Your Questions Answered - Bret and Heather 64th DarkHorse Po...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:11

Hey folks, welcome back to the Dark Horse podcast. Hope you brought your questions. We have brought some answers, and we're going to try to match them up.

**Heather** 00:21

Who that could be fun. Yes, yeah, just sort of put them on a hat to

**Bret** 00:25

twist. We've done the Jeopardy thing. This is the next logical step.

**Heather** 00:28

Yep. Yep. Now we've got all four Coronavirus present at this point we got. Maddie has just entered the room. There she is. There she is. And all three cats arguing over cream in the background. All right. We will start with four questions from last week's episode, Episode 63. climate models aren't as bad as you say. There is physical conservation. Same models are used for weather forecasts, some parameters parameterizations are iffy. So I included this because I was surprised that we were understood to be claiming that climate climate models were bad across the board. We are absolutely 100% not

**Bret** 01:10

Yes, what they are is iffy. And what we have said, I will take responsibility for this. What I have said is that they are fine as the generators of hypotheses, they are not in and of themselves tests of anything. And so yes, some of the models are labeled to be quite good. The question is Which ones? And how do you know? And what do you do with things like the uncertainty surrounding cloud models and the what we discussed last week with respect to the negative feedback that might arise from increased ocean depths resulting in greater pressure that holds methane clathrates frozen in the Arctic? And so in any case, what you do if you've got a model, and you think it's good, is you test with says, rather than use it as a test?

**Heather** 02:04

Yep. And actually, I meant to read these two together from the same person is a seeker at all 2019 showed in science that there was an ENSO bias in all climate models. And so being the El Nino Southern Oscillation, the field is not captured. There's plenty of disagreeable mathematicians, which I'm sure so yeah, I don't know, I did not go and find that paper. But just continuing on with the same.

**Bret** 02:28

Yeah, but field is not captured. It's not that simple. There is pressure to not deviate. In other words, we can see because of what happens when we as non climate scientists say that we have skepticism about any part of what we hear from climate science. We get pushback, yeah, to believe that that push back does not exist inside of a field that believes to the future of the world rests on whether or not people accept what it says it results in an artificial consensus. And so that has to not be the case, if people are to, to trust what's being said from a field and the perverse incentives are there as they are in every other field. It's just the danger is greater in this one.

**Heather** 03:12

Yeah. Next question. In terms of cultural evolution, could wokeness be an environmental stressor, which serves to strengthen enlightenment values in society? If we survive? Yeah, intermediate levels of disturbance is what we're shooting for.

**Bret** 03:30

Right? I mean, look, I think, you know, our joking answers here are exactly right, which is to say, my

**Heather** 03:37

joking in group, you know, models of explanations for the lateral diversity gradient.

**Bret** 03:44

Yes, yes. Well, so all of these things are correct. Yes, of course wokeness could force us to grapple with our values and could cause us to bring a whole new generation online with the reasons that those values are so important. How would you do that by jeopardizing those values so that people registered their loss? So yes, of course it could. And the question is,

**Heather** 04:07

and that is part of what you know that that is part of what it presumably explains at least some of the pendulum swing between between sets of values is that people don't notice the erosion of them until they you know and everyone has some different straw that broke the camel's back some different moment at which like Oh, wait, I you know, I cannot do that thing. And people before me were complaining about these other things I didn't care about now I know it's, it's something that I care about, I can see it. Now I'm paying attention.

**Bret** 04:33

So the potential is there. But you know, if you think about things like you know, this equity stuff equity in the Bailey form, the more aggressive version of the argument, that is not a viable basis for a system. We will destroy functional institutions attempting to do that. That is to say any school Any business that signs up for this in lieu of a system of merit will suffer in its quality. And it will fail relative to competitors that don't sign up for this. So you don't need to run the experiment to discover that. What could you destroy? If you decide? Well, we're going to need to see that for ourselves before we accept that that version of equity doesn't work, you could destroy the West, you know, you could put China or Russia or who knows who, in a rivaled position in the world. This is an extremely dangerous game to play in order to rediscover values whose basis was well understood and captured, in you know, in literature and discussions at the time. So it you know, education is not the solution to everything, but at the very least, we got to educate ourselves on what is understood about why these are our values, how we arrived here, and why they need to be protected, rather than run the experiment of uninvented all of them to see why, you know, so that we can rediscover them.

**Heather** 06:07

Right? And final question from last week. I put this on here, and then I hadn't considered it until just now. So I'm not sure what the answer is going to be. What are you personally not doing? That goes against your better nature in the context of your biology, education? And why not?

**Bret** 06:25

What are you personally not doing that goes against your better nature, in the context of your biology education? Like why not?

**Heather** 06:34

Like, what do we know, would be good for us? I think you know, what, given what we know about biology and evolution, and we're behaving in ways that are that are opposite?

**Bret** 06:48

I think, I mean, like I said, I don't think it's I don't think we have a viable alternative, which is why it's not a live question for us. But I think it's perfectly clear that the internet, its algorithms and processes are dangerous to the quality of thought, and that we would be wise to come up with a rigorous and regimented isolation mechanism, we would be healthier, I mean, frankly, you'd probably be smarter just to walk away from the whole thing than to engage it as it is. That said, our family's livelihood depends entirely on interacting. And it wouldn't Frankly, I don't think be fair to people who are getting something valuable out of this. So I feel like, we know it's bad for us, but we don't have a choice and that that's not entirely irrational.

**Heather** 07:52

Okay. Yeah, I think I have two generic answers that will be true for many, many of the people watching and so i think i think there's something perhaps that can be learned from thinking about thinking about both of them, which is, you know, not actually doing heart pumping exercise as much as, as you say you want to and do want to and always feel better afterwards and usually feel great while you're doing it even but the sort of activation energy required to get to get suited up and out the door, whatever it is, depending on what the activity is, can be can be too high such that you don't do as much you know, in the winter you'd like this year, you were actually going out on your bike, a fair bet. And there definitely been winters when you haven't, and I'm not doing it this winter. And, and this, this thing that our brains tell ourselves in advance of hard work, that it's easier which it is to just stay where you are is a kind of privileging of short term comfort over long term benefit. And teaching yourself to actively remember you especially like engage in activity and sport in thrill whatever it is that you actually love and if you just hate move on your body, I don't know what to tell you. But you know, find find and I even hate the word exercise, right? Like find some athletic enterprise that you really do thoroughly enjoy. And I mean there's there's certainly benefits tons of benefit and walking but I'm specifically talking about the kind of thing that you know, you're going to come back and you need to shower to feel comfortable, like you're not gonna want to just get into bed after doing this because you're going to be sweaty, and that kind of work for I think for actually most of us actually feels amazing. And afterwards you feel much better and those benefits, you know, continue for days, you know, even if you're doing it every day or or Almost every day, and yet, it's very easy to get out of the habit, because it's it's more comfortable to sit around.

**Bret** 10:08

So I want to add two things to that one, what usually happens when I stopped doing it over the winter is I do it pretty regularly until I get sick somewhere. And you know, this was a much bigger problem when we were teaching college students and they would bring everything through the door, and our kids were in daycare and you got

**Heather** 10:27

like six or seven years there where we were both teaching college students and our kids are in daycare, and there was just no, no avoiding the pathogens,

**Bret** 10:34

many, many holes and sometimes worse. And that, you know, when you're knocked off of this pattern for a couple of weeks, or if there's a particularly bad spate of weather so that you know, it's not safe to ride your bike because there's ice on the roads or something, right, and then you try to go back to it's very hard to do. And so in some ways, this winter has been better because we haven't been passing the regular colds around not sick. Which I think there's a you know, we're not paying attention to extra pay attention to COVID. But we society ought to be paying attention to how much better we are doing on many of these other pathogens, and we ought to figure out what the lesson of that is. The other thing I wanted to say here, though, is, this is a place where our biology is up ending us because our novel circumstances don't match our ancestral circumstances, essentially the subject of our book, but the point is this, your ancestors, almost all of them were starving almost all the time, doesn't mean they never had adequate food. But the point is, to the extent that there's excess food populations tend to grow, and that means that they become their self limiting. So what that also implies is that any food you don't have to source because you are able to not spend the calories is to your advantage which is why we are so sensitive to it being chilly it's not that there's anything bad about it being chilly in fact, it's probably good for you if you have unlimited food, but we are constantly in this mode of trying to save every calorie because essentially at some point those calories are the difference between life and death and we are programmed to save them now so that we have them then and that totally Miss wires us for our own physiology which accumulates fat and all of these other things where Wouldn't it be wonderful if instead of feeling you know, some sort of trepidation and resistance to going out and doing amazing exercise that we know is good for us we were wired to be enthusiastic about going out the door especially if it's cold you know that would be the way you know if we could self reprogram in order to do these things we'd be better off but we're up against programming that occurred in an ancestral environment we no longer live in and so it you know, yes, we know it would be better to go out and do vigorous exercise more that we like everybody else are up against our own ancestral programming programming programming which is just out of phase with the present

**Heather** 13:04

Yeah, that's very good. The other thing I will say is that despite my ever more ever greater certainty that these two things are just not healthy for for us to be ingesting I continue to eat sugar and drink alcohol and you know I love to bake and have a sweet tooth and when you know both of us I think your your you have an easier time resisting sugar although now that I baked gluten free it's harder for you when I make delicious things and both of us drink and I I am particularly compelled that you know alcohol just is not is not healthy it's just not good for us and I say that you know you know neither of us have ever thought or had anyone else say oh you've got a drinking problem it's not it's not like that it just I can just feel much as after you do you know rigorous exercise, you feel better your body is just more more flexible and mobile and just everything about it is functioning better. After you know bright after a drink or two, you feel looser and it's it's nice. And I you know, my German Irish background, I don't tend to get hung over but I always feel like less sharp and less capable for a little bit in the morning the next day if I've had a drink or two the night before. So again, it's it's about prioritizing short term over long term.

**Bret** 14:34

Yep. And in fact, we have experimented quite a bit with forgoing alcohol for periods of time. And one of the things one discovers is that it takes a long time for you know, five o'clock to hit and for it not to occur to you to maybe have a drink. But if you can get through the five minutes where it occurs, yeah, maybe I would have a drink forget you forget So it's really a very short term thing you're responding to. So in any case, that's another Yeah, good examples.

**Heather** 15:09

All right. The question from the discord server this week is, how do we come back to shared reality together? When it seems record numbers of people are suffering from mass delusional conspiracy thinking on both sides of the political spectrum?

**Bret** 15:24

Well, the real question is, who wants us involved in these massive conspiracies? And how are they convincing us to think this way? All right, that was irony. That was sorry. I'm back. Yes, well, here's the problem, I think, really, is that the unprecedented complexity of our informational environment, and the collapse of the structures that are supposed to help us make sense of it, have resulted in a kind of sense vacuum. And conspiratorial thinking is natural, because conspiracies are real. They happen. They're not uncommon. And therefore, speculation about what might be the result of them is not novel. It's ancient. So the real question is, are there conspiracies? Yeah, lots of them. Most conspiracy hypotheses wrong. Because that's automatic, just as most hypotheses about anything will be wrong. So how, especially in the neighborhood of conspiracy, does one exert some kind of quality control. And it's not simple because the rules that allow you to sort truth from fiction under regular, let's say, scientific circumstances, don't apply, because a conspiracy will, by definition, try to create an excellent explanation for something that is false in order to cover the true explanation. It's inherent. Yeah. So we need to we need to do better about this, I will say, I am in conversation with somebody that I'm hoping to put on the podcast soon. Who I regard as an expert in this topic, and we will talk about it. Excellent.

**Heather** 17:11

I guess I will also say that we are trying to model some of what we do in order to detect and assess possible conspiracy hypotheses in our midst and, you know, information that comes in, you know, often it's information that comes in as if it is 100% true. And then it turns out that there is a motivation behind the person who's feeding it to you. So you know, it's, at some level, you can't do absolutely everything in your life like this. I remember I mean, I remember when we were in our 20s and, you know, really trying to resist just about all of the received wisdom entirely. And I remember at one point, we were like, grocery shopping together, and standing like in front of the paper towels going what kind of paper towel Should we buy? And it occurred to me like, this is what brand loyalty is for on the positive side, like just you want you need some things in life that you can set and forget, right? That you can just be like, I just did this twice already. And I made the choice, it doesn't matter. It's not that important to me, right? And it's it's really important to the you know, eight companies who are vying for my dollars, but once I've made one just doesn't matter anymore, right? And of course, the brands themselves make that difficult cuz they change it up. Like, you know, I'd love that for, you know, the shoes that I wear, just like let me just buy the same shoes that I bought two years ago, to walk around, oh, they're don't exist anymore. Oh, they're only in that hideous color. Oh, my God, like, Why do I have to rethink this? Again, like, I actually really don't want to have to rethink most of my like buying decisions, yeah, over and over and over again. But with regard to intellectual stuff, there's almost nothing that you can safely set and forget, you actually have to say, for almost anything coming in there once you trust people. And this is actually something that we both used to say in our classrooms that I would say, in the very first day, I'm up here, I've got the degree that allows me to be a college professor, and you guys are all paying tuition. And you should not trust me on that basis. I will be writing your narrative evaluations at the end of the quarter rather than grades. But, you know, maybe, maybe, maybe you don't come Yeah, I have to earn your respect and your trust. And if I fail to do that, you shouldn't stay in this classroom, you shouldn't go into the field with me, you should you should not pretend to be learning from me, which is in fact, what most students are doing at every level is kind of, you know, ticking off boxes and nodding when they're supposed to nod and regurgitating stuff, and they go to the next class. And if it's like post modernism, and then physics, well, they're at complete odds with one another. And they're pretending and one or the other. Or maybe sometimes both of them and just playing the How do I satisfy this teacher game, and it's what a lot of us have begun to do with our media as well. So being extremely skeptical of everything that comes in, coming, coming To trust and respect some voices, that still will make errors, but that you don't have to apply the same level of skepticism at all times to is, is a way to shortcut a little bit of it. But really, whenever the whenever claims are made, like masks don't help, or the vaccines are safe the data say so. And you know, trust the science Well, no, that's not that's actually not how science works. And you've just given me an indication that I now need to go back and figure out what it is that you're basing that on and oh, wow, that was political, not scientific at all. Now, what do I do?

**Bret** 20:34

Yeah, you can do your own work. Anybody who's robbed a bank or a stagecoach knows that masks work? You're feeling a little shortchanged at my response. Yeah, sorry about

**Heather** 20:47

the next. So finally, before we get to questions from today, there was a second discord question, which is just a suggestion that I said I would read aloud, please record a nature walk where you discuss whatever interesting things you see. Or to make it into question, why are you doing this already?

**Bret** 21:06

Yeah, well, you know, a, I don't think we we have not experimented very much with live streaming over cellular? Well, it's

**Heather** 21:19

super cord, I'm not sure, well, I just have to be live streamed. Yeah, it would be recorded either way. But, um,

**Bret** 21:25

but how awful to have your nature walk. built around. I mean, I'm not saying there's not a purpose to it. And we could do it specially. But

**Heather** 21:34

I mean, I guess also. So you know, we've we've specifically talked about doing trips, like taking people into nature, specifically, the kind of deep nature we've spent a lot of time and where we have access that, you know, if you just buy a trip to the Amazon, once that is possible again, most times, you don't actually get into anything that's really the Amazons like, on the map, it kind of looks like it is but you don't actually get anywhere close. And it's really disrupted. And, you know, beyond secondaries, like forest fragments. But what I used to teach people how to be animal behaviorists, and I, unlike, you know, everyone else at these remote field stations, that I would take people to be like, you must go out alone, you absolutely must go out alone. Because just you know, and like, you have to be, you know, in order to be safe, you have to have a buddy, it's like, I haven't brought anyone here who I don't trust, and you need to tell someone when you're leaving until you do all the back country safety things, of course. But if you go out with someone else, and you're trying to actually observe animals doing what they're doing, even if you know that that's what you're trying to do, when you really have your heart in it, and you're really trying to do that. We are social creatures. And we will end up talking even just a little bit, even in subdued voices. And as soon as you talk, the animals become cryptic and either flee or just become cryptic in place, and they don't do anything anymore. So you know, if what you're looking for is lemon ants in the Amazon, for instance, or you know, Socrates, like you know, the walking palm or something filling for plants, or, or ants, you can talk through it. But if you're looking for anything charismatic, you actually have to be totally quiet. And so talking about what you see is going to make what you see much less because it will be scared off. So potentially recording and then talking afterwards about what was recorded is a possibility.

**Bret** 23:26

Yep, yeah, there there are things you could do. I also feel like it's not as possible, right here in Portland, it should be you know, we have, I would say, lots of natural space around us. But it's amazing how overtaken it is with English IV, and what a big impact that has on doing what I can do here. Big State.

**Heather** 23:53

I'm doing what I can just very, very locally, but it's a big project. But

**Bret** 23:56

you know, English IV here in California, not everywhere. But some places, you know, massive problem with Eucalyptus. And the thing is the effect that this has on all of the creatures is profound. This is really a under recognized ecological catastrophe. biologists are aware, but I think others are, you know, they see green space and they think it's nature and in fact, in many cases, what you have is one species or a couple of species disrupting what would otherwise be there at levels that are hard to appreciate unless you saw it happen.

**Heather** 24:34

Most people go most Portlanders, I think who spent any time in nature know that English IV is a scourge and they'll recognize it when they see it. But you know, I have a very hard time looking at a landscape that's got English I'd be visible in it and not just sort of feeling the absence of what should be there. And Yep, I've as you know, I've cleared and we bought a piece of property that Nearly covered and I've been doing a little bit every week and when I've cleared trees and both pieces of huckleberries and sword ferns and then you know we've been here a couple years now so I've been able to see just you have cleared the Huckleberry of the ivy right sorry when I when I've cleared trees and two species of Huckleberry and sort of horns of the IV you can actually see not for the trees right away but you can see for the understory stuff their response really almost immediately like it's almost like it's almost being able to do plant behavior which sounds ridiculous but you know that we've we've got for instance just a read Huckleberry deciduous Huckleberry right off our deck. That's actually huge now and it was so bowed down under either that you couldn't tell and it didn't fruit at all. And you know, I uncovered that maybe a year and a half ago now. And last year, it put out a lot of it put out a lot of leaf and I'm hoping we get flowers this year, which means seed set and fruits by next summer. And you know, it was it was just about the ivy was just about it being buried under this invasive species.

**Bret** 26:11

Yeah. And there's so many places where Eucalyptus is the, the it's not one species, but is the the clade that is causing the devastation. the Andes are completely screwed up by by Eucalyptus, which was brought in because it makes a very fine kind of lumber. But anyway, it's an invasive that gets away from people who are cultivating it. So

**Heather** 26:34

yeah, same thing, looking at across Andean landscapes like Eucalyptus. It's like looking into Portland forest. I'm seeing Ivy, I'm not seeing Portland forest. I'm seeing Eucalyptus, I'm not seeing Andean landscapes. It's heartbreaking. Yeah. All right. First question from last hour. It looks like this is in three parts, but I'm not sure it's three questions. If science research is publicly funded, how will you prevent its gaming capture and corruption? Would this not simply create an official Ministry of truth and another tool for government to impress to oppress people trust the experts or else? Well, actually this that's okay, so that's one question. And the next two are two different questions.

**Bret** 27:15

Yeah, I don't think I think the idea, this is too simple, you're not going to publicly fund it and suddenly have it be clean. There's a culture of corruption in which people who don't even know that it's what they're doing are trying to figure out what the viewpoints are, that are remunerative. And so you know that corruption is throughout the system. And public funding is not a solution in and of itself, what you need is an incentive structure where you are rewarded for being correct and farsighted over the long term. Right? If you do that, then people will compete to discover what's true. But ya know, in isolation, public funding won't do it. It's one one piece of a much larger solution.

**Heather** 28:09

Yeah, a lot more to say on that. But let's move on. I feel that automated unemployment is another individual versus collective action problem. new job sectors won't help the veteran truck driver, for instance, who knows nothing else and can't be retrained because of Moore's Law, science and the arts will be oversaturated driving wages down. And what happens in our brave new world and the robots build design and repair themselves? I'd say utopia if not for the Calhoun experiments. crisis. Question mark. I don't know what the calhoon experiments are.

**Bret** 28:43

Oh, I think I do. I just doesn't

**Heather** 28:45

matter.

**Bret** 28:46

Well, yeah, I don't think it's necessary. Let's see if mouse utopia shows up. Yeah. So these are circumstances where mouse colonies were given everything a mouse out, and they became absurd and self destructive. And

**Heather** 29:00

the mice done.

**Bret** 29:01

Yep. So yes, this is part of the logic in this question or pair of questions is, in part, what underlies game B style thinking are called fourth frontier, which is that if you follow our current trajectory to its logical conclusion, it will result in tremendous paradoxes, like large fractions of the population being unnecessary for the continuance of society and therefore, one needing either some sort of massive program to, to replace what would have been their wages or the acceptance of them as you know, outside of the economy in some way homeless or otherwise. So the basic point is, look, this got us so far, but we're about to run off the end of the tape. The logic has Come to its natural end. And we have to replace this with something in which either we redirect how the economy pays you, for what? So that it pays you for things that you can actually do that enhance the well being of society or we have to decouple your, let's say, well being at the wealth level, from your productivity as a worker, right? That was not initially what human beings were about. And it doesn't have to be that way permanently. But you have to do something if you just simply imagine that this system is great, because look what it did for us, and then you continue to play this game, it will result in huge paradoxes and tremendous amounts of unnecessary misery.

**Heather** 30:48

Fabulous, I mean, excellent answer.

**Bret** 30:50

Oh, see you like, yeah, precedented misery.

**Heather** 30:53

Oh, yeah. That's what I like. That's what I said. And you heard it here. First. The Washington establishment has reasserted its ugly head, while strengthening its ties to big tech, challenging the official narrative and white center censorship. Are we going to look more like China in four to eight years?

**Bret** 31:11

You want to be careful with that last conclusion. Right?

**Heather** 31:14

That's that's the leap there. Yeah, I agree with the the first two parts,

**Bret** 31:18

I would say, we are going to reinvent some of the things that China does in one way in a very different way. And in fact, we already are, right. So the big tech, whether it knows it or not, is creating an alternative social credit system that will be used and abused in ways that I believe are every bit as frightening as what China is already doing. And does that mean? Well, we'll look more electronic? No, it could could be that we look very different. You know, we could look as different as communism and fascism look from each from each other, on the other hand, to authoritarian systems do have an analogy between them. And you know, so let's not be so precise that we miss what's actually going to occur.

**Heather** 32:07

Yes. Yes. With Biden, rejoining the Paris Agreement canceling the Keystone pipeline, XL pipeline and reversing Arctic drilling rights yet that too. Could we not say planetary triage wise that we definitely have the much lesser of two evils in the seat? Love you too? Yes. Assuming assuming that we don't get into a global war. And I think I think Biden's more likely to get us into into that situation, which could obviously destroy everything. But certainly with regard to two environmental protections that are bigger than just the US even lesser of two evils. Yeah, I go with that.

**Bret** 32:52

I'm not ready to do that. I mean, the reason Look, there are lots of things about a Biden administration that are going to be better, or just simply are right, the the pettiness is likely to be gone, the chances of a completely out of left field strategic blunder that, you know, stumbles us into something unforeseen is probably lower. On the other hand,

**Heather** 33:24

functional war is more likely intense, unintentional wars gone down potential war

**Bret** 33:29

is more likely. The undermining of the of the fundamental American values on which our system depends by kowtowing to work ideology actually has an almost unlimited potential downside, right. If you take America apart, by playing Americans off against each other, so that they don't go after elites, then what is likely to happen is going to is going to unseat the United States from its position of global power, which leaves a vacuum that could be filled by China, Russia, some combination thereof, some new emerging power, and the danger of that, too, all of the values that you would point to the Paris Agreement, the Keystone XL pipeline, Arctic drilling, etc. The net effect could be negative and so I think the lesser evil paradigm is just simply broken it's not it is not game theoretically stable. In other words, it becomes a weapon that keeps you in line by censoring you and ever more corrupt regime and getting you to vote for it because there's something even scarier on the outside. So you know, that's one thing but it also is not complex systems aware, right. That lesser evil be the thing that actually undoes the system. Where as you know, despite the the dangers of it things that are not party to that lesser evil, trading back and forth of power may be the route out, you know, I don't like Yep, either mode. But I would just say you can't do that analysis and know where you are, you can say that there are some things that this administration is much less likely to do. And as far as putting us in danger, and there are other things that is almost certainly more likely to.

**Heather** 35:38

Next question, would you please consider reaching out to your on Brook regarding capitalism? Recently, on your appearance with zubi? You said things about capitalism that according to my understanding was a mischaracterization of capitalism? I don't totally know the Yaron Brook is

**Bret** 35:53

I do you know, I'm wanting to talk to your on Brook. But I also think that this is, you know, I think what I've said about capitalism is that I reject challenges to it because it is ill defined, and to the extent that anybody is challenging capitalism and meaning, to challenge the role of markets, I think they're dead wrong. The fact is, markets are the most powerful tool we have to discover solutions. But the problem is that we put them not only in charge of figuring out how to do things, which they're very good at, but we also put them in charge of figuring out what to do, which they are absolutely appalling at. So I think that formulation is right, I'm open to having a challenge, and I'm certainly, you know, ready to listen and respond to that challenge as to whether or not I have just defended or attacked capitalism. I don't care. Yeah, the the, the, the analysis is what's important, and I know I don't have a dog in the fight either way with respect to that term. Great.

**Heather** 36:58

I'm curious about schools being forced to move away from dress codes as they are sexist, or slut shaming, is there a valid reason to have a dress code in an educational environment? So I think the first part of this sentence means schools can't use or being forced away from dress codes because the dress codes are claimed to be sexist or slut shame. Right? This is this is sort of a third wave feminist interpretation of what a dress code does, which is it puts the burden on the would be victim of being observed and and possibly groped and all of us as opposed to putting the responsibility firmly on the boys who would be doing the observing.

**Bret** 37:46

I think there's more to it than that. I think the claim is that more provocative clothing is endemic to certain populations and not others, and therefore the burden of a dress code falls harder on oppressed people is

**Heather** 38:03

well that's a different thing, right? This is this is about sexism, and sledgehammers. This is about the male female dynamics is what this question is about. What you're talking about is adding the intersectional a bit around around oppressed classes, basically socio economic class and often which is correlated with race. Yeah, right. So that that is that is also one of the reasons that is trotted out for abandonment of dress codes, I believe, but it's not what this one is. This is about basically, girl should be able to the caricature of the point is, girls should be able to wear whatever they want, including almost nothing at all. And if boys luck that's on them, because none of this is inherently sexualized. It's the act of looking by the boys that sexualizes female body parts. Which is a stupid position.

**Bret** 38:57

It's nonsense. It's nonsense, right down to the biologically factual nonsense. In light of female body parts that males are fond of being evolutionary displays of

**Heather** 39:13

sexual sexually selected, unique to humans. All of this. Yep, yeah. So is there a valid I get to the second part of the question, is there a valid reason to have a dress code and educational environment? Yeah, absolutely. I say that as someone who never had one, and whose children have never had them, man, you didn't.

**Bret** 39:32

I went to one school in which there was a dress code but it was not onerous. Yeah, there was no there was no uniform.

**Heather** 39:40

Yeah, it was it was it just prevented signup shirts with collars,

**Bret** 39:44

that kind of thing. Yeah.

**Heather** 39:47

And so you know, it hasn't it hasn't become personal for us ever. And I think it would have felt frankly, for me, I think it would have felt I would have had to contend with it more deeply. If it about our kids rather than if I had just sort of been slapped. get into a situation where I found myself with a dress code because I didn't really care much about clothes as a kid and like, okay, as long as I don't have to wear a skirt, like, you know, actually, but that is the kind of dress code that a lot of at least religious schools would have would have imposed, potentially, which, you know, effectively limits activity, you know that those those sorts of dress codes are like girls have to wear skirts, and boys have to wear like suits and ties, actually limits physical activity and does reinforce traditional gender norms, especially with regard to skirts for girls where you can't do you know, you're not going to play upside down on jungle jungle wearing a skirt. So, you know, those, those sorts of things are regressive. But basically asking for a certain amount of coverage. So there can it can be easier for everyone to focus on what it is that they're in school to do, academically as opposed to on the social aspects of it. I think, I think I think I could make an argument for that I've not ever tried exactly, but I think there's one to be made,

**Bret** 41:04

I'd go a little bit further, even that there's something to neutralizing the effort that goes into competing, you know, via clothing. And you know, there's certainly something to be said, for self expression. But the idea that you're going to go to school, and this is not an issue for anybody, because it's against the rules for everybody are all wearing the same thing. I think is probably as much as that seems kind of old world. I think there's a strong argument for it, because yeah,

**Heather** 41:36

no, it obscures class differences. Right? It? Yeah. Yeah. If you've if, if you're at some school that requires a dress code, and you've got whatever, two of them. Yeah, you know, like, regardless of whether or not that's all you got in your closet at home, you come to school looking the same way as the kid whose family has a boat? Yeah, right. So yeah, it potentially does begin to get at equalizing the playing field.

**Bret** 42:03

Yep. No, it's it does equalize it in a way that I think is important. Now, as for whether or not there is evidence of what happens whether the two environments are really different? I don't know. Right? I certainly there are ways of gaming it, you know, yeah, the movie trope of, you know, girls hiking their skirts up higher, despite the fact that as part of a uniform is well understood. But

**Heather** 42:30

this next one is just a link see here for a review of stats and studies on trans violence. And I did link it up, I can figure out where it is, or this is it's hard for me to navigate my computer in this form that we've currently got it because it's so tiny on my screen. But come on. So Zack, if you just want to show this very quickly, this is just someone I did not have an opportunity to look yet pseudonym on medium the transgender movement and bad stats and debunking compilation and my you know, 10 seconds looking at it looks like exactly that they have collected a bunch of these bad statistics or these statistics that are commonly trotted out, like, you know, increased suicide rate for trans teens and such, and tried to drill down on them. And it looks like for the most part found, yup, no evidence. So that's, that's good. I'm glad to spend some time with that. Can you guys look into or address the Pfizer Israel deal? From what I've seen, it looks like Pfizer is giving vaccine doses in exchange for Israel's patient data seems fishy. I don't know anything about this.

**Bret** 43:41

I only know that Israel is supposedly a model in terms of its effectiveness at delivering vaccines. I believe I've read that though. I didn't see this question coming. So I didn't look deeply into it. Yeah. But yeah, we could look into that.

**Heather** 43:58

Was Rachel Levine born a male question mark? Yes.

**Bret** 44:01

Yes, but she is not born a man. Actually, I would point out, can you go back? Which, yeah, was Rachel Levine born a male. I would point out that a measure of the absurdity of where we have landed can be found and I can't swear that this will be the same for you if you try it today as it was for me a few days ago when I went to Wikipedia. But if you look up Rachel Levine's history, it does not make any sense because while it is obvious and acknowledged on the page, that she is a transgender female. The page is written as this as if this was a revelation of a permanent internal state, which of course is an argument you could make but it's not one that that Wikipedia should be trafficking in. The fact is, this is somebody who lived as a male and was married as a male had children as a male played football in football, football transition to female and as it is with with Chelsea Manning, and you might check out her Wikipedia page two. But there is also a just a simple destruction of historical fact where it is reported that Chelsea Manning gave classified information to WikiLeaks, which she did not she was Bradley Manning at the time. And the fact is the idea that somehow a site whose whose reason for being is to record factual information so that anybody can find it such a site should be doing anything other than reporting the actual facts, which is that Bradley Manning handed over the documents was sentenced, transitioned while in prison, now is

**Heather** 46:02

no one. This is this is the part where they're just asking that we are being collectively gaslit Rachel Levine's Wikipedia page under personal life, she has two children David and Dana. She transitioned in 2011. Levine and her ex wife, Martha peasley. Levine divorced in 2013.

**Bret** 46:23

I believe it does not say

**Heather** 46:25

that suggests. Now it doesn't say genetic children. It doesn't say that. Rachel is the genetic mother of the children, but their mothers listed here, the ex wife. And you know, it's just not possible that two eggs got together and made these babies that's not what happened. There was sperm involve and it came from Rachel, which means Rachel is their dad, and therefore was a man. That's just really basic biology. And the sentences that are written here, don't, don't come together. They're written they don't work

**Bret** 47:06

to obscure it's gaslighting as you say, they're written to obscure the truth and in fact, feel scum. We're looking at the page now. Rachel Levine is reported to have been born on October 28 1967 5757. So that's just factually inaccurate, right? And

**Heather** 47:30

it says Levine it says Levine was born October 28 1977. And is originally from Wakefield, Massachusetts.

**Bret** 47:37

So okay, again, constructed so as to create the ambiguity we're talking about over there. Anyway, I think I think it is there but these things look,

**Heather** 47:51

let's say I mean, like where she trained in pediatrics, you know, I'll

**Bret** 47:55

look Yeah, where she Yeah, if you go back into the career history in the early life, it doesn't add up. And we are simply we are expected to do the work on the user side of putting together what must have happened and an obvious question like, you know, when did Rachel Levine transition which is just a simple factual question a journalist might want to answer Yeah, can't be established here.

**Heather** 48:18

Well, I mean, the date is listed here. separately from that wapo article that I shared in the first hour from 2016 we are told that she won't say whether or not she's had surgery or is on any cross sex hormones at all. And she has fathered two children that's that's a pretty solid group of facts right there for me. So there was there was no way that I should be expected to refer to the person who was growing up and who had children and who trained as a pediatrician as if that person was a woman all along.

**Bret** 48:57

So now to me this is exactly parallel to if we attempted to erase the distinction for women who married and change their names. If we pretended that when you married you are simply fulfilling your destiny to be with this other person and adopt their name and therefore you really have their name since you were born and we obscured your maze game right? Yeah, it'd be exactly the same thing and the answer is we don't do that why not? Because it makes it really hard to figure out what happened oh, this person is the same as that person hears her maiden name

**Heather** 49:31

also as you acquire new identities, new truths about yourself that does not change history right this this thing is about this this movement, the activist part of this movement and not not all trans people. Yes, true. 100% is about obscuring history it's it's it there's a pretense here that by wishing it to be so you can time travel and recreate things that already happened. History happens it happens once there is objective reality to it two different viewers on a particular scene can have different interpretations of it. But this person had children, genetic children with a woman who just hated them and gave birth to them. I'm guessing at a few parts of that here, right? Therefore, this person was male at the time, but you shouldn't

**Bret** 50:18

have to guess Wikipedia has an Early life and education career, it should all be here. And I said, Can you put up your mom's screen here? So if you look on the right side of this Wikipedia page, it does say Rachel Levine was born October 28 1957. At the top it says Rachel Levine, and then it says where she was born. So that is the same thing that they do with Chelsea Manning, having delivered classified documents to Julian Assange and WikiLeaks. It's not true.

50:48

Yeah. So

**Bret** 50:51

this is obviously become a corrosive influence on our ability even to figure out what basic facts are, that should be completely uncontroversial. It is no threat to Rachel Levine's right to be Rachel Levine, to acknowledge that she was born male. Yeah, right. It's no threat. It's just simply a fact. Yeah.

**Heather** 51:12

Okay, there's just a few comments here that I want to get through before we switch to this hour. This one, actually, so Biden, quote, we're going to crush the virus. Also, Biden from January 22. Quote, there's nothing we can do to change the trajectory of the pandemic in the next several months. I feel like so I get what the person who's writing this comment is doing, they're saying there's inconsistency. On this very important topic. I do think that that second part of that, quote, has been widely taken out of context that, I believe, and I wouldn't know where to find it. I only saw it once. And I was out in the world, and I was like, looking at my phone. But the full quotation from him, has him sort of not slurring, but like mumbling a little bit at first where he says, like, unless we can do something, then yada, yada, yada, and there's nothing we can do to change the trajectory of the pandemic in the next several months. I believe that that's what, that's what the actual full quote is. And if I'm wrong, I'm sorry, but I don't I think that this particular thing that I've seen a few times is an unfair assessment of what what he's claiming,

**Bret** 52:22

even as presented, those two things are not inconsistent, we're going to crush the virus doesn't say when there's nothing we can do to change the trajectory of the pandemic in the next few months. So I agree it this is a much ado about nothing. Yeah.

**Heather** 52:37

I might be in the minority. But I agree with Rand Paul, on this one. I'm all for treating people with respect and dignity. But government coercion typically does way more harm than good in these areas. So this is going to be I think, I think this is going to be trans stuff again.

**Bret** 52:52

Well, I think it's a general point. And I must say, I don't know Rand Paul's position, if it's, if it lines up with what stated here, I am more or less in agreement, which is to say, forcing people to speak in a particular way, is not an effective way of dealing with their bigotry, it's liable to make it worse, and that the successes we have had have not come from, you know, wagging fingers at people that have come from structural reforms that have placed people in circumstances they couldn't have gotten to with, you know, prior barriers. And then exposure does the heavy lifting. So you know, yes, the the idea that we're going to police speech into utopia is nonsense. And I will say somebody is going to take me to task for being such a stickler about the term theory versus hypothesis. Is it going to be me? No, I don't think so. But I, I am I accept that I am the only person who is exercised about this, at least at that level.

**Heather** 54:01

I care. I just don't think every moment is the time for the conversation.

**Bret** 54:05

My Well, we do have a convenient example in the last week where a journalist who actually did a decent job of covering the lab leak hypothesis first scene that started with the title and it's you know, titles are sometimes written not by the author, in fact, often not,

**Heather** 54:22

almost always.

**Bret** 54:24

But you know, the title says the lab leak theory and that terminology goes through the entire piece. And there's just this question about a, the entire fact that we are now talking in Rational terms about the lab leak possibility, the lab leak explanation, and whether or not it is correct. That is the result of very hard work. Yeah. on the part of people who have been very careful not to overstate the case. And in one piece of journalistic carelessness, a whole lot of good is going To be undone, because once again, we're now subject to the idea that we are conspiracy theorists, when in fact, we had successfully shut down that false accusation by being careful. So anyway, I do think it's important. But in that case, it is not that we want to police people's language to make them better. It's that we want the language to actively reflect the rules of engagement. A hypothesis is different than a theory. Right? If you disbelieve the theory of evolution, it's not always the time to talk about it, right? Because it is a theory it is well established. And if you want to go to an evolution conference and have that battle, you know, we don't have to listen. But when it comes to hypotheses, we know what the rules are, right? They're evidentiary rules, they're well established, and that's where we should be. So language matters. But policing people's language to make them change their moral stance is not going to work.

**Heather** 55:54

Awesome. Okay, three quick comments before we switch to this this hours question 64 our friend Holly reminds us is both a perfect square and perfect cube swims.

**Bret** 56:07

Wow. Yeah. Yeah, that's awesome.

**Heather** 56:10

Four cubed. It's squared. Brian, brilliant podcast is always greetings from Somerset, UK. Here's my daughter, Sophie, thank you for that. And I love every one of you. And hope you all have a wonderful day today. Thank you for that as well. Thank you so much. And let me see where all right. is going on. So Zack, I am there we go. No, I know there's a line I just lost control of my. I don't know what's going on. Okay. Why? Says the first question from this hours questions. Why are women so much more likely to love horses than men? I work as an equine artist. And in three years, I've never had a male client. I am also a horse obsessed woman. So very intrigued. Thanks.

**Bret** 57:00

Thank you for clarifying.

**Heather** 57:04

As What?

**Bret** 57:05

Well, wouldn't you say about equine artist?

**Heather** 57:09

Ah, yes. So you thought it might have been a horse riding in

**Bret** 57:13

it or someone who identified as one, but she clarifies that in the later part of the question. I'm glad to have it clarified. So we don't have to wonder What a relief. Yeah. All right. That it's gotten. It's gotten that it's

**Heather** 57:28

gotten there. Yes. It's gotten there. It's where for almost three hours in. Okay.

**Bret** 57:33

Yeah. So all right. Why? Why are women and girls more likely to be fond of horses? And I do wonder if this was always the case? There may be, you know, when horses were animals taken into battle, yeah. Presumably, the relationship of men to their horses would have been different. Yes. So

**Heather** 58:02

certainly Dothraki women don't have a particularly close relationship with the horses,

**Bret** 58:07

it seems Yes. Dothraki women to the extent that

**Heather** 58:11

they exist, which they don't, right,

**Bret** 58:14

yeah, so I'm not entirely sure. Yeah,

**Heather** 58:16

I don't I don't have anything good on this. I mean, it's, I guess, I would like to know, in order to posit a hypothesis here, I'd like to know the history of how widespread it is, like, Is it just the US? Or is it across the weird world? And how long ago, you know, does this start in the 50s in the US sort of in you know, post war boom times? And then I still don't have an answer off the top of my head if that's when it starts, but I don't without knowing, you know, is it a Victorian era thing? I think I think we need more information in order to, to get at it. I mean, you know, on average, women and girls are more likely to be interested in you know, systems that are human or animal and men and boys are more likely to be interested in systems that are things objects, numbers. So that doesn't get you anywhere close, really, except that you might predict if the horse if the horse girl, horse woman thing is real, that you would also find that girls are more driven to have a pet at home, right? That, that that is that is similar and you know, of course, we have this trope of, you know, a boy and his dog. And that presumably goes back farther into you know, into hunting times again, but that having an animal that you don't, that you can love, unequivocally and who loves you unequivocally back, but whom is not doing a job for you, is pretty novel circumstance, right? Like it's a toy. Luxury to have to have the people wolves and epic Tabby that we do right? they they they serve no function but but love and companionship and I think they know I think the dog in a way is actually perturbed by the dog does but I'd like to be functional with like a job the cats are quite happy the way things are Thank you very much.

**Bret** 1:00:20

Yeah, that's fair. Yeah. Yep. All right so I'm not sure we know we didn't have to answer but

**Heather** 1:00:27

and I the next one from echo. I quickly looked this up. I don't do Dune question is how it starts. I love Dune. I've only read the first book that No, that's not true. I read the second book, and it was so disappointing that I didn't read any of the rest. What's your take on chair dogs? Well, Chair dogs weren't in either the first two books so I don't know. feasible, ethical. Same question about acts a little tanks and other. That's both tiny and probably in Dune language. Tilak su something March. PS Did you know that Herbert was into young in psychology? I didn't know that. You know, super interesting, weird guy. But then you know he, yeah, he's into a lot of weird stuff. Do you know anything about your dogs? No, I doubt. So that's two questions in a row, we can't really answer sorry. Which of these Do you believe is lifted more people around the world out of poverty? capitalism, globalism, democracy, public education and safety nets, or the empowerment of women?

**Bret** 1:01:31

Wow. Yeah, I would say.

**Heather** 1:01:37

I mean, some of them are contingent on other right? That's right. They're non independent. They're not independent. So you know, both public education and safety nets, and the empowerment of women are probably inherently downstream of democracy. And maybe of capitalism as well. I mean, I think I can, I think I can take globalism off the list,

**Bret** 1:01:54

I would be tempted to as well, although there's an argument to be made. On the other hand, it sort of forces you into a okay define poverty, right? Yeah. So

**Heather** 1:02:06

and, you know, you need you need some amount of globalism for you know, democracy here to spread over there. And thus, you know, give some education to women so that they can be empowered and so that they can you know, the birthrate can go down and they can accrue more wealth, etc. Yeah. So, you know, it's a good list, and even even the one that, that I am most willing to say, it's not that one has a role to play here. So most Well, no, you're more people around the world. I think it's a ranked list. I think you just can't do them independently.

**Bret** 1:02:39

Yep. And there's also the possibility that there are things on how to, to really, you know, the spirit of the question is completely inconsistent with the idea that things like war, famine, deadly pandemic diseases result in consequences that may be economically positive for those who survive these things. So anyway, wow, is a complex question. And

**Heather** 1:03:12

yeah, no, I mean, like, Black Death left. A lot of open niches

**Bret** 1:03:18

left a lot of wealth on the surface, and resulted in an increase in wellbeing for those who are around to participate in that.

**Heather** 1:03:25

And early on, most of them were in deep mourning, but but they're there those who survived left descendants who were better off marginally. I've had some success waking up my mom and Aunt to what is happening. However, my brother and his wife are frogs in the pot. Any advice on reaching

**Bret** 1:03:46

them, get them to where lapels

**Heather** 1:03:51

used to tell there was we had, we had one student who we adored, and who was just hard to get to do what he needed to do. And you finally told me Tell him to just wear lapels all the time, because we had this kind of relationship I did, and I, and I grabbed him by them. He was gigantic, like six foot six. Anyway, they didn't work. still didn't work. But I got to grab my lapels, right? Yeah. So I think we need to know more about your brother and his wife, right? Like, I mean, you've told us something that's important, which is that you are able to talk with some members of your family such that you can convey some truth and reality to them. And scales may be beginning to fall from their eyes. Awesome. That means that you have the wherewithal to make careful nuanced, compassionate arguments with people you know, who with whom you share the history and presumably love it our sibling relationships look all sorts of ways and not knowing what your history with your brother is. It would even help to know frankly, if you're the older brother, the younger brother, if you have other siblings you know what the what the relationship But the wife is like, what's yours and his, but, you know, absent, absent any of those particulars? You got name. You got any approaches that he may not have thought of this, you know this I'll fight you naked guy who who has been able to successfully talk to other family members as

**Bret** 1:05:18

well I don't know we don't get enough hate mail so you can point over the Dark Horse podcast, it's always that approach. Yeah, I mean, look, this question about the the timescale right? And are you making headway but it's slow enough that you don't register it? Can you make predictions about what's coming that are sufficiently careful that when the things that you think are going to come to pass due, and your brother has told you that he doesn't believe that they will, that he will recognize that there was something about your model that carried the truth?

**Heather** 1:05:54

And can he do that? Like, will he follow through on? Oh, you predicted this? Wow, that's I didn't, I was sure that wouldn't come to pass and you're not addicted?

**Bret** 1:06:04

Yeah. So things along those lines? Yeah.

**Heather** 1:06:08

Love you guys wondering if you've ever heard of The Venus Project? Would love to hear your thoughts or pass it to Eric for his commentary? I have not. No, I have not either. from Texas, heading to Mount Hood among many of the other Oregon attractions in April. Cool. That aside, what do you think the future of game B is? Guess what guess?

**Bret** 1:06:31

The thing is game B, you probably should look into. There's a couple of pieces on it. Tim Wright has done some on his podcast, Rebel wisdom has done a bit on game B. My perspective is that game B isn't

**Heather** 1:06:49

Jordan written a couple of things on his medium Jordan Hall, Jordan has a couple of really, really good pieces.

**Bret** 1:06:57

But I would say this distills down to an understanding that once you see it is inescapable, right? That the structures that run civilization put us on a fatal trajectory, that they are very strong, but also fragile and not competitively superior. In other words, there is inferiority, that against an honest competitor would result in game a failing. Once you've seen that, then the question is not game B itself. It's not an organization. It's not a particular plan. It's a recognition that something must come next and that that something can be what naturally emerges at the failure of what we've got, which is likely to be a disaster, and maybe not a survivable one. Or it can be something architected to succeed at what we value better than our current system does. And so the question is, how, you know, it'd be great if there were 2040 100, game B, projects, targeted at figuring out what the next system looks like, yeah, only one needs to succeed. And the problem is there are too few of them. And the likelihood is we won't find the viable formulation in time. But the answer is, yeah, it's game beer bust.

**Heather** 1:08:22

Yeah. And if you haven't looked at some of Jordan stuff, I would just put this up briefly, Zach, just on medium search on Jordan Hall, and you'll find some his stuff and looks like he hasn't published anything since July of last year, but he's got the rise and fall of networks defunded redesign everything. And he his thinking is always very, very careful, reliably. And surprising. Okay, I'm so liberal. I not only believe in universal health care, but I think registered pets should be part of the package. Do you think the next big hurdle is proper rights for animals and the environment?

**Bret** 1:09:07

No, for the following reason. It's a very tough sell. And it is not obvious how you would properly value these things. On the other hand, if you say what matters is human wellbeing. And it's not living humans, it's as many humans as we can give as liberated a life as we can provide them the gift of a liberated human life being the ultimate thing that we have to offer. The planet has to be stabilized. In other words, our system has to become sustainable in order to provide an indefinitely large number of generations. A world if the world is being degraded every generation then that's a short term plan if it is stable, that's An indefinitely long plan, that's the way to give that gift to the maximum number of humans. And if you recognize that that is a worthy goal, and you will actually end up generating systems that protect the very values you're talking about, without having to defend them independently, right? In other words, a world in which there are no more orcas is a degraded world, it's not a sustainable world, right? So do we need to award orcas status? In which case, how do we do it? I don't know, do we want to say actually, the value of orcas to humans is such that they must be protected. And therefore, we must evaluate policy relative to its ability to do that for human wellbeing purposes that we can do.

**Heather** 1:10:48

I'm not sure about this. I don't have an answer. I'm not sure.

**Bret** 1:10:51

I think the problem is, if you try to implement any alternative plan, you'll discover why they don't work.

**Heather** 1:10:58

Yeah, it feels to me like this, quote, like what you're suggesting, and I know that you and I share the actual values and underlying goals, but it feels like this, that could be used to create a explicitly anthro centric world in which only humans are, are considered a value. And you know that there are those there are, there are those who actually really believe that we can live absent the world that the vast majority of us on our ancestors have grown up and of course,

**Bret** 1:11:40

but Who are they to tell somebody five generations from now that a decision was made that they're not entitled to have workers on their planet?

**Heather** 1:11:46

But then but then it feels to me that it's easier to defend the value of workers in their own right than the value of workers in my mind. Like what what does me valuing me having like putting amenity value on orchids? Do it's it's it's inherently unquantifiable. Right. But the thing is,

**Bret** 1:12:08

if you Well, I don't know that it's inherently unquantifiable. Its inherent that it will be arbitrary, which is part of the point. Now, my point is, look, I think we need to be free to drive monopolies mosquitoes to extinction, and not free to drive workers to extinction. One can do

**Heather** 1:12:27

not actually free to drive all mosquitoes to extinction either, right? an awfully is being the genus of mosquitoes that vectors, malaria, dengue, a Zika, yellow fever, others, right.

**Bret** 1:12:36

And so my point is, if we just take the simplifying assumption, that what we are doing is trying to provide the maximally hospitable world for the maximum number of generations over which we can have an impact, we can do that calculation, without having to reckon with the right of Anopheles mosquitoes to continue which of course, if workers do, then it's really an aesthetic choice to say that Anopheles mosquitoes don't. So my point is the reason I've heard this, I mean, I am I am

**Heather** 1:13:13

persuaded of choice, or you know, people have tried to do this on the basis of consciousness on the basis of social structure, right

**Bret** 1:13:19

and my point length of

**Heather** 1:13:21

life,

**Bret** 1:13:22

I can hear the sound effect of the car accident that comes from each of these choices. The only one that doesn't result in that sound effect is to say, you know what, this is about human well being, but it can't be about us living humans at the expense of future humans. It's about them every bit as much as it's about us. And to whatever degree we start degrading the planet, so they get less of one. That's our screw up and we're not entitled to

**Heather** 1:13:45

I guess, how do how then how, though, do we defend against the ELI masks? You know, the super powerful dudes who actually think that life on Mars would be a way for humans to live?

**Bret** 1:13:57

We don't I mean, for one thing. Ilan. It's a hard road. I hope you succeed. I'm not going Red Rocks are cool. Maybe for a week. But Mars is going to be a very boring place. Even if you terraform Mars, it's going to be you know, you think Portland is bad because of the the IV Mars is gonna

**Heather** 1:14:24

be Gylfi to Mars. Yes, Mars is gonna

**Bret** 1:14:27

be appalling, even terraform. Right? That doesn't mean it wouldn't be beautiful, like to glimpse out a window. You could but you know, maybe you could, but if you did, the point is there's no richness to it, because it's not a natural biological planet, or at least it hasn't been on in a very long time. So anyway, I'm not against Ilan hedging our bets by getting something going on Mars. That's a good idea. I don't think it's anything to bank on. I would say the same thing about Eric's point about breaking the Einsteinian speed limit. Okay, cool. Let's do that if we can, but I don't think anybody should be treating that as Plan B. It's not right, right? Plan B has to be, how do we break this system from doing its destructive thing and replace it with a system that does not degrade the planet one generation to the next. Right? That just simply a, I believe it's philosophically robust. And be, I believe it is the one thing that we can say that is objective, sufficiently objective that we could actually pursue it. And bonus, I think all of the things that you want to come out of an attempt to grant nature rights or whatever, fall out of that naturally, rather than having to be artificially erected on top of some unstable philosophical ground. Maybe

**Heather** 1:15:54

I hear you, makes me very nervous. Sure. Yeah.

**Bret** 1:15:58

We're in a predicament. You should be nervous. Yeah. Well, this

**Heather** 1:16:00

person writes a follow up question saying psi have a quality skull, if you were interested, of course, are interested, I suspect that they are illegal to take out of Australia. I actually are qualities sinese. So quality is besides listed societies A stands for? I don't know. So it stands for something. Societies is the set of international law that describes the that's not it at all. That describes the level of protection of particular animals. So it is one two or three and I species, how about that? It's coming up with something random. So it stands for likes, it's not telling me? I don't even know. I don't know what it stands for. Anyway, if qual as your site is listed, which I think it must be. You can't it's probably illegal to have them. You know, people end up with skulls. But the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild fauna and flora. It's an international group between governments and it's good and actually does restrict illegal pet trade and, and such. And even if it's legal with permits, to have them within a country, if your site is listed at all, I think you can't transfer transfer them across borders, which means that anything that appears to be anything like that is at risk of being searched and seized. at the border. And anyway, it's a it's a big mess. You know, of course, we want to call it skull, but that's a huge, likely legal problem. Yeah. I don't know what this next question means. Do primates Oh, chiroptera is something better than Kevin dish? If so, should probably figure out preferred cultivars, hope they're good for smoothies. Ah, Cavendish primates, primates, or Opterons or bats.

**Bret** 1:18:13

Not quite sure you can look up Cavendish. Because if you

**Heather** 1:18:17

might look attempt to look up CDs was distinctly Yeah, that's gonna come up with a bunch of different cabin dishes. So that's not really gonna help. Yeah,

**Bret** 1:18:28

well, then I think the answer is an unequivocal Yes.

**Heather** 1:18:30

Okay, excellent. Let's do maybe three more. Hi, Brett. Why are the meta analyses done on implicit bias? so rarely mentioned? All of them show negative results? And there's a link to something from an overview. Yeah, Brett? Why, yeah. Why are you ignoring the meta analysis?

**Bret** 1:18:55

I think for the same reason that we do all kinds of other shoddy things in order to advance policies that are not well supported by evidence.

**Heather** 1:19:03

Oh, wait, hold on. So second part of this question. That link is from the latest published article. On January 4 of this year, quote, we conclude that much research effort is theoretically and empirically ill suited to provide actionable evidence based recommendations for reducing prejudice. Great quote.

**Bret** 1:19:18

Yeah, I mean, the whole landscape around this is so messed up. You know, if implicit by it bias tests work, then we ought to be able to use them to test out of implicit bias training. Right? Yeah. Implicit bias training is being wielded as a weapon. And the idea is, oh, it is both necessary because it works and doesn't end and you can't test out because it doesn't. Right, right. So you know, the whole thing is just logically inconsistent at a suspicious level. Yes. So The reason that they aren't mentioned is because that would be even more awkward than the inconsistency is that are already staring us in the face.

**Heather** 1:20:07

Yeah. Okay. So what are we at? We must be well over an hour this way. Okay, maybe this is the one to end on. What do you guys think about shrooms? And do you know of any ways to sober up quickly? I've been hot all day. Sorry. If you're if you'd rather not be at this point. I'm sorry. No, I don't know. I don't know. Anyway, to sober up to sober up quickly. No, yeah. You know, do do do steer away from mirrors and phones. Yeah.

**Bret** 1:20:38

But you're not alone. You're not alone. it'll it'll end soon.

**Heather** 1:20:41

Yeah, it always does. That's I mean, that's the if, if it's bad trip, you're on know that it will always end it will 100%. And, you know, find yourself a nice animal to hang out with that often helps. Yeah. No, super interesting. Very interesting.

**Bret** 1:20:57

Now, I will say what I always say, which is great, but not recreational. doesn't mean you can't have a great time. But these are very powerful tools. And they should be treated with respect. Which means, among other things, pay very careful attention to the circumstances in which you do them. I would say, circumstances of trusts, circumstances that are thought provoking, that allow you freedom to think quietly engaged, not engage, all those things are important

**Heather** 1:21:36

in which you are and you know that you are actually physically safe. Yep. All right, maybe that's it.

**Bret** 1:21:44

Okay. Well,

**Heather** 1:21:46

so we will be back in a week. Once again, at the right now is the we're in the middle of a 48 hour, ask your question period on my Patreon for the private q&a, which will happen not tomorrow, but next Sunday at 11am. Pacific for a couple of ours. Join join me there join Breton his Patreon if you'd like access to either of his monthly conversations. Access I access the discord server on either of them. We've got we've got merchandise for sale somewhere. Was it called store? Thank you. That was Zachary. Yep. That was Zachary, our producer, our 16 year old son producer in the background informing me of the URL which is stored at Dark Horse podcast.org. We may have some something new soon there. Email the Darkhorse moderator@gmail.com for any logistical questions you've got and enjoy your week. Get outside, stay calm. Try to do the science rather than just trusting the experts. Be well,

**Bret** 1:23:03

and if you're tripping, it'll be over soon and I hope it was great.