

a partisan one, the system has cancer, or rabies or something. And I think we're still having a you know, an argument about you know, the left half of the raccoon is less rabid and therefore we have to support the left half of the raccoon rather than Oh my god, the raccoon has rabies. We're going to have to get rid of it and replace it with a raccoon that doesn't. Okay, I need raccoons, but I mean, we do we'd need like raccoons. Yes. All right. I've got that handled. No, that

**Heather** 08:53

was good. I think that helped you emerge from whatever funk you were in the briefly. That's good. Just get you on the topic of raccoons. Perhaps hedgehogs.

**Bret** 09:02

Oh, no, not again.

**Heather** 09:04

No. And I don't know too many hedgehogs for one. Oh,

**Bret** 09:07

Mike. Too much. Too much hedgehog for one lifetime. Really? Yeah. No, I would like to see hedgehogs. That's why this comes

**Heather** 09:15

up. Yes. Every time you speak with Douglas, for instance. Yes, yes. For example. Our biological parents replaceable with surrogate or foster parents. If so, what do adoptive children lose that only a biological lineage can provide.

**Heather** 09:32

Got lots to say here. A family that has entirely adopted children is on is likely to have very few problems that a family with entirely genetic children might have That the the genetic lineage part of the relationship between parent and offspring. Bees is not largely something that looms looms large in daily life, I think it is difficult. And I speak from experience in my own nail family and from hearing many other stories like it, when there are both genetic and adopted children in the home. That that, that you know, even when everyone is trying their absolute best on that there is conflict that that erupts. Almost always. So I don't know what more you want to say about that there's,

**Bret** 10:41

well, I see, I would just say, there is no bar to an adoptive parent being an excellent parent, there are things that make it less likely mixed. brood being one of them. We know that from lots of research that says such households are much more prone to all the things that go wrong.

**Bret** 11:02

But the

**Bret** 11:07

I mean, the problem is we're seeing the collapse of parenting all over the place, because in large measure, our circumstances are too novel. And parents have antagonists that are trying to persuade kids of things that aren't true for their own economic reasons. And so anyway, there's, you know, there are so many things going wrong, that focusing on a what might be a small difference in the likeliness of an adoptive parent being an excellent parent. I think it's just wrongheaded. We're we're seeing a failure of parenting all over the place. And really the point is what goes into excellent parenting, and how can we bootstrap a return to a culture in which parenting is basically functional, and that will bring adoptive parents along just as much as anyone else?

**Heather** 12:03

All right, final question from Episode 50. Would you fly seven hours to see elderly relatives for holidays? Then stay with family in a hotel for two days? Is this unsafe, given the pandemic? Note that the destination state requires a test or 14 day quarantine? So I included this not because I think we can answer it because I think you just need to know more about everyone's risk tolerance, and the particularities of how careful people are being and, and, and all of this, but I wanted to just say this out loud, because I suspect that this is something that a lot of people are wrestling with, right now as the holidays approach. You know, how is it that F after to cash two thirds of a year? have almost Yeah, almost have have some combination of lock downs and just, you know, complete disorder at almost every level of life? How valuable are the the shared memories that you would create around holidays together, which is so often a time that families see each other? Who don't otherwise have time to see each other? You know, what, what is a break? You know, for people who have an annual tradition for whom that that part of the annual tradition has actually not yet been disrupted? What might disrupting regular traditions that occur at that level of simplicity do to further cause disorder? And I don't know, but I think it's potentially big. I think that there's been so much disruption this year, but there's just like tether on the holiday season. That can mean a lot of different things for different people. For some people, it's Thanksgiving. For some people, it's Christmas. For some, it's you know, Hanukkah isn't a real holiday. But but it's minor. I know I mean, not real but you know for for most people, there are some holiday at the end of the year that feels like the thing that that they experienced that they that they return home for the solstice. And giving up on all of that may create even greater mental health disruption than we've done we've yet seen that said people often complain about the family time around holidays. And you know, missing it might actually reveal that it wasn't as bad as you thought. So yeah, there's a lot going on here and I don't know the answer.

**Bret** 14:43

Yeah, I think that a it could be very hazardous in the sense of the annual check in that people typically experience may have a calibration function that we don't

**Heather** 14:55

missing. It could be hazardous. What you mean absolutely

**Bret** 14:59

are be asleep, there's a huge danger of, you know, a not a super spreader event, but a super spreader moment where people are gathering and suddenly, versions of the virus are spreading around which could be hazardous in its own right. One thing I would say that I think we have been discovering of late is, and this is actually a perfect model for what we were talking about before about the oscillation between left and right. At the moment, we have two narratives about virus and carefulness surrounding both of which are wrong. And the the little bit of travel that we have just done, and gathering with people where we have seen very few outside of our immediate circle for, you know, two thirds of year has revealed that there's a problem. Also the change in season, all of these things have revealed that there is a problem with the fact that we have not reached agreement on what we are trying to accomplish, and therefore, how to collectively make good decisions. In other words, there should be some discussion before you gather with people about how you're going to minimize the chances that if one of the people at the gathering has COVID, that it will not spread to others? In other words, is there an opportunity to meet outside? What is the code of conduct with respect to masks does the fact that I'm not wearing a mask while we are meeting outside mean that I am against masks? No. So, you know, basically, it would be great. If a socially distant group outside didn't wear masks, because they're unnecessary. Put them on without anybody having to remind anybody as you go in doors, that you spend as little time as possible in very enclosed spaces, you prefer rooms that are larger, you prefer windows that are open, you prefer fans that are on

**Heather** 17:08

Yeah, it's really tough to do from us the country, though, in November in December,

**Bret** 17:12

right? So what that means is that all of these things are changing. So what we've discovered is that we had a really good pattern that we were all in on, and it just became really the heart of us and our family here, our immediate family had a pattern where we, you know, we had, we were making use of restaurants, always outdoors, right? And we, you know, we were very careful about Windows and things when somebody came into the house. And the problem is the weather is now taking the behaviors that were working and up ending them. And so what that's resulting in is a kind since we're not in the frame of mind of thinking about COVID every minute of the day anymore, because we've just gotten used to it. We're now you know, thinking Well, we're not even thinking so it's the idea is that restaurants were possible because outdoors was safe, and it isn't highly transmissible in food. So the temptation is, you know, we're back in restaurant mode where that restaurants are a possibility, but they may again, not be a possibility based on the fact that the weather means that outdoor dining isn't happening anymore. So all of these things require sort of a rebooting of the conscious discussion of how can we prevent each other from getting COVID if somebody brings it to a gathering, and this is much more important than some fraction of the population seems to believe at the moment based on the dire consequences for some people who get this thing these months and months and months of, you know, myriad different symptoms.

**Heather** 18:52

Yeah, I will say that on our recent just four day trip to a place even farther north than we are now. We went to eat outside at a Mexican restaurant and it turns out that despite what their website said, they were only open for takeout but they were selling Margarita is to drink while you waited for your takeout. So we sat outside and drank extraordinarily cold Margarita is under a very cold sky and darkening sky. And I thought this is not the conditions under which margaritas were invented. This is not this is not the right circumstance to be drinking markers at all. Yeah,

**Bret** 19:29

but the food was grazing your ass off and Margaritaville.

**Heather** 19:33

Exactly. Exactly. Alright, question from the discord this week. Humans are running on 10,000 year old hardware. What's the evolutionary explanation for groups tearing themselves apart and moral panics like the cathar heresy, Salem witch trials, the Red Scare and canceled culture. So I'll let you take this. I will say that some of what well two things first before you take it is that some of what we talked about with regard to Eric Hoffer was I addressed some of this a bit. And then I'm not sure where the number 10,000 year old hardware comes from, I think we've got 20 rather 200,000 year old hardware, the 10,000 number, the number that that reminds me of is 10 to 12,000 years or so is about when agriculture was popping up in multiple places around the world independently evolved in three, four or five places, depending. So our hardware is a lot older than 10,000 years. But other than that, well,

**Bret** 20:33

you know, what we say in our book is, the hardware varies a lot. So we've got, you know, the basic platform was fully in place a couple 100,000 years ago, there's obviously some hardware level stuff that's altered in the post farming era for humanity. You know, most of the hardware, almost all of the hardware will be quite a bit more ancient than 10,000 years. But it doesn't really matter for this question, because the basic answer is, you're dealing with evolved software. And I don't think the moral panics of this kind would have been very common. Pre agriculture, because the the shared fate aspect of very small groups of people living together wouldn't have tolerated it. And so, you know, you're dealing with the 10.0 or 12.0 version of the culture. And that's where these things happen. And I do think it has a lot to do with what we discussed in the first hour, where you have competitive dynamics that cause a group that is in a position to do it to freeze out another group that isn't in a position to defend itself those who are frozen out rebel against the merit meritocratic system because they're not well armed for it and therefore would be its losers. And they topple it, which causes a catastrophe when you know, rinse repeat. Awesome. I knew I could make shampoo into it. So yeah, so anyway, that's that's what it is. You're dealing with a culturally evolved phenomenon not a genetically evolved one.

**Heather** 22:10

Yeah, this does remind me of the to me somewhat unexplicable final paragraph of this book, which I didn't share. I haven't shared. I didn't share any of what I was going to talk with you about before we went on. Yeah, well, I can explain

**Bret** 22:21

it once you've Yeah. explique this Okay, fair enough.

**Heather** 22:26

Remember, Britain in 1951. JBS Haldane counts fanaticism. Among the only four really important inventions made between 3000 bc and 1400 ad. It was a Judaic Christian invention. And it is strange to think that I'm receiving this malady of the soul the world also received a miraculous instrument for raising societies and nations from the dead an instrument of resurrection. The core is a paragraph even come from how he's finishing the holiday is the one that

**Bret** 22:58

by like the the idea that fanaticism has an origin,

**Heather** 23:02

you know, in the Judeo Christian tradition, although like, On what basis so Haldane is one of the framers of the modern synthesis. Yeah, right. Yeah. Yeah. So he was a very important early mid 20th century evolutionary biologist, if you can hear that. That is Zach, the producer trying to deal with the two kittens. And their penchant for I don't know what they're doing eating pens, something just drink carton something bad. Yeah. So you know, his halt. Apparently, Haldane just I really didn't expect to see Haldane quoted in this book. And it wasn't it wasn't until the very last paragraph, like I said, counts fanaticism, the only four really important inventions made between 3000 bc and 1400 80. How would he even like to just pull those numbers out of his ass? I

**Bret** 23:49

think? I don't know. He's pretty careful thinker. Yeah, it's sort of needs more than the paragraph to know what he was. What did he what he was getting at? Yeah. All right.

**Heather** 23:58

Okay, first question from last hour, Episode 51, twin studies, etc. Show that shared family environment only accounts for a small percentage of variance of intelligence in adulthood. Can individual parents still have a large influence by using an unorthodox parenting style and becoming a statistical outlier on purpose?

**Bret** 24:18

Yes, I would caution people, I don't think we know nearly as much about how these things are inherited. And there are many very subtle mechanisms by which things can appear to be genetically encoded, and therefore, parents have very little influence yada, yada, yada, this can't possibly be right. It cannot logically be correct. Right. So the question is, how is it incorrect? And once you're at the How is it incorrect, then the landscape is pretty open. From the point of view of

**Bret** 24:52

mechanisms to influence, so

**Bret** 24:57

do not take this stuff as gospel that says There's very little that can be done the very fact of parenting being the highly intensive, long standing activity that it is. And childhood being so darn long tells you that this is a very important set of interactions.

**Heather** 25:13

Exactly. We have we have the longest childhoods per lifespan if anyone on the planet and every organism with a long childhood as a long childhood, because they are being parented and they are learning how to be the adults they will become this is what it is. That's not childhood. That's thesis. So also rotifers, I suspect being able to just cheating, that was cheating. No. Well, they do have also not all hashtag not also. Only periodicals.

**Bret** 25:49

This is getting this is getting ugly. Yeah. No, but they do have this very long larval stage attached to the roots of trees.

**Heather** 25:58

Yes. 13 or 17 years.

**Bret** 26:01

Yes, everything else that has a long childhood has a long childhood. I mean, there's probably others. I just

**Heather** 26:06

don't think that counts as childhood. For one thing. Well, it's a dreary childhood, I will grant you that. And it's totally isolated. I don't think that we need actually to accessorize the term childhood by specifying that it's with others of your species. But that's that's the primary reason that I am declaring that the childhood of periodical cicadas for 13 or 17 years is not in fact a childhood.

**Bret** 26:33

All right, okay.

**Heather** 26:35

Both men and women, parentheses mammals, are physiologically sexually activated with erection or clitoral encouragement during REM sleep from a very young age onward, even though the content of our dreams is often not of romantic nature. Do you have a hypothesis Why?

**Bret** 26:53

I don't think we have the ability to know what such states are correlated with cognitively? I mean, how would we even so right? What I would say is, you've got a system in which the purpose of the system is the propagation of certain genetic Spelling's. And mean this is the reason human beings are fascinated by sex is that it matters evolutionarily. And so at some level, dreams are an adaptive phenomenon. This is clear by virtue of the fact that they're expensive and persistent. It is not surprising that there is sexually relevant content throughout them, and that it has some sort of relationship to physiological states. I mean, we could we could, we could pursue this in all kinds of directions. But I would just say you've got a state dependence issue, where arousal accompanies sexual success in waking life, and therefore the scenario building surrounding attaining that success in sleeping life should be accompanied with physiological states that are consistent with it. So something in that neighborhood, but I guess what I would say is, I think I think I hear in your question, the suggestion that those physiological States during REM sleep, are uncorrelated with dreams that would make sense of them. And I just don't know how we would know that if there's a way to know that I'd be very

**Heather** 28:41

curious. And your suspicion is that there is sexual romantic content and related to, I think, physiological sexual activity,

**Bret** 28:51

I would put it in a different way, which is sure to be misunderstood. But basically, if all human activity is a means to an end that goes through sexual interaction, then what exactly is, you know, what is non sexual thought? The point is at all heads that direction, though very indirectly, right. So anyway, it's a high bar, but Yep.

**Heather** 29:23

What a Biden, when effectively reward and reinforced pre election, political violence. I am a lifelong Democrat, no fan of Trump, no fan of Trump. But to me a dem win would mean the normalization of political violence and all action years henceforth would be like 2020. Yeah, they're throwing a tantrum. And they are, I think, yes. And yet I've heard exactly the opposite argument as well. That a Trump win will mean that the pre election political violence gets worse, and therefore that's why you need to vote. For, for Biden, I mean, I could maybe that's maybe that's the same argument I kind of I feel like I've heard all versions of this. I don't think I just quite said exactly the opposite version that I was trying to but I think

**Bret** 30:11

people are talking themselves into, well, there's a simple answer, and it involves doing x or not doing x.

**Heather** 30:19

Yeah. But I don't think this question is as simple. This strikes me as

**Bret** 30:23

true. Oh, I think it's absolutely true. But what I would say is, violence is a means to an end, the end has to do with power and resources. So what I would say is, I would expect a Trump win to produce one reaction, which might well be a continuation of violence. And I would expect a Biden win to change the nature at which power is being wielded. What I do not expect, which I have heard people argue for, is the idea that if Biden wins this madness, the welcome madness will stop. Right? I think this is utter nonsense. It is completely illogical, this woke madness is about power, has discovered how much power it has. And it has every reason to continue that, irrespective of who wins. And so I would expect it to function through the Biden administration. Yes. Even if it doesn't remain in the streets. Yeah,

**Heather** 31:28

it'll look different. But this just this continues to lie. And some people I think, are genuinely confused. But some people are just lying, when they say that the craziness that we saw, in fact, after the 2016 election, was a result of the 2016 election. No. And you know, we we saw a particular version of it, of course, being still at evergreen at that time. But all of the chaos, and you know, even violence that happened on the campus of evergreen that year, after November, whatever it was 2016 when Trump was elected through through May 23 2017. And beyond when the protests and the riots first erupted in force at evergreen, were not the beginning. They were not the beginning campus was already going crazy for years before then. And it was facilitated by leadership that tolerated it. And so, you know, look, look to the leadership is tolerating this. And don't imagine that this is somehow Trump's fault. This is that mean? That is that is a ridiculously juvenile argument.

**Bret** 32:38

Yeah, it just,

**Heather** 32:39

it doesn't fit with how this unfolded? No, it doesn't it changed it. For sure. And and, and he played it, and he and he profited from it. But the he did not create it. Yep, he did not create it. Oh, where am I? Here we go. Hey, Brett. Hey, Brett. France gets 75% of their electricity from nuclear power. Yep. Some five age children just saw a mushroom cloud rise over the minarets of Paris, three out of two people have cancer. Naturally, I stand with you on your visualization of nuclear power.

**Bret** 33:15

Thank goodness, your math needs work. Come on, let's not play games like this. The fact is, nuclear power is a gamble. When nuclear when fusion power was first deployed for electrical power generation. The idea was that we would figure out what to do with the waste. And we never have And what's more, we've proven that the mechanisms that we thought might work don't so I'm not demonizing nuclear power. For one thing, as I keep saying nuclear power isn't one thing. It's two opposite things. And I'm very much a proponent of the second thing that is to say fusion power. With respect to fusion power, is there a way it could be done safely? I remain to be convinced, but it certainly can't be done safely with the modern, or the most recent generation of reactors, you would need different reactors, you might need a different fuel source. But

**Heather** 34:13

because of the potential for positive feedback and runaway meltdowns, yeah,

**Bret** 34:17

yeah, the meltdown potential I am even even when it doesn't melt down, the generation of large amounts of waste that is highly radioactive for 1000s of years is, you know, it's just going to continue to build up, it's eventually going to find its way into the environment. So let's not pretend this is a simpler problem than it is.

**Heather** 34:41

It seems like moral systems need a place to experiment and to evolve. They have such long term consequences that we can't design them. Would you agree? How would we create these spaces?

**Bret** 34:53

Like moral systems need a place to experiment? Well, hey, we have that What we don't have is a proper boundary. In other words, we have tremendous freedom to choose our level of adherence inside of a moral system. And this is a feature of almost all maybe all religious structures. For example, there are people who are orthodox, there are people who are more liberal in their view. And in some sense, these things are in competition with each other. And so that experimentation occurs, the hazard becomes in secular society or pluralistic society, you have the danger of profiting from opting out of moral restrictions that bind everyone else. And so a temporary advantage to atheists are those who behave like them can destabilize an entire system, because not everybody is equally bound. So that I think, is the hazard within any of these groups, a sectarian or other difference in levels of adherence naturally runs the experiment in question.

**Heather** 36:12

Yeah, that's true. And I guess I would add to that just I would have, I would have framed a slightly differently and said, This reminds me of adaptive landscapes, right? That you're if if you're looking for a moral system, that is better than the one that you or the populace are in, you cannot blueprinted and say go there. You can get off the beat gear on and get on to another slope and and see what happens. And that's what what does that get on a different slope and see what happens look like? Like, how do you create that space? I don't have a decent answer. I think that's part of what you were trying to answer there. But I totally agree, the designing of the endpoint is not going to be the savvy way to do it, savvy approach, because it's just not gonna be possible. The left seems highly capable of unearthing parentheses generating problems. However, it does not seem capable at all of solving them. Does it lock any sort of implementation arm? Does it gate keep people that would be instead arm based on aesthetics? I'm not sure what that last part means.

**Bret** 37:20

I'm not the left. I mean, if you mean the American blue team, that's one thing. But the left itself, I mean, progressives have engaged in a tremendous amount of highly effective solution making and are not getting credit, because that which passes for progressive these days is so crazy that it makes it look like it's an insane way to think.

**Heather** 37:49

Right? And right now not so much. But from the now 6070s. And before Absolutely,

**Bret** 37:56

yeah. Well, I would also say, you know, in light of the consideration of hofers book that you engaged in in the first hour. There is there's a dynamic that has to be unpacked to the extent that what is passing is left now are basically authoritarians rejecting a system. That's not the same thing as actual progressives proposing? how society might be altered, bettered

**Heather** 38:30

fit. Yes. Yes, good. You spoke of Jordan Peterson's book maps of meaning, and its cover art is a sculpture he made in 1985, as a graduate student, called the meaning of music, to be an object that changes as you look at it like a Necker cube. What did it remind Brett of? We don't have it outside, show it here.

**Bret** 38:53

Yeah. The, what it reminded me of is what I called pie chart language. So there is a missing a missing bridge between this collage of this thinking and evolutionary thinking. It's not that it is not obvious to many people that such a bridge is necessary, but the first forays into making that bridge. Basically, evolutionary ecology kind of died on the vine and it did not take over and fuse the two disciplines the way it should have. So as I was trying to build the proper tools for thinking about evolution and ecology, it became clear that one needed to use pie charts in order to understand populations, growth frontiers, etc. and that what happened is that slices of pie grew so they didn't fit the original confines of the pie. And anyway, I built a little proto language that allowed the description of an event in terms of how it affected the fortunes of multiple populations simultaneously dividing up a world of resources in which the world of resources changed its volume based on what was discovered.

**Heather** 40:17

So basically, once you move from zero in from zero sum into nonzero sum dynamics, you can still use this new form of pie chart. Pie charts haven't been much reviled in scientific literature. But you were using this new form of pie charts to describe not just relative growth within a population, but the growth of the opportunity under nonzero sum dynamics,

**Bret** 40:41

positive some negative sum and zero sum dynamics inhabiting the same pie chart was what was necessary in order to talk about competition between populations for example, anyway, so it looked to me a lot like that diagram. That's good.

**Heather** 40:58

I didn't know that actually.

**Bret** 41:00

I at some point, I want to sit down with Jordan and talk to him about what he was getting out there and see if there's any analogy between them yeah.

**Heather** 41:10

I am a mental health nurse now required to attend healing racial trauma training. Presenters website full of CRT lingo, critical race theory lingo, sent letter to my human resources person with help from James Lindsay website, new discourses, I'm now nervous in Ann Arbor thoughts. Love you too. I'll bet on arbors gone a bit. Well, that's where we did our graduate work. And it was a lovely, lovely town, but cold at some times of the year. But other times, I could deal with the hot more easily. Um, but yeah, I'll bet that are one university in a relatively small town with a lot of culture and a fair bit of federal money coming in from grants as made it pretty woke and I feel your pain. You don't say what has happened? You know, maybe you've just sent the letter to the to HR. And you don't you don't have a response yet? I don't know. I don't know what to say. Yeah. Within that.

**Bret** 42:12

I mean, unfortunately, I think there is nothing to say it's dangerous. I hope it goes well. I do think we need to develop I'm modality as we started to on our last podcast, getting people to write down their faulty claims, so that they're checkable in the future, and that they cannot escape them is one feature of that landscape. In this case,

**Heather** 42:36

if you it's a training, you can't kill, ask the person doing the training,

**Bret** 42:40

that one's applicable here. But what would I do here? I think I would be trying to introduce the idea that that solution you are proposing is a threat to something that is serving everyone. In other words, there is a problem to be solved, the solution you're proposing to it threatens to destroy much more than you realize is in its scope. And I don't know, frankly, I don't think an individual is going to be in general in any position at all, to do that in a context like the one you described, but somehow, to the extent that we as a larger group of people talking about this can lodge in the discussion. And well, in fact, I was talking to Douglas Murray in my podcast with him several days ago. And he pointed out, so my claim to him was that the work revolution is actually going to destroy, we've got a system that fails to meet its objective. There's a gap between what it does and what it aspires to do. But that the challenge to the system as a whole is going to evaporate the well being of the system is delivering and distributing Yes, unfairly but distributing to everybody. And what Douglas said that I was unaware of. He said, this is reminiscent of Kant's point about the bird that thinks that the air which is causing drag, drag, yes. Is the obstacle to it flying really fast. And if only the air could be done away with it would be that much speedier, when in fact, wouldn't that be the life? Yeah, when it can't fly at all without the air. So to the extent that we can start making this point to people look, you have no idea what you are threatening? Yes, there are real problems with how well being an opportunity are distributed. There just are but you're going to kill the thing that makes well being exist at all, and it's not going to be good for anybody, including the people that you think you're helping. So I don't know that we can make that resonate but it is I have thing, one person saying it isn't going to be enough. sending it multiple times isn't going to be enough. But to the extent that that message begins to come from different places, and it causes some who are on this bandwagon to think, oh, wait a second, I could I could evaporate. The very thing that I'm trying to see distributed more fairly.

**Heather** 45:21

Yeah, I'm trying to enhance mental health, for instance, across people, and attending healing, racial trauma training, having having to incorporate such thinking into the rest of what I do may actually cause everything to decline in quality. Yes, may I feel certain that absolutely well, but you obviously have to catch things more gently for an audience that can't hear it.

**Bret** 45:46

Yeah, I would also just add this whole idea of healing racial trauma, it sounds so right. And it is so backwards. Because the fact is, what you actually need is opportunity. If you've been frozen out of opportunity, what you need is opportunity and the tools to make use of it. And my experience dealing with people all over the world, is, as soon as you have that opportunity, and the tools to utilize it, the trauma scars over right, it's not like it's gone. It's not like the history evaporates. But the point is, it is not an obstacle to day to day well being functioning, happiness, any of those things, as soon as the problem is addressed.

**Heather** 46:28

Well, I mean, this is an analogy that you've used under a lot of, in a lot of circumstances here, but it really is so apt is that you don't, we will all experience injury in life, some of it literal, some of it metaphorical. And at first, it creates wounds, and long term, short, short term as possible. We hope that it scars over such that the wounds are a thing of the past without ever pretending that the injury did not happen. you attain the scar, you don't retain the wound. And that so much of the modern ideology is about picking and picking and picking and picking and making sure that you never scar over. So there was always exposed wound to display to people and to announce about how how awful you have it and how it can never be made. Right. And that is in part a result of the constant picking at

**Bret** 47:20

it, yes, that keeping the wound open, because the wound is your entitlement to, you know, to be given something Yeah.

**Heather** 47:27

And like, you know, what the injury happened, what, or whatever. In some cases, people are just making shit up, right? But presume that there's something real here the injury happened, the scar can still be your indicator of injury, but also allow you to move forward. And a wound specifically keeps you mired in the past and keeps you from from becoming anything better. And, you know, part of part of it is exactly what we're talking about in the first hour. You know, your, your your pessimism, about sort about, you know, being able to fix whole swathes of the population is I think, in part based on you seeing that so many people are busy picking up their wounds. And And sure, 100 I know it's not entirely I know that there's another big part of it, which is that they you know, they arrive, you are arguing without an ability to full without an ability to win in a meritocracy. Yeah, without tools. But certainly, it only makes it worse if you if what is being told to them. And this is being this is happening in the K 12 schools and higher as this is happening for people across all levels, where they still could generate a toolkit with which to actually move forward with creativity and analysis and productivity. And if what they're being told instead is keep focusing on your wounds and the wounds of others and how wounded they are compared to you. Well, no one's going to win, ultimately, except the very few people who are in charge of, I don't know, wounded defining.

**Bret** 49:02

Yeah, I would say that, you know, if we go back to the question of, can we agree on a collective objective, that's, that replaces the, you know, the left right oscillation control mechanism. The point is, look, you have an obligation to make yourself as capable as possible, right to deal to scar over rather than keep your minds open. Having done that, we have an obligation to make the system fair, right. To the extent that the system isn't fair, we have work to do, but you also have work to do and it is the partnership between those things. You make yourself as capable as possible. Yep, we'll make the system fair, you know, as quickly as possible. That's the shared objective, and it doesn't involve I'm not gonna make myself capable at all because the reason I'm not capable is unfairness and you know, take care of me like that's just not a stable long term pattern right.

**Heather** 49:59

Are you Getting. Okay, we got to get through three more here and then we'll move into the next. Next hours questions, Brett? Based on your Twitter banner, you seem to like pygmy owls with how bad Twitter and Facebook are, why not come to discord instead, the Dark Horse server even as a pygmy owl, keeping conversation civil and on topic, Hood Hood.

**Bret** 50:21

So that pygmy owl picture, I am a budding longtime nature photographer and that pygmy owl was a very lucky get on my part. I actually screwed it up the first time I thought it was a little piece of leaf matter cotton tree and I walked up on it too quickly and spooked. It

**Heather** 50:46

was this campus once. Yeah, on the Oregon coast. Yeah, what's up with our class,

**Bret** 50:51

I was kicking myself, this beautiful animal had been in a place where I could have taken a great photo of it, and it had flown off because I didn't interpret it correctly. And then I thought, you know, it looked awfully happy in that spot. I wonder if that's a hunting perch. And it sits there often. And so I on the walk back, I set the camera very carefully for what I thought it was going to need. And I walked around the corner very slowly, so I didn't spook the animal. And sure enough, he was sitting right there. And I shot a bunch of pictures and got a good one. So anyway, I do like pygmy owls. diurnal owl, by the way.

**Bret** 51:32

And

**Bret** 51:34

that does not address your point at all. Twitter is a hazardous place. It doesn't deserve my apple picture, and I should take it somewhere else. But anyway, I'll take it under advisement

**Heather** 51:43

from Hi, yes, what's going on man? from an evolutionary standpoint, why is violence reduced over the ages? has just the percent propensity for physical violence reduced? Or has the concept of violence just morphed into something else, causing us to have a false sense of security?

**Bret** 52:01

I would say that this is actually the same thing that we've been kind of addressing over several different questions here, which is, violence is not a good way of fixing things. It's a very wasteful mechanism, right? Does it work? does it keep people in line to the threat of violence, get them to do things that they should probably, but the point is, if you can get the same system to reduce the violence necessary in order to get people to behave, in other words, if you can ritualize the violence, or if you can encode it in something else, so it doesn't actually require people to, to engage in it. That's better. And so in effect, we have all agreed to be less violent, in order to accomplish those things that we agree are good when we accomplish them. And I would expect that pattern to grow greater and greater over time. Yeah, because violences as artists, and an expensive, that's right,

**Heather** 52:58

and I guess suck if you would just show the screen for the moment. Here's a Robert sapolsky. The great Robert sapolsky, writing in 2006 for Foreign Affairs, a piece that he called a natural history of peace, something that I used to assign to my animal behavior students, which I recommend that should be fine double. If you search on a natural history of peace sapolsky, the magazine foreign affairs and he walks through some of what it is that we look like as humans compared to some of the other primates. Mm hmm. All right.

**Heather** 53:39

Final question here before we move over to this hour is questions. So this is actually someone has written in several times with a link. Here's a totally new cyclical evolutionary hypothesis. The hypothesis explains political polarization through biology through silico hormone levels and history explains how hormone levels of oxytocin and vasopressin create the left versus right ideologies, and explains how populist nationalism is created by hormones. So that link is here. So I can show this again. I believe the person writing in the question is is the author here, it's a work in progress. It is. The title is cyclical evolution hypothesis, generationally, oscillating birth cohorts, specific hypothalamic hormone levels, create physiological, cognitive and behavioral differences in cyclical animal populations, including human populations. So obviously, this just came in we neither of us had a chance to do anything but read the title, but my first reaction is that this is putting the proximate before the ultimate and this is effectively putting the cart before the horse. So it may well be true that you're on to something interesting here. But citing hormone levels, even you know, cyclically fluctuating hormone levels that are reliable across across individuals is primary In a proximate level analysis of what is going on rather than an evolutionary level analysis, because the hormones will follow what is selected for, with with relatively rare events where you're just limited, you have phylogenetic constraints. So you know, for instance, you know, we can't get to a better eye invertebrates because it would take require going through blindness to get to say, a cephalopod i, this will not be clear to anyone who hasn't ever thought about cephalopod eyes, but basically like an octopus eyes built better, and we'd be able to see better for more cheaply if we had one of their eyes. But in order to make it, we'd have to go back through not having eyes at all. And so basically, evolution can't get there, selection won't take us there. Whereas cyclical hormone levels could be could could be modified. And we know that they do get modified pretty regularly. So I would say that the question is likely to need to be, how do cyclical hormone levels serve what is being selected for, as opposed to using the cyclical hormone levels? As an answer? They are, in fact, an observation that warrants a question, rather than an answer?

**Bret** 56:12

Yeah, I think it's a little bit like saying,

**Bret** 56:16

you know, 20th century nation scale, violence is the result of low voltage fluctuations, right? Because you don't go to war in the 20th century without making some phone calls. And so if you were to track, you know, low voltage oscillations on phone wires,

**Heather** 56:41

no idea what you

**Bret** 56:43

do. If you were to track you know, you know, phone calls out of the Pentagon, or whatever, you might register, there was a whole bunch of, you know, phone traffic, and if you mistook the phone traffic is causing the wars, you think, well, this is important, because it happens. It's every single war, you get, you know, phone calls.

**Heather** 57:03

Okay, so But I, that's good. I like that. But it's not quite sufficient. I don't think because that's a more standard, like correlation, causation, conflation.

**Bret** 57:12

No, no, this this is this is the same thing, okay. I'm saying exactly what you're saying, which is that the phone calls are involved in how wars happen. And if you therefore track them, you will detect something. But your point is, the evolutionary dynamics are gonna control why the hormones are fluctuating, rather than the hormone is fluctuating causing the dynamic.

**Heather** 57:35

So maybe it really just is maybe maybe the proximate ultimate, the confusion that many, many, many people have in science and biology and evolutionary biology, even although more rarely have between the proximate level, the sort of mechanism level of what's happening and how it's happening, versus the ultimate level of why it's happening at the evolutionary level, is in fact, a just a fancy deep history, conflation of correlation and causation, which I've never actually thought to put in those terms before but i think i think that's right, I

**Bret** 58:03

think that is right. Yeah. So anyway, I'd be interested in looking more deeply into what you've written, and it's possible that it's just that the title is leading us to imagine that this is a conflation that's here but I would guess if you're if you're thinking this is downstream of the hormones, than the hormones are downstream of something else, and it would be well worth understanding what it was that caused the hormone fluctuations

**Heather** 58:26

Yeah, and you know not not to say that hormone levels Aren't you know, aren't very interested in fact, my my, some of my prelim work in grad school was looking at the ways that androgens The so called male specific hormones like testosterone and understand ion actually affect female behavior in in primates and actually drive things like friendship between females. So that is not the evolutionary you know, the bigger level evolutionary question of like, why, you know, why is there sociality Why do females have friends at all what you know what drives those friendships? But looking at the hormonal indicators of those friendships is you know is another piece of the puzzle that can be interesting so we're not dismissing this just saying that it's not likely to be the top level driver

**Bret** 59:16

Yeah, it also raises the question of whether or not you could have toxic masculinity and women absolutely oh my god yes. A frightening thought.

**Heather** 59:24

I'm not really okay. Questions from this hour? Right? If the opportunity to fix my toolkit has been largely lost, he's quoting I think you from last hour Why am I listening to you? Are you saying I should just die? Maybe we think that so obviously slightly snarky here but in this I feel him like this is what I felt pushing back against you at the end of last hour like what like really? Yeah,

**Bret** 59:53

but Okay, here's the thing. human being is a fantastically capable creature and we are all being hobbled by this very Stupid civilization that takes what could be marvelous tools and dulls them for decade upon decade before setting you loose to do someone else's bidding in the marketplace. So are you damaged? No doubt my friend you're damaged, are you in a position to better yourself, of course you are. And you should write whatever damage we have all sustained, and however much we may have lost out on opportunities that we might have availed ourselves of the difference between throwing in the towel and attempting to make the tools as sharp as possible and wield them as well as possible. That's a gigantic difference. So of course, you should upgrade them. But I don't want to pretend like we're in a position to to make you a, you know, a journeyman, whatever if the opportunity has been lost, right? So, you know, and please don't take this the wrong way. At some level. It isn't about you, it's about the fact that we are going to continue to do this for generation after generation of human beings that are not yet damaged. Right? We do not have to damage them in the same way. Even if we are not fully rescue bubble. So let's get over the idea that we need to be fully rescue able to for rescue to be a worthwhile topic. And let's just please not do it to any markets.

**Heather** 1:01:23

Yeah. Amen. You hate the DNC. Yeah, you know, beam. You hate the RNC? Yeah, you know me. You hate FB policy. Yep. You know me, who's down with Unity, this whole podcast live stream.

**Bret** 1:01:40

That wasn't a question. No, I was some kind of poetry. Yeah, yeah.

**Heather** 1:01:44

from someone else who sometimes gives us power. Oh,

**Bret** 1:01:46

wait a second. No, that's a permutation of a song lyric. I can't quite resurrect.

**Heather** 1:01:55

So he would have been far more likely than me. Yeah, I'd look it up if you wouldn't. Okay, I'm gonna move on, tell us when you got after 2016. And I asked myself what the left could have done to lose to this guy. And I came up on identity politics and abandoned in the working class. If Trump wins again, how can we best ask this of lefties after this election? Oh, my God, the left really seems determined, really seems determined to not learn the lessons it

**Bret** 1:02:25

does. And so determined the idea. I mean, really, it's some level one wants to say

1:02:34

you did this.

**Bret** 1:02:36

And if you don't understand how that happened, you're gonna keep doing it. And it won't last you have to stop. And this is this is in fact, exactly why I'm completely unpersuaded by any of these arguments about you must vote for more, or whatever it is that people are telling you, you must vote for in this context. The answer is, unless you are thinking about the fact that this dynamic is making things worse and worse over time, and that we have to escape it, then you're not in a position to say who you must vote for. Because as bad as Trump is, he could be far worse. And it is not at all clear that Biden coming into power isn't going to make things worse by cynically playing along with this woke ideology. So we haven't been given a good option you're going to therefore avail yourself of a not so good option, whatever it may be. This was exactly the topic I wrote about in my essay. Right before the conclusion of the 2016 election. There was not a single choice you could make in that election. That rendered you harmless. We are once again there. Yeah. You want to go peepee bye. Bye by nature. Excellent.

**Heather** 1:04:01

I'm not going to look it up and try I've never heard it so I can't possibly do justice to it. Yep. Or I don't know that I've heard it. I don't at least recognize it from those modified lyrics. Okay. Following your episode on evolutionary dentistry, Can you discuss evolutionary ophthalmology? Should kids wear eyeglasses? What's your take on refractive surgery? Man echo such good questions always from you. Here like we should we should, we should spend some time another time talking about this in some more depth. If If let me take the slightly easier part first, if you're if your question about refractive surgery is like LASIK, which I think it's going to be so like, basically cutting cutting slits in cornea to change the curvature of the lens. If we had the precision to actually do that, and, and we expected that the eye wasn't changing shape over time, which it is, then it might be it might be a reasonable surgery, I was actually days away from having that surgery myself. I have I've had myopia, since I was pretty bad myopia since I was 13. And I was lucky enough to have ended up with a crazy eye fungus from Madagascar, which had me forced to put the surgery off, which I had scheduled for after I came back from this five month field trip field season in Madagascar, during which time I spent some more time looking into what success in LASIK actually means. And it turns out that anything that 2200 or better, which may or may not be improvable, with glasses or contacts afterwards is called success. And so obviously, if you're doing things like playing sports, and spending long times in the field in alone, and you rely on your eyesight, that doesn't actually sound like success. So I don't know if that surgery has improved since then. But I guarantee you that given that, like teeth, eyes change over time, like like teeth change in terms of where they are positioned over time, and they actually have a dynamic tension in the jaw. As you heard Brett talking about with Mike mu in the evolutionary dentistry episode, we know that the eye changes shape over time, and it also becomes harder the cornea becomes harder over time and says pot This is a large part of what like middle aged presbyopia is about is not being able to move back and forth between different focal lengths as quickly. So the idea of these quick fixes that will simply correct you into perfection really ignores almost everything about what we are as organisms. And you want to say something about yourself. I

**Bret** 1:06:57

yeah, I would say one, we are stirring children up to part of this is natural. In other words, the invention of printed material creates a dynamic that is unnatural, and the value of printed material is presumably high. So by having people read it a close distance, we are disrupting a system in which the development of the eye would be normal. This is likely the reason that we have so much eye dysfunction, the idea that it is genetically encroached. encroachment of mutations is nonsense, just as it is with the teeth. But two things one, the eye takes shape in large measure because of the musculature within the eye, which adjusts the eye based on the distortion,

**Heather** 1:07:49

not within the iPad, the extrinsic eye muscles around the eyeball. Well,

**Bret** 1:07:52

I don't want to say too much, because I don't know. But yes, you've got extrinsic ly muscles, there may also be endogenous stuff. But the basic point is, you are built to fix your own vision, right? How do you do that on the basis of information about the distortion in your vision? What happens? If you take distorted vision, and you correct it externally? Well, now the data coming in results in you not fixing your own vision in a context where you're going to destroy your own vision by focusing very closely and this is going to be screens too. Now, here's the part maybe you don't see coming.

**Heather** 1:08:27

It's kind of like taking the anti fragility away from the feedback system between person and I. Like Yes, you create a fragile system where it was anti fragile it did correct from it did correct on the basis of insults that came in and insults being Wow, that thing is out of focus, I really can't see what that thing is, oh, I keep on running into things that are focus, maybe the extrinsic eye muscles or you know, whatever it is need to change the curvature of my lens, such that that thing that I keep on running into that keeps on being out of focus is no longer out of focus.

**Bret** 1:09:00

Right, exactly. And you know, look, you've got a, basically a video camera made out of biological goo, right? It's not going to be perfect, it's not precision ground. So the idea that musculature is going to correct for those distortions, that's a marvelous, beautiful biological solution to a biological problem. You now take a ground glass lens, and you distort the information coming in preventing the eye from fixing itself. Now, what have you got? Well, there's almost a definition of fragility, because the fact is, all of you, folks who walk around needing glasses are dependent on the mechanism that produces glasses, what would you do if civilization came apart and it wasn't making glasses anymore, right? So you've been rendered, you'd be you're rendered fragile by this. And it's not that serious in a world where lots of people are wearing glasses and civilization can produce them. But it is a solvable problem in the following sense. A, we probably now have the technology we didn't 50 years ago, but we probably now have the technology to take whatever close focus work kids need to do in order to educate themselves or whatever. And to place it in a context where it appears to be far away, like imagine that you are reading a book on a screen in a movie theater 30 feet from you, right? That might change the dynamics, so you didn't destroy your own vision in reading, you know, so I don't love at all the idea of kids wearing VR goggles that place printed material effectively 30 feet from them in order not to destroy their vision, but I like it a lot better than destroying their vision. So maybe there's some way it could be done. That wouldn't be so intrusive. But at the very least, this is the same thing that we were just talking about. All right, we're screwed up. Let's not screw up another generation device. Right? Let's let the next generation of kids have normalize and normal teeth by fixing the thing that we do that screws up every generation upon arrival.

**Heather** 1:11:06

Yeah, so one thing just to one more thing now, but we will continue to talk about this. Do you have questions? Should kids wear glasses? One thing that we have suggested is if if your kid is myopic, and he or she is, at risk, like really does seem to need some correction in order to move around the universe, consider under correcting Yep, consider, you know, whatever their diopter is correcting one, you know, half stop, full stop. That's camera language, but you know, whatever, whatever it is below that, such that their eyes. You know, an ophthalmologist is gonna like this, just like most dentists don't want to hear what, you know what Mike has to say. But you know, the kid who has to squint a little bit to see the thing, but can make it out. Their eyes are likely to keep on working to get it right. And rather than give them the fully cushy oz was great. I could just relax into well, failing further.

**Bret** 1:12:04

Yep. Right. So along these lines, let me just say that as a kid, I was diagnosed with I've forgotten I definitely was diagnosed with astigmatism and who knows what else. And I was given glasses that I was supposed to wear as a kid, I was supposed to be wearing bifocals. And I basically thought, fuck that. And so I didn't wear them ever, in my eyes corrected themselves. And I had vision that needed no correction whatsoever until I got to 50 and reading glasses became a thing. But the point is, that was an anecdotal demonstration of the fact that the eyes given the opportunity, given data that actually comes in normally, we're in a position to fix themselves where I was being told, you know, that I had a problem that required intervention.

**Heather** 1:12:54

And just you know, it, if we're doing anecdote, as you know, my anecdotal experience, runs, runs not at all like that, right? Like my parents discovered that I was already having trouble seeing when we were on vacation, and they were going to look at the beautiful waterfalls across the ravine. I was like, I don't, I don't see them. They took me to the eye doctor, I already had 2200 vision. And I got contacts very quickly. And within a few years, I had 2800 vision where it is basically within four or five years it just like shot down to 2800.

**Bret** 1:13:25

I don't know that that story goes in the opposite direction. Yeah, but and then

**Heather** 1:13:29

it just it stabilized and kind of getting slightly slightly slightly better now. That sort of the middle age presbyopia is also setting in the diopters basically, down at like negative seven, negative 6.5. And there's I was already not seeing all that well, but not saying anything about it, because it just seemed like what was normal

**Bret** 1:13:54

ride, but you had your nose buried in books, and you were reading music hours

**Heather** 1:14:00

a day, I was also outside playing sports and running around, right? But my

**Bret** 1:14:03

point is, that may be a job that that breadth of activity and the feedbacks, and it may be beyond the capacity of the eyes to figure out how to correct and it may have biased in one direction and not the other. Who knows. But at the very least, hey, you know we need evolutionary ophthalmology. Wouldn't that be grand if people were actually studying these questions rationally, but not blaming genes, which obviously are not going to be the explanation here? Yep. And we stopped screwing up kids Yeah.

**Heather** 1:14:33

Okay, we're gonna get through a couple more of these because we've only done for this hour so far. So at least a few more, more than two more. I submitted an article to Colette today titled letter to a woke heart. If it is accepted. I hope it does some good can Dyson can I send you a copy by email. We have a moderator on who can give you an email address I think and I'm not going to promise but I will be interested to look at it probably. Yes. Three people who receive Facebook bans Alex Jones, Brett and Rose McGowan. Politics makes strange bedfellows The Power of Three will set us free. Good out, Lord. Yeah. I find it weird that the executive of telling people to do things at the point of a gun is also looked to as the person to ask us to do something.

**Bret** 1:15:30

I don't know what that refers. I don't either. I'm sorry.

**Heather** 1:15:33

I don't know what that refers to. Emma Sandell critiques, meritocracy, even if our opportunities are equal for all because it legitimates the inequalities that follow from innate differences and talents in virtue. thoughts. Here's a review. Yeah. A I don't know who that is. It

**Bret** 1:15:49

doesn't matter. Okay. It's clear from the question. Yeah, I think so too. But here's the here's the problem. You're leaping to the conclusion that there are going to be large, innate differences, right? Personally, I would argue that is unlikely to be true, there will be differences, but are they innate, immutable, etc. And so anyway, we're not going to know this until we actually democratize access, right? democratizing access is the thing that will tell us whether or not those differences are durable. But at the very least, you could build a world and we should build a world in which access is democratized. You do have meritocracy, which properly incentivizes people to produce cool stuff that enriches humanity in which you are protected from bad luck. That is to say, you're not going to be, you're not going to fall off the bottom of the ladder, if you tried and failed. And the fact is, in such a context, differences in well being are tolerable, you don't want extreme differences in well being, you don't want concentration of opportunity. But the world in which we are all rendered equally well off is not a desirable world. For one thing, if you built that world where we were all equally well off, it has a huge defect in it too, which is that it makes people well off who didn't do anything, and therefore is effectively punishing those who contribute most. So what I would say what a conclusion I came to in a conversation I had last week was that there's a difference between those of us who think equality is the objective. And those of us who think it's a means to an end. And the fact is, equality of opportunity as a means to an end is the prerequisite for the best system that we have come up with and probably the best one possible. equality of outcome is a devastating and terrible system. And there's really a huge difference between these things.

**Heather** 1:18:05

FYI, Jordan Peterson describes some apps meaning logo as the meaning of music. Yeah, I think we already Yeah, but yes, we have

**Bret** 1:18:14

added a link to that description. So it might be that the answer to my question is buried in that video.

**Heather** 1:18:19

Great, thank you. Some weeks ago, you could not identify freedom is slavery in the current movement. That being from that being one of the three, he stops, that being one of the three sayings in the beginning of 1984 on the pyramid, the Ministry of truth I think freedom implies responsibility for your own life. For a lot of people responsibility feels a lot like slavery. Freedom is slavery is therefore Hoffer, but shorter.

**Bret** 1:18:49

That's interesting. That's Yeah, quite right. Yeah.

**Heather** 1:18:52

Good. Keep up the terrific work, guys. Thank you. All right. That's not a bad idea. Enough for the partisan mods. I know you support free expression. I don't think our mods are partisan. I'm sure they make decisions that not everyone agrees with all the time, but we know who they are. And they are awesome. So

**Bret** 1:19:08

I'm sure they're partisan, but I don't know what party

**Heather** 1:19:11

actually Yes. Yes. Actually, yeah, they. Yeah, yes. Do you to plan to write in Peter Bogosian from air? If I lived there? I would hardest part of that choice is spelling it? Well, you spell it correctly. No,

**Bret** 1:19:32

I love Peter. Yeah, I think he'd make a much better Mayor than either of these crazy people. That said, you got to understand what we're actually facing in Portland. And it's not that we have seen an effort that makes Peter a viable candidate. So I think this is that when Heather and I've talked about this at length, that there's a very different logic that unfolds inside of our local election. Then unfolds in our presidential national election. So I would just say this is not this is not the place for a symbolic challenge to the to other mayoral candidates. This is a case where you're on a running Ronnie has to be defeated interest in Iran has to be defeated because she is going to make a terrible situation vastly worse.

**Heather** 1:20:30

So there's no duopoly in Portland. In fact, that's part of the small part of the problem. They're just not even two parties. There's just no republicans anywhere close. So there's no tension between like Democrats or Republicans here. We've got Wheeler, who's like the George bridges of Portland, it's just an evergreen reference. He's woke, he's weak, he's ridiculous. I think he means well as somewhere deep in his heart, and he just barely began to speak out against anti fog in the last week or two at which point he had around who identifies as an anti fascist, respond to him and said he was all right and playing footsie with white nationalists. I don't know if he said that what she said the last part, but she said the first part. She's crazy. He is an incompetent boob. He's a Democrat. I don't know what she calls herself. But in Portland, unlike at the national scale, votes actually have a chance of of mattering. And it's not a duopoly, we aren't being forced to decide between the lesser of two evils even though we live in a competent boom. But if even our own gets the mayorship of Portland, Portland may well fall like, I don't know if Portland can can withstand that. She is she is an extremely dangerous character.

**Bret** 1:21:53

You know, it's refreshing to hear endorsement of a candidate with the phrase incompetent boob, that's not common that people make endorsements. And that kind of language just I,

**Heather** 1:22:05

you know, I'm, I feel free not to vote for either of the decrepit clowns in the national election. I hate it. I wish I could vote for someone who I hoped would win, but I won't vote for either of them. I'm voting for the incompetent boob for Portland. I wish I could vote for Pete. He's a friend of ours, and we love him. And he would make a better mayor. But he won't win. And therefore the vote actually feels like it's important not to not to make a symbolic vote for the Portland mayor,

**Bret** 1:22:35

I hate to say it, yeah, but

**Heather** 1:22:40

okay. To do. Here we go. Our views often don't quite line up. But I really appreciate the contributions you both provide the discourse, keep up the great work. I appreciate you both. Thank you. You mentioned that you used to smoke copious amounts of marijuana that cause you to develop an allergy. What was the allergy you developed? And if you were able to get rid of it, by quitting,

**Bret** 1:23:00

haven't gotten rid of it. The allergy is just a reaction in my lungs. And interestingly, the reaction in my lungs happens even if I eat it.

**Heather** 1:23:14

So yes, that's true, isn't it? Yeah.

**Bret** 1:23:16

There's something about you know, my immune system took it to be a hostile force learned to fight it. And now if it shows up by any means, even through the gut, my lungs react and they fill with goo. Yeah. So you know, it's fine. I yeah, I had more than my fair. That's right. I don't need an I don't miss it, frankly. Yeah. Okay,

**Heather** 1:23:41

we're actually gonna get through the questions that are here now, even though cut it's late, but I'm going to get through the rest of these this hour. Check out Kirk Sorensen and Gordon McDowell's and others efforts to advance thorium within the nuclear industry. It looks to be safe here. So it looks to be safer and more abundant. But a barrier seems to be an entrenched uranium fuel industry. Yep, no doubt. So you know something about this? Oh, I should

**Bret** 1:24:06

do I should do and I remain to be convinced the thorium is safe enough. But yes, if you were going to be serious about fission power, this would be one of the mechanisms you would want to be looking very carefully at it is clearly safer and better. And, you know, of course, the uranium fission industry is not interested, right.

**Heather** 1:24:27

One, do you see a parallel between neurodiversity movement and the CRT movement in the sense that both regard the world as a construct founded on exploitation of diverse groups to do support shock based treatment of autism? Wow, I've never heard of shock based treatment of autism. I doubt it, but I would have to hear more. I don't think so. Worried about

**Bret** 1:24:48

this know that. But I mean, the second one's easy, right? I don't know exactly how you run the experiments. But the answer is if it helps, and how has to be defined as you know, in some integrative way, you're more capable. I don't know, happier, more fulfilled.

**Heather** 1:25:10

I just don't think we have a good enough model of autism. I mean, I don't think we do if, if you're talking about people who are, you know, deeply unable to function in the world? For whom? Something like that might help them, then maybe, but there's there's so many high functioning artistic people for whom, right?

**Bret** 1:25:31

It certainly wouldn't. This wouldn't be about requiring of. Yeah, I just But okay, on the first one,

**Heather** 1:25:41

do you see a parallel between the neurodiversity movement and critical race theory movement? In the sense that both both regard the world as a construct founded on exploitation of diverse groups? Yeah, that's not how I see the neurodiversity movement at all. The problem

**Bret** 1:25:53

with this one? Yeah, I would say not at all. On the other hand, I think we've been down this road with the term anti racist, where as viewers of the podcast will remember, first time I heard the term it was applied to me. And I thought, that's great. I felt honored to be included in that category, anti racist, and I found out it's narrow definition. And it's like, No, I don't want to touch that with a bargepole. But So the point here is, you know, neuro diversity, as I think people in our circle who talk about it mean is just the, you know, frankly, there's a lot of value that has been brought to the world by people who have things that would be considered deficits by many, including high functioning autism, high functioning autism, you know, Dyslexics, whatever it is, and so

**Heather** 1:26:41

that I did I did a big thing video about this years ago. Yeah, yeah.

**Bret** 1:26:45

So to the extent that neuro diversity is simply the recognition that even stuff where we're really talking about some kind of damage that results in you having a different view of the world can be very positive. And you know, the term I use for myself and many students was misfit. Because misfit does not place judgment on whether it's you or the system, that's a bad match or could be both, but, you know, so there's a very intuitive reason to defend neuro diversity and not look to stamp it out. On the other hand, yeah, CRT is obviously a, an insane bastardization of a real recognition that there is some historical biases built into the way we think about about race. So has neuro diversity become some sort of a toxic claim? Or is it headed that direction? And then we should be wary of it? If so we're not aware of it yet. So I don't see the parallel but it could emerge. Yeah.

**Heather** 1:27:49

Can we push back against this memory hole in some way? Ie setting up a repository and decentralized server with censored deleted content? I feel like there are some movements like that.

**Bret** 1:28:01

Yeah, in fact, one is called the memory hole. I think there's a site called the memory hole. But yes, we have to push back. And also I would say that to the extent that something that does not have your interests at heart doesn't want you discussing something, you have an above average, or above normal obligation to think carefully about it. Right? Whatever it is that they don't want us talking about, we should be talking about. So if you're not talking about the implications of hunter Biden's peddling influence in the form of his VP, Father, you should be thinking about whether you're voting for Biden or not, you should be thinking about the implications that a Biden win is an influence peddler taking office. And you should also be thinking about the fact that some of us were telling you that from the beginning, yep.

**Heather** 1:28:51

So the next question from the author of the cyclical evolution hypothesis, he I think, clarifies the circle the cyclical evolutionary hypothesis presents a self driven population wide, multi generational oscillating hormone cycle. So it's an intrinsic system.

**Bret** 1:29:08

Okay, it does sound like integral theory in some way Yeah. says you know, the idea that there might be some cyclical pattern might well be I still I still want to understand does can't be hormone driven. Yeah, right. It's got to be organs have to be driven by something else. Exactly. But

**Heather** 1:29:33

high, there is a risk. Is there a risk that the increase of environmentalism in the West is going to create a new form of colonialism wherein rich nations intervene and other countries with the idea to protect guys resources? It's already happening. Hi, yes. We've got to wait too long apparently. Yeah, it's a It absolutely is already happening. You know, the the US Got to physically cut down a lot of our forests and is now making a point of telling other people not to and I'm thinking about covered. Is it Institut de Universidad? Yeah. MBO which I think actually was pretty honorable and I hope still exists. But back when we were in graduate school, we spent a couple of seasons and a couple field seasons in Costa Rica. And were given a tour by our professor of invivo, which was training, which was run by Costa Rican scientists, if I remember correctly, so just jump in if I get something wrong, and they were training poor, poor Costa Ricans porticoes as what they were calling para taxonomists to basically do collect an ID. And then and then, but they were working with Big Pharma. Right. So they were I think, funded in part by I don't remember who it was Pfizer, Merck or something probably mark. And Merck wasn't able to just come in like they had been before the formulation of nbo. And, you know, and find lots of organisms and take them back to the US or Germany or wherever, and, and create new compounds and do the r&d and make make billions on some drug, they now had to actually involve Costa Rica. And its resources in the, in the process somewhat, but it was, it was more honorable than it had been, but it still had the risk of being predatory, I think,

**Bret** 1:31:33

okay, but you've got a corrupt version of something, some level a, we did cut down our forests, B, we cut them down long before these dynamics were understood. Yep, we might have done it anyway. But it's, in some sense, not a fair comparison. But then see, we're also talking about the world's source of a large fraction was biodiversity housed in these other forests. In other words, our northern temperate forests aren't all that diverse. The Amazon, for example, is fantastically diverse, and extinction is permanent. So losing

**Heather** 1:32:10

100 acres of Amazonian forest, you can't replace that by supporting or growing 100 acres of boreal forest in Canada, it's not the same, right, do anything like the same job.

**Bret** 1:32:21

So I think the thing that needs to be said is we have not yet worked out the governance structure that properly reflects that the arbitrary distribution of important biota is not the fact that these things fall within national borders does not, you know, allow bolson arrow to destroy the Earth, only Amazon, right? Because he's a fruitcake and doesn't understand biodiversity, nor would he care about it. Right? It's nobody's right to destroy it. Right? Does that mean every branch and every tree needs to be preserved? No. But we have to work out the structure in which those things that belong to humanity are protected in perpetuity. And we're a long way from it. But we do have to this is one of the things I think the right gets quite wrong. Yes. We only have one Earth, and we are degrading it. And that's not our right and so we have to stop and how we get there without placing some people at advantage and other disadvantages is a topic that needs to be explored.

**Heather** 1:33:34

Absolutely. Two more they're just comments. And competent boob 2020 love it. Yep, that's, that's what we're doing competent.

**Bret** 1:33:44

And competent boob 2020

**Heather** 1:33:46

I'm not settling for Biden. I'm not voting for voting for Biden either. crepin Cloud is

**Bret** 1:33:51

pointing out that it belongs the settle for Biden is an excellent slogan given Biden Yes. And incompetent boob 2020 is an excellent slogan given Wheeler Yeah, if

**Heather** 1:34:00

somehow I can get behind the incompetent boob and neither decrepit clown

**Bret** 1:34:03

Yeah Yeah.

**Heather** 1:34:05

Do we need to start a PLM puppy Lives Matter fund the cat seem to get all the love here. Thanks for sharing your time and knowledge with us all.

**Bret** 1:34:14

Yeah, this is weird because the dog is a better person.

**Heather** 1:34:17

She's aspires to be a better person

**Bret** 1:34:20

and he gives a damn about being a good person. Yeah, cats manifestly don't. Anyway Yeah, it's interesting that the the the cats seem to get them more than their share of the milk.

**Heather** 1:34:33

Yes, well, off camera, Maddie. Madison here gets gets plenty of love, don't you? Yeah. All right. She will be relieved to find that we are at the end of yet another Gosh, more than an hour by lot. Tomorrow. Again, we will be doing our private q&a, which you can find that you will be able to find a link to this evening on my Patreon tomorrow from 11 to 1:11am to 1pm Pacific. Next weekend will be the first of your monthly conversations through your Patreon. You can find access to the discord server at either of them. And we will be back next Saturday on Halloween if not sooner.

**Bret** 1:35:13

Halloween as if you weren't scared Enough already. All right. We'll see you then.