Bret and Heather 22nd DarkHorse Podcast Livestream\_ Don't #S...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather, Clip

**Bret** 00:12

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast live stream. I believe this is our 22nd live stream. That's right. I'm here with Dr. Heather hying. And wow, is there a lot going on in the world? We are going to, we are going to have to talk about this and do some some analysis. I thought that actually though, in light of how much there is it's going on and the fast pace of change. I thought it might be wise just as a counterpoint to open with something that is important, but maybe isn't so much of the moment. So I had an important question for you. How sure are we that eating dessert in a dream doesn't count?

**Heather** 00:52

This is your important question for me.

**Bret** 00:54

I mean, you'll agree it's important.

**Heather** 00:55

It's not.

**Bret** 00:56

Oh, well, I'm pretty sure it is. But you have a sense Do you think it counts? Or do you think actually it's a freebie?

**Heather** 01:03

It's it's a freebie. I just don't even know how to respond to you here.

**Bret** 01:07

Okay. This is a freebie. I'm less sure. But anyway,

**Heather** 01:12

take that as it is. Where you eating cake and your dreams last night.

**Bret** 01:15

You know, it happens every so often. And I must say it's never great. But sometimes it's better than you'd expect having

**Heather** 01:21

what like listened to Marie Antoinette? like okay, I'll just go ahead and do it. Or, you

**Bret** 01:26

know, it's always hard to tell in dreams what, what actually took place because you forget it on waking up. But yeah, well, alright, so that's it for not so timely, but important matters. You want to lead us into this landscape. So people who maybe aren't aware of where we've landed can be brought up to speed before we do any analysis. Yeah.

**Heather** 01:43

First off, we want to show the clip from Mike Nina's excellent three part documentary on what happened at evergreen that we tried to show last time, but which really does indicate how much what we saw on a college campus three, four or five years ago, has spilled out into the streets right now. So Zach, if you would show the clip from the hunted individual,

**Bret** 02:09

I have to say I keep being invited to talk about free speech on college campuses. And every time I'm invited, I make the same point, which is this isn't about free speech. And this is only tangentially about college campuses. This is about a breakdown in the basic logic of civilization, and it's spreading and college campuses, maybe the first dramatic battle. But of course, this is going to find its way into the courts, it's already found its way into the tech sector, it's going to find its way to the highest levels of governance if we're not careful. And it actually does jeopardize the ability of civilization to continue to function.

**Heather** 02:53

Alright. So in light of that, in light of those predictions that you made a couple of years ago. What's happening today, one of the things that is happening today, June 10 2020, is a movement, accompanied by many hashtags, to hashtag shut down stem, hashtag shut down academia. Stem being, of course, the acronym for science, technology, engineering and math. And I thought what we do first is show a couple more clips from the very first day of the public parts of the Evergreen protests, and then show a little bit about what the shutdown stem movement is looking like today. Three years later, in on college campuses,

**Bret** 03:40

may I put a placeholder before we go there. That clip is from Mike and he just showed a clip that we just showed is from Mike Nana's documentary. And it was at Peter Bogosian, this table with Helen pluck rose, you James Lindsay, all present and Mike Naina. They're filming. And my point is, one of the things that will come up today is how much this was apparent in its early phases to some of us. And we were told that it wasn't for real or wasn't important. But you mustn't get the sense that this was invisible, because their whole reason we were sitting around that table was that some of us were very concerned. And yeah, I think I did nail it in that clip. But

**Heather** 04:25

but so did they. And so so did many of us. And you know, we were being told for years, you know, really before evergreen blew up. We were we were talking about this with people. And we were being told that this was a few niche faculty in the humanities, and it had no bearing on the outside world and there was no way that this ideology would have the legs to get anywhere. And here we have people falling all over themselves to be obsequious. In the face of a movement that is not what it seems. It just isn't, you know, with with regard To the good faith protests that start on the streets much of that is and it stems from real real anger real hurt over actual history of systemic oppression the riots are not that and the movement that is co opted that and may in fact have been part of what set those protests in motion is not that and certainly what is going on college campuses is not that because the idea that there is active and ongoing systemic oppression of everyone but straight white males on college campuses is flat out batshit crazy it just

**Bret** 05:40

is so when we get to the analysis phase I want to return to that clip and I want to point a philosophy of science lens at it because this is the day in which those two things come crashing into each

**Heather** 05:52

other Yeah, they do. Alright, so Zack, do you want to start with the so before actually let me set this up on May 23 2017. The protesters the activists, the people who would become writers at evergreen showed up in your classroom Brett and and then later in the day that was 930 or so in the morning. Later in the day, there was another very public meeting that almost became violence on the fourth floor of the library building the so called four o'clock meeting in between those though, was a private meeting between many of the lead protesters I don't know how many are there than what there are in the room 10 or 12 and all of the top admin at the Evergreen State College at the time, the president all of the deans and I believe all the vice presidents so in which includes the provost, so all of the top admin at evergreen have met our meeting with the the lead protesters and once again, the activists have videoed it and put it on put it online and someone grabbed it and now and now we have that video

**Bret** 07:01

they put it online on Facebook and an account that goes it's not my fault I think it's not my fault one took those videos and put them on YouTube which is the only reason that we are aware of their content.

**Heather** 07:14

That's right. That's right so we're going to show you just a couple of tiny clips. The first one is President bridges president of the college still president to this day, although soon not to be up for its own volition. president of the college promising re education or banishment of those who don't agree this one is subtitled because Mike Naina actually clipped this for me and gave it to me in service of a talk that I gave at Oxford last year on on some of these very issues so you want to play this one Zach

**Clip** 07:45

they're gonna say some things that we don't like in our job is the brainwashing or gamma right? And what I hear us stating that we are working toward is Braman train them and if they don't get it sight right you must and I encourage you to hold us accountable

**Heather** 08:11

it's gonna repeat they're gonna say something said President bridges that we don't like and our job is to bring them on or get them out and when I hear us stating that we are working towards is burn them and train them and if they don't get it sanction them and you must and I encourage you to hold us accountable to doing that very shortly thereafter like 30 seconds later in this over two hour long meeting for which we have the entire video we have the lead protester maybe the protester who is most instrumental in making the this happen at evergreen and by far if not the least honest actor among them one of them asking the administration of the college well I'll let him speak for himself if you want to play the third videos

**Clip** 08:55

just because it means Is there any way to word some sort of language or a commitment towards I'm really targeting and a lot of this like everyone needs all of this but like regarding targeting like the sciences as far as like education about like these issues because like I know like one black woman on this campus is often like one of one or the only like black and like black woman person in their classroom and basically just has to sit there in the corner and suffer through everything and like I can buy all my classes but then like she's talking about every single day someone is saying some bullshit and the teachers there are educated to do anything. And so it's definitely not just a science issue there's no way there's no way to say that but like that's the place where it's like happening the most consistently.

**Heather** 09:40

This was like a 15 cent eclipses. Okay, so Jamil starts by saying is there any way to word some sort of language about the commitment towards really targeting stem and a lot of this when we first heard that we were shocked and And soon thereafter, when the protesters became rioters and started doing both physical damage on campus and actual assault and battery to students who disagreed with them, the the places on campus that were targeted with the library and the science labs. This, the windows of the science labs are broken, the Museum of Natural History was was vandalized, and the library was vandalized. Which is exactly in keeping with the idea that in order to get rid of white supremacy, we need to shut down science, technology, engineering and math. So let me just say a few words about the thing that is happening right now. Before we go into more analysis. We have one ask you to show a screenshot here in a minute, Zack, if you would just show both of us please. Yeah, so this, if you can show my screen. This is modos summary of the goals of shutdown stem quote, white supremacy is baked into science and academia from racist language and textbooks to a culture that excludes black scientists from innovating and advancing at the same pace as their colleagues. But rather than more milk toast statements and diversity initiatives, researchers want action. organizers are asking the scientific community to participate in a work stoppage on Wednesday, June 10, to bring attention to racism in the world of research. Just asterisk the idea that the culture of academia and science is excluding black scientists from innovating and advancing is a claim for which I have seen exactly zero evidence but it is a claim that is being tied to the claim that police brutality can target black men in particular disproportionately for which we do have some evidence right? those claims because they both seem to be about racism are linked and you're not allowed to disagree with one for fear that you are understood to be disagreeing with the other. Okay, next one, hold on sec take off the screen please. Just Okay, my, my trackpad is not working. This is from the actual shutdown stem website. What you can show us Now those of us who are not black, particularly those of us who are white, play a key role in perpetuating systemic racism. Direct actions are needed to stop this injustice unless you engage directly with eliminating racism you're perpetuating it. This moment calls for profound change. Shut down hashtag shut down academia and hashtag shut down stem is the time for white and non black people of color. This is a new acronym to me nbp oc, non black people of color to not only educate themselves, but to define a detailed plan of action to carry forward and Wednesday June 10 will mark that day okay, so we can take that down. That's one more thing. The the we're beginning to see the movement splinter into its constituent parts. And then Zach, if you would just walk us through the six pictures that I had you had sent to you beginning with the nature picture. This is these are all screenshots of tweets from the last day or two. This is nature magazine, one of the two biggest, most important preeminent science journals in the world, saying that they are going to be joining shut down stem striking for Black Lives is the is the one of the taglines that people have become convinced this is what it's about. Next from science, the editor in chief of science as science and scientists must say out loud they have benefited from and failed to acknowledge white supremacy. Next one of many societies, probably professional societies This happens to be the Society for research and child development is saying shut down academia and genuflecting before the new gods. For we have some academics with their version of well, what they actually say is looking forward to shut down stem and having conversations with my students tomorrow about racism and academia. As folks who hold any power in academia, it is our responsibility to disrupt the system and take responsibility for ongoing contributions to systemic oppression. I read this as don't hurt me, please move along. Nothing to see here. Five, this craziness from an academic tip to Lee Johnson, for pointing this out to me. I hope there are a lot of circles in academia having serious conversation on how academic freedom uphold white supremacy, racism and prejudice.

**Heather** 14:33

And finally, sex. We have a PhD student, Zachary six, saying, I can't read that. I'm not sure what it says among other things. She says the science can wait. Because obviously, in the middle of a global pandemic, the science can wait.

**Bret** 14:54

Well, they have taken pain as they have learned from the accusation that there's something toward about mass protests when we should be social distancing. And so they have taken pains to exclude work on COVID-19. From their

**Heather** 15:09

shutdown, even at first that they've added that.

**Bret** 15:12

Maybe they got some immediate pushback. There's a bunch to say here, but I really think the most important thing we can do, and we have to make sure to do a good job of it before we're done here today is to give people a sense for what they are actually seeing, because almost all of this is euphemistic and not straightforward. It's Potemkin, it's not to be taken at face value. And, frankly, there there are two experiences for us that are happening simultaneously. On the one hand, we are having a large number of people wake up to the fact that what they saw happened to us at evergreen is part of something much larger as we tried to warn them. And so on the one hand, that's reassuring that at least we are not in a tiny group of people who see it many more people are seeing it this week than last, for example. But there is also this increasingly frustrating sense that we lived through this in order to make it possible to avoid having this takeover civilization. In other words, I feel like we paid a high price at least in terms of our security in the world, we were tossed into a completely unknown realm and we are still there, we're doing fine, but we had tenure jobs now. We're here on the internet trying to figure out what our new job is. So in some sense, this was all for not we went through this we you know, we we had the police withdrawn from a riot against us. And we watched the community patrols descend immediately in the violence. We know what happens when you when you shut down the police. And I must say as much as it was surprising to see Jamil talking so openly and on camera about his feeling that stem was the problem. I can't remember the first instance but somewhere in the year prior to evergreens meltdown, I remember it may have been in a faculty meeting, I remember saying something about that what was unfolding was a challenge to enlightenment values and that we academics had an obligation to defend them. And I remember being stunned to hear an attack on enlightenment values come back, right, not just the Enlightenment, right, but enlightenment values. And, you know, at first I was

**Heather** 17:43

which I understand to be rigor and logic in combination with compassion for the humanity of all people. Right, you know, maybe that's sort of strict to lotto. That's, you know, it's a really broad interpretation. And a more narrow interpretation is just, maybe about logic and rigor, and, and using science to understand what we do in the world. But even so, even so those are the values that you're fighting back against. It was

**Bret** 18:09

stunning to me, I did I didn't think anybody could Marshal such a broken argument in public and not have, you know, a faculty assembled for a faculty meeting erupt in people saying, wait, no, you don't have that, right. You haven't understood what enlightenment values are, then because you couldn't possibly be attacking them. But it was silence, right? And are scared. That is, the thing people need to understand is that at some level, we've said in other contexts, that frequently you will understand what people are doing better if you turn down the sound, because we humans can't help but process language. And if you listen to what people say they are doing, then you will often be misled if what they are doing is not the same thing. And so you have lots of people who are saying that they are looking forward to talking about bias in the sciences. Okay, there's nothing wrong with talking about bias in the sciences. It exists. And it has a long and dark history agreed. But

**Heather** 19:09

certainly certainly up through the end of the 19th century, it was a prime it was actually a primarily not just white and male endeavor, but also sort of a landed white and male effort. It was it was it was rich people. And those rich people tended to be men and those rich people tended to be white. And what has happened in the 20th century, in part is an opening up across all of those demographic categories. And you know, obviously, I have benefited from it being open to women, but I think more so the vatic everyone effectively who's doing science today has benefited from it no longer being just appropriate for the landed gentry. Right? This is this is now actually open to to anyone out there. There's a move away from that. Now we've talked a little bit about the problems in modern science before but the fact that In theory, you can get yourself into college and get through and become a scientist, no matter where you came from, is wholly different from anything that was true of the Western scientific tradition, up until, I don't know, at least the turn of the 19th or 20th century,

**Bret** 20:19

yeah, the door is wide open, which doesn't mean people are walking through it in numbers that are proportional to their numbers in the population. And it is certainly worth talking about why that isn't the case and what might be done about it, I think it would be wonderful if people did show up in numbers that were proportional. But nonetheless, if you're scratching your head, if this is the first time you've heard, enlightenment values challenged, or I mean, please understand, shut down stem is a new kind of tactic. I tried to get somebody to tell me if this tactic had a name, and a lot of people came up with things that were in the ballpark, but nobody has come up with a description. The thing about shut down stem, and it works. The same way for defund the police is that these terms are basically a floating point variable. Shut down stem could mean what people presumably at science think they're doing when they use their platform, to broadcast the stuff that we are shutting down for a day symbolically to acknowledge that there's been some bias, right? But how, imagine that you were sitting somewhere and you thought, how can we demonstrate our power? Let's get the very top echelon of science to broadcast hashtag shut down stem, right? And then you realize that those same people who seek this kind of power are also actually broadcasting the message that science itself is the problem that I mean, you heard their language, that white supremacy is baked in, baked in baked into science, think about how preposterous a claim this is. Right? scientific method, you observe a pattern, you hypothesize a possible explanation. You come up with some predictions, that would be true if the hypothesis was correct. And then you run a test. Right? But they're pretending that the scientific method is something like you observe a pattern, you come up with some explanation that blames black people. And then you broadcast it without checking

**Heather** 22:22

right now has has science been done badly? A lot for absolutely has some of that bad science been done badly in service of racist goals? Yes. Is that happening in the last 20 years? I don't see any evidence of it. And and we've gone looking eventually, even 50 years even right. And that's not to say that this isn't pretty recent history, and that there hasn't been a lot of frankly, evil done in the guise of in the uniform of science, but that doesn't make it science. But just just like, hashtag Black Lives Matter is cloaking itself in something that sounds honorable and amazing and is not actually that inside. The idea that eugenics or social Darwinism is actually a scientific, a scientific study. It's not it's the it's the same misapprehension.

**Bret** 23:13

But even if it was, let's transport ourselves back 50 or 100 years, right? The cure for bad science is good science. And it always has been science is a bias correction mechanism. That's really the only thing it does. You don't need science to tell you things that are obvious. You need science to tell you things that are counterintuitive, which means that whatever your biases are, science is the tool for addressing them. And I would say further, let's imagine so if you listen to the leaders of the movement, and you listen to what their internal conversation sounds like, they say, look, white supremacy is so baked in that you have to level the institution and replace it with something else. And sometimes they will say something afrocentric right. Now let's suppose for a moment that there was some other system that was interested in what's true, that's what science is about what's true. And it was self correcting, which is the beauty of science, the thing that separates it from every other method, let's suppose that you did have an alternative method, all the better if it comes from Africa. Lovely. Okay. So you've got some other method that is both self correcting and interested in the truth. What will happen to it, if you set it in motion, it will converge on enlightenment science. That's what it'll do. So

**Heather** 24:30

at this point in a global economy at well, and we know that there have been other enlightenment's, you know, the Enlightenment that we talk about, and when we refer to it is the European enlightenment. But the Maya, as we have talked about before, the Maya had an enlightenment many hundreds of years before the Europeans dead. And although we know very little about what their inner workings of their thinking was, because almost their entire library was destroyed, in fact, by the Spaniards when they arrived, although the Maya themselves already called During decline at the point that the Spaniards arrived, what we do know is that they had astronomers, they had scribes data concept was zero, they had mathematics, they had vast written literature. They had they had, they'd had an enlightenment advanced

**Bret** 25:14

agricultural chemistry. So I don't even want to put caveats on it, though, you need two characteristics to guarantee that all you have to add is time before you rediscover science, right? It doesn't matter what the nature of a truth seeking self correcting mechanism is, it will inevitably land there. And what that means is that the right thing to do if you really want to empower black people, and believe me, I do, if you really want to do that, the best thing you can do is you can arm them with the tools of science, rather than setting us back hundreds of years and waiting for some other methods to converge on discoveries we've already got, you can arm them, you can democratize these tools, which is exactly what we were doing at evergreen, it is exactly why they had to come for us. Now this is the part that I think people are going to be totally bewildered by. Why if this movement is so interested in empowering black people, would it attack a tool that was really their best weapon in order to end whatever oppression remains? And here's the reason. This movement isn't what it looks like. This movement is a false version of something that doesn't exist to be found in large numbers. In other words, the energy has been captured by people who are not well intentioned. And the reason that they hate science is because science is a good mechanism for figuring out what's true, and what they are peddling is not true. So the last thing they want is people empowered to check their claims, because the claims don't stand up. And we saw this all over the Evergreen debacle, right? When we said, okay, you're telling us that there is racism at evergreen? Where's the evidence? And what did they say they said to ask for evidence of racism is racism with a capital R. Now that's obviously a preposterous circular bit of logic. But the

**Heather** 27:05

idea is more precisely to ask for evidence of racism is evidence of racism.

**Bret** 27:10

Yep. So it's inescapable. It's hermetically sealed by design. So now think about what you've seen. You've seen 10s of 1000s of people in the street, marching behind banners that seem superficially, like they might be pointed in the direction of something good, but are actually Trojan horses hiding something else?

**Heather** 27:31

Most of them don't know they're carrying Trojan horses, I

**Bret** 27:33

don't think they have no idea. And even the ones so you point to some of the tweets that people are you said that they are basically saying, Don't hurt me. That's certainly a component of it. But there's something far more insidious here. When these people, they see the mob coming, they look at their skin, they say, Oh, I don't want to be backed against the wall. And they figure out what you have to say, in order not to get backed against the wall to get the mob to move on to somebody else. A, they are externalizing harm on to the next person, right? They have an obligation to stand up. And by not standing up, they make the mob stronger. And then the next person that backs against the wall has an even bigger problem, right? So this is not cool. But the worst part of it, and we've seen it hundreds of times, is the individual says this thing to get the mob to leave them alone. And then they've got a problem. How the hell are you going to sleep after you've done that? Right? So what do they do? They tell themselves that it's true, right? They forget what they knew. And they tell themselves, this is actually the right thing. That's why I did it. And so now the point is, the mob didn't just move on, it actually captured their minds right? Now, the reason that people like us were so animated after the Evergreen meltdown was that we saw this force takeover lots and lots of people who should know better. And after it took them over, there was no place there was no place that you could say it stops here, which is why I said in that clip what I said it's why I said the same thing to Congress, right? This is going to eventually spill over into anything now. Truth be told, I'm impressed at the speed. But nonetheless, the mechanism was obvious. And Well, anyway, it's it is very important that you think what is the most parsimonious explanation for what I'm seeing? Is this an honest confusion about whether science is a good thing? Or is this a demonstration of power?

**Heather** 29:35

Yeah, it is. It's a demonstration of power. Let me show another screen Zack, my computer. This is the particles for justice site, which is the site that actually began I believe the hashtag to a gotta be forgotten what they're calling it now shut down stem. So strike for black lives with the now familiar Black Power fist But this strikes me as particularly important. So this is put together by some particle physicists, including one who will say a few more words about here shortly. This oops. This paragraph here therefore, as physicists we believe in academic strike is urgently needed to hit pause to give black academics of break and to give others an opportunity to reflect on their own complicity in anti black racism and academia and their local and global communities. This is where it gets interesting. I think this hashtag strike for Black Lives is in dialogue with a call from colleagues in astronomy to hashtag shut down stem and hashtag shut down academia for at least the day of June 10. Hmm, there it is. Right? So you know, there's there's Martin Bailey all over the place, right? And you you refer to one explicitly in the last live stream, but for those few people who will stand up to this, you can take it down now sack they will be told, look, can't you stop what you're doing for one day? Can't Why don't you care about black lives that much. And the most important thing is what you were just saying that now this isn't actually what it appears This is not actually in service of ending racism. That is that is not what is going on here. Although many of the people who are participating think it's what's going on here. Those two things can simultaneously be true and they are but just like defund the police Oh, we don't mean defund we just mean like don't put new funds to Oh, we don't mean abolish we like but actually they do, or at least some of them do. Same thing with it's a one day strike. Come on. Can't you get behind that? What are you racist? Well, let's shut down stem and shut down academia for at least the day of June 10. So let me say just a couple more things. One of the instigators of this particular madness is an astrophysicist or a particle physicist who wrote this piece. Zachary Shonda, Prescott Weinstein or Weinstein, no relation. In response to the James d'amour memo, the Google memo that was that came out in August 2017. And we can do a whole other livestream about that we won't do that here, in which the headline that that slight gave her was stop equating science with truth. And it's exactly the piece that you would expect, given that, to which I responded. Let's see, Zack take down my screen for a while I find it. I responded, here you go. I'm not saying Colette, should we stop equating science with truth? No. So it was a short essay? No, actually not. It was it was more than that. But let me just share a couple of things that I said there. Just a couple of lines, quote, shutting down dissent is a classic authoritarian move and will not result in less oppression, you will send the dissenters underground, and they will seek truth without you. Science and scientists need to respond the truth has not in and of itself oppressive. To the extent that selection has produced differences between groups such as differences in interests between men and women. denying the reality of that truth is hardly legitimate response. So that is in reference, of course the demore memo which no did not claim that men and women are definitely abled even, he just claimed you can take it down, Zach, he just he just made the observation, which is backed by empirical science, that given free choice, men and women tend to make somewhat different choices about what they're interested in and what they want to do, on average, between populations. Anyway.

**Bret** 33:34

So I want to try to orient people. To our perspective, obviously, you hit the nail on the head in your article that would have been in 2017. Yeah. So okay, that's interesting. You and I have both predicted the future. And it has arrived quickly and in very dramatic form. But what I want to point out is the philosophy of science is actually applicable to this not explicitly scientific discussion. Science has you hypothesize the explanation for a pattern, and then make a prediction and test it. The purpose of that exercise is not the testing of prediction, scientific experiment is not the same qua non of science. The important thing is that the hypothesis, the model of reality that generates the prediction gets credit for the prediction when it turns out to be true or in technical language. It remains on falsified despite test. So what that means is that when you've got a true prediction, you should look at the model that generated it and say that model appears to be somewhere in the ballpark of correct What else does it say? That's the important part. What else does it say?

**Heather** 34:54

So just just make sure you know, you have to be very careful that your predictions not just inherently followed from the model, but that there weren't other models that made the same prediction. Right? You have to be careful in both directions. So

**Bret** 35:06

there are lots of things that tell you the quality of a prediction. So one of the things that tells you the quality of a prediction is if it's unique to the hypothesis and question, or does it reflect well on several hypotheses at once. Another one would be is it counterintuitive? If a prediction is intuitive, then it's not a very strong test. If a prediction is wildly counter intuitive, then it's a great test when it shows up. So for example, Einstein's prediction that the light of stars would be where that light is bent by gravity, which is then tested by the observation that the, the sun bends the light of distant stars, which is something you can't observe directly. And so we don't know it to be true. You can only see it during an eclipse when the sun is darkened, but the starlight behind it is still visible. So you can detect this gravitational lensing. Right? That's an amazing prediction. Because a It's so strange to imagine that gravity is going to bend light, nobody would think to predict it is really counterintuitive. And the second thing is that it's, it's so it's very easily demonstrated here easy to check. So

**Heather** 36:12

so the more people are surprised by a prediction, and who think it's not true, the riskier the prediction, as it were, right? Actually, if it is borne out, the better a test, it has actually been of the hypothesis in question right askew, that, when when you have two predictions of hypothesis, both of which inevitably follow from that hypothesis, and they do not follow from any other hypotheses. If you have a risky prediction, adding non risky prediction, you can test the non risky prediction, but it is not nearly as strong a test of the hypothesis and testing the risky prediction,

**Bret** 36:45

it reflects weakly positively on the hypothesis, whereas a deeply counterintuitive, totally unique prediction reflects strongly on it. But here's the point. Now we have a thing, that's not an explicitly scientific kind of prediction. Right? you predict the future, I predicted the future. Eric has predicted the future so many times, right. That the point is the real question is okay, how are you doing that? Right? Do you have a time machine? Or do you have a model that tells you what's really going on so that we're other people are caught off guard, you actually see it ahead of time? And if so, what else? Does your model say? That's the real question. And so I hate to be the one saying that because I'm among the people who have predicted this event would happen. But nonetheless, the important question then is alright, who got this one? Right? Shouldn't we be elevating them in the conversation? It's not just us. It's also Glenn Lowry. It's john McWhorter. it's

**Heather** 37:37

it's it's the it's those guys you already mentioned. grievin studies, Peter Bogosian. James Lindsay, Helen, pluck rose, lots of academics actually, you know, just you know, and across across a number of domains, who have increasingly been saying, Wait a minute, hold up. I mean, Jordan Peterson, obviously, maybe male probably most powerfully, yep. For effectively saying what would it have been 2016 2015, basically standing up against compelled speech. He wasn't standing up against trans people. He actually I know this to be true, as you do has nothing against trans people, real trans people who are real, but very, very, very, very rare. He was standing up against compelled speech, the idea that if you do not speak the way that we now speak, that we have now agreed to speak, you are dis you are breaking the law? No, no, we don't agree to that. We do not.

**Bret** 38:32

And he read correctly predicted that Bill C 16, would result in people having their liberty threatened if they did not use particular language. And this has now happened, a father has been instructed on what he has to call his own child in the confines of his own home. Right. So Jordan Peterson was right. That means Hey, Jordan Peterson now has credit in the bank with respect to his model, whatever it may be, right? Who doesn't have credit? Well, as recline blew it, as recline was busy rationalizing that a lot of the things we hear people saying they don't really mean and what we are to imagine that they mean something much more benign, and they're just venting, well, that doesn't turn out to be the case these things,

**Heather** 39:19

it probably is true for some of them again, right? But that but the fact that it's true for some of them, does not mean that the movement is an incredibly powerful, even if it starts as all movements well as a tiny niche thing over in some made up fields in the you know, made up fields, I want to say, you know, they claim to be in sort of humanities and social sciences, but they just they don't, they don't deserve that title. The humanities are real and necessary to a full and rich understanding of the human experience, the study of literature, the study of history, the study of philosophy, these are real, unnecessary fields When done, right and there are many ways to do them, right? But almost everything That ends in studies is not that.

**Bret** 40:02

So let's talk for a second about Shonda Prescott wine. I'm gonna assume it's Weinstein just

**Heather** 40:10

put her over with Harvey and be done with it.

**Bret** 40:14

Well, I won't say that. But I will say I don't want any association with her nonsense. But yeah. The, the fact is, we are not going to end up disbanding science. But this shutdown stem thing is. So again, a Martin Bailey would have two versions, right? You would have a strong version, and then a retreat position that was secure. Right? So the strong version, is there some massive problem with science, and we need to transform it into something new. And then the weak version is Can't you just shut down for a day to acknowledge that it hasn't all been hunky dory race wise in science in the past, right, that retreat position is not wrong, but but the point is,

**Heather** 41:02

it wouldn't be wrong if this was actually what was claiming,

**Bret** 41:04

right. But the idea what would it cost? If you were trying to corrupt Science Magazine, right now, Science magazine is already corrupt. But if you were trying to corrupt it to your own ends, and you wanted to get it to broadcast a hashtag of your choosing, right, that reflected some bias of yours, the price point would be astronomically high, right? Science would be very good at resisting anything that you tried to bring into their office and disguise as something lovely just to get them to broadcast it to enrich you. Okay, this movement has actually managed to get Science Magazine to broadcast shut down stem, right? Like, if you ask me, what would you have to do to get Science Magazine to broadcast a call to shut down stem? I would say it's impossible, but for the fact that at this moment, you have, I hate to say it, I know there are renegades among the millennials, we've taught them for years, but

**Heather** 42:08

almost all of our students were millennials, and almost all of them were actually amazing, and interested in truth and interested in discomfort if it allowed them a better model of the world. So yeah, they wouldn't. Easy, it's easy to paint a brush across entire generation, it is mostly the millennials, who are protesting on the streets and riding on the streets. But we know we know that there are a tremendous number of people who are born into that generation who are capable of simultaneously valuing right? rationality and compassion.

**Bret** 42:39

Well, on the one hand, the streets are everything. And on the other hand, there nothing Yeah, okay, what's going on on the streets is part of a larger plan. Right? So somebody, one of the people who I'm in dialogue with on Twitter responded to my question about Is there a name for this floating point variable term that allows you to, you know, move a slider around with respect? What do you mean by shutdown? Is that one day? Or is that permanently and completely right?

**Heather** 43:07

So you're looking for something that basically button Bailey is a binary, right, and you're looking for the continuous version of continuous

**Bret** 43:14

variable where a mob of 1000 people eat, a person can set the slider where they're comfortable with it, and they can all move together towards this goal. And then, you know, the amazing aggressive position wins in the end, because all of these people have advocated thinking they're advocating for their right level. Anyway, one of the people that I'm in dialogue with suggested something I'd never heard of before called above and below, which, there's not much evidence of this discussion. But there's a little it's apparently affiliated with communism, although I won't be surprised if it's more general than this, but it has to do

**Heather** 43:47

affiliated with the people who are identify as communists or are people who are fighting communism

**Bret** 43:51

know, that identify with communism, and you know, it has to do with basically using the creating a mob to create the impression of demand for some kind of change. And then using that impression of a mob that is demanding change, to get elected officials and things to capitulate to the public, right? It's sort of like a pseudo populace thing. I mean, the public if you told the public Oh, no, actually, we're really interested in shutting down science. You know, they'd look at you like you were crazy. Yeah, I mean, it is crazy. Yeah, some some account with zero followers, which could be a sock puppet, or it could be somebody who's afraid and so has made a new account, tweeted something like how ironic to broadcast hashtag shut down stem from your super sophisticated cell phone. Yeah, right. I mean, it is pretty ironic. But in any case, we've got we've got a power grab, that has a game theoretic mechanism for using whatever power it has to marshal more and more force. The important thing is is not the street, the street is like a demonstration of the amount of energy and the amount of energy is used to take institutions and topple them from within. So I think the real story which we are not seeing while we are paying attention to the street is inside of every single institution of a certain size, there is a mirror of what's going on in the street taking place. The New York Times, we know what's happening at the New York Times, Barry Weiss has talked about it.

**Heather** 45:30

Well, but I mean, we've also now seen, you know, they've, the, the firings have begun the fires and I don't, I don't have it, I won't be able to pull it up. So I'm going to, I'm going to paraphrase. But there is a something from the new editor in to boy, I didn't pull this up, I don't know if it's the editor in chief has been replaced, as well as the new the editor of the editorial section, or just the editorial section. One of the new editors has basically said to his entire staff, if you see anything, anything at all, that strikes you is not quite fitting with what we're trying to do here, the new york times you've let me know, it's, if you see something, say something, if you see something, say something, and it is, you know, it is, again, simultaneously like Please, I'm on the right side, please don't hurt me. But it's it's encouraging. It's encouraging people to start reporting out on their neighbors, and, and their family members are here and just it, we know where this goes from here.

**Bret** 46:32

We know where this goes. But imagine that you could peer into these institutions. Imagine that you were at Science Magazine. Now, we don't know anything about what happened in Science Magazine, other than something happened that caused Science Magazine to broadcast shut down stem, and to stop doing anything else for the day, right? We know that the movement, when you talk to it directly, is very clear on the fact that it's not that they want to reform stem, they actually find stem to be their enemy. And we can infer why that is. So imagine the millennials, right? We're Gen X. Gen X is a tiny generation. It is now sort of upper echelon in these institutions, right, just by virtue of seniority.

**Heather** 47:18

But the boomers are still more senior, but they're more senior, but

**Bret** 47:21

they're also pretty old. Right? And so anyway, there's a lot of there's a lot of Gen X at the top, but it's not very large in numbers.

**Heather** 47:29

Yeah, I actually I actually don't think that Gen X is yet heading up admins. I think it's still boomers who are heading up universities and colleges and and mainstream media and such.

**Bret** 47:39

Well, I would say at the very top anyway, it's an interesting question. And it's, you know, it's an empirical question. Yep. But in any case, what you do have is the rank and file in these institutions is millennial, there are a lot of them, they are rightly angry, they've been handed a bad deal, terrible deal. Terrible deal. So there's a lot of interest in change. Not much sophistication, I would say about what change ought to look like. So it's really just pent up energy.

**Heather** 48:05

Well, they had crap education. At some level, they didn't eat this. Just Just to return to the final point that I made in those 14 points I made a couple of livestreams ago, they've just as you said, they've been handed a terrible deal. Most of them are dead, they had terrible education, they have no chance of owning property, they have terrible health care. They've mostly been, you know, on legal pharmaceuticals for so much their lives. They don't even know how to order their own moods and their own psychologies or interpret those of others. And they're living online. And, of course, they're confused. And of course, they're angry. Well, of course, they're angry, they're good reason to be angry, they're

**Bret** 48:40

angry, and a movement outdoors that is formally about the murder of a black man, but is actually quite obviously about a demand for change has been co opted by people who are selling a particular phony story about what's wrong and what to do about it. But anyway, there's a lot of fervor for just signing on because hey, change is good. If things suck, change is good. Now, that's not true change. I mean, you know, the problem a lot of if you're now listening to us, because we correctly predicted what was going to happen, then our current conversation is, well, we told you this look Maoist, now project that thing to the scale of nations, and you know why this is preoccupying us. But inside of science, right, some battle presumably took place where a bunch of people who have behind them as they approach the question of whether or not to shut down one of the premier science journals for the day and turn it into a megaphone for the George floor protests, right? They have images on every screen of violent unrest in cities across the nation and increasingly across the world. Right. So that's Seems like a reason to listen. And for the kind of cowards who ended up in administrative positions in large institutions, and frankly, it's a lot of cowards,

**Heather** 50:08

right? tirely. We've known a few non cowardly administrators. But am I going to be first against the wall? Well, I'm on evergreen. One of them was, yep. before us. He was gotten rid of first Michael Zimmerman. Indeed, Michael

**Bret** 50:20

Zimmerman, who was the very courageous, very courageous Provost was shoved out by George bridges before the madness unfolded. And he, he would have been in opposition to it all the way along. So they got rid of him for the same reason they got rid of us. So anyway, the courageous people are going to get tossed out, that's just what happens. And then the institutions are going to topple into the hands of this thing, right? Where does Shonda Prescott Weinstein end up? After physics has been brought to its knees? I think she's one of our new top physicists. Why? Because there aren't enough black physicists, which is probably true,

**Heather** 50:59

right? You know, and you say this, we say this, I at least have no idea what the value what the rigor of her science is, I have no idea. But she is clearly one effect of this will be to, to win in a system that is supposed to be about merit, but in which she will win based on her lineage, or the color of her skin. This is the kind of science that we had in the 19th century. Yep. It's a different lineage that's winning now, but it is exactly what was going on then. And it is not legitimate, it is not okay. So

**Bret** 51:35

at some level, I worry about this, repeating it so much that it gets lost. But I've been saying from the beginning, that part of the problem here is that there are two movements fused together, there are people who earnestly want change in a realm where it is necessary, who would love to end oppression. And then there is a cynical, self interested movement that wants to turn the tables of oppression, and it doesn't turn the tables of oppression on people who are actually oppressing. It takes these very crude demographic measures of whether or not you've benefited from or paid the price of some kind of historical oppression. And then it just simply rank orders our new role in the world. And it's preposterous, it's incoherent, it's dangerous, it functions like a cult. But the power, I think the problem is the power of this perspective, is in no way correlated with the accuracy of the portrayal. So you have something that is a fairy tale that is marching forward on the basis as if it was the literal truth, and it is going to line us up against the wall, it is going to topple the institution's, suddenly, it is going to be understandable that, you know, the people at Science Magazine, the people that nature, the people of the triple as all of the people who have broadcast shut down stem are going to discover what that actually means too late to do anything about it. So

**Heather** 53:05

this seems, a decent moment, to introduce just a few short quotes from Orwell's book 1984. I don't think actually, and we've talked about this elsewhere, that we are mostly living in a 1984 moment, this looks more, Huxley's, it looks more like Brave New World. But both Orwell and Huxley had their finger on the pulse of what, what authoritarian and totalitarian movements look like. I just think that Brave New World is a little bit more accurate in its predictions of what the world is that we're actually moving towards. But here's from 1984, which is published first in 1949. Quote, for after all, how do we know that to and to make for or that the force of gravity works, or that the past is unchangeable? If both the past and the external world exists only in the mind, and if the mind itself is controllable? What then? So that's predicting post modernism. Next quote from Orwell, every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book has been rewritten. Every statue and street and building has been renamed, every date has altered in the process, and that process is continuing day by day and minute by minute, history has stopped. And finally, another quote from 1984. The party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others we are interested solely in power, pure power, what pure power means you will understand presently, we are different from the oligarchies of the past, and that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian communists came very close to us and their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives. they pretended perhaps they even believed that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just around the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever sees his power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution. One makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution, the object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. Now you begin to understand me in 1949, that's 71 years ago,

**Bret** 55:25

71 years ago, yeah. And he really needed to as reclined to explain why he was overreacting, I guess. Yeah. Yeah. It's, it's amazing. And you know, you're right. I hadn't thought about it till now. But Orwell does predict post modernism, that's what Newspeak is, right? It's a completely nonsensical language that inverts reality.

**Heather** 55:49

And I mean, so this is maybe not nearly as interesting in light of what Orwell said. But there was an insane piece that came out. Today, yesterday, in the independent, which has had its headline change, but the original headline was, so this is about the the kerfuffle, in which JK Rowling comes out with the insane stance that sex is real, and that men and women are different. And of course, all of her. So many people are falling all over themselves again, to say don't hurt me, don't hurt me. Of course, I deny biological reality. So

**Bret** 56:30

can I just point out if you don't think sex is real, you're doing it wrong? I think you've used that before. Damn, that's embarrassing. Yeah. All right,

**Heather** 56:38

maybe maybe not here. Maybe not. You've just called

**Bret** 56:41

me out, though. Great, sorry. My family has gone full work there now outing what I've said at the dinner table.

**Heather** 56:50

That's woke. Wow. Okay. So, you know, there's, there's, again, we will talk at some point about the amazing and heroic JK Rowling and what is going on with regards to the responses to her. But one of them is this headline from the independent, the rich, the original headline before it got changed. What the white supremacist roots of biological sex reveal about today is transphobic feminism. You know, what can you do? Okay, yeah, it's just, they're just putting their, you know, their, their craziest ideas next to the new movement that no one who hasn't been through this really seems to be able to turn away from. And, you know, we're saying, you need to be not a racist, and you need to be anti racist, and you also need to reject this, you need to and rejecting it means that you will probably be called a racist. And that has become, in the 21st century, one of the scariest things to be called, and until you were called a racist, and until I was called a racist, and the reasons for us being called racist are a matter of public record. I've published the letter that I wrote, which was, which was this that you guys are not seeking to end oppression, you're seeking to turn the tables of oppression? Before before you go through that particular looking glass? It seems like it can't be survivable, right, that you cannot possibly survive someone calling you a racist, but the fact is, someone saying that word about you, or Nazi or transphobic or, you know, whatever number of these ridiculous epithets are being used now, it feels like it's unrecoverable. And like you, you won't ever be able to recover from it. But the fact is that if it's just wrong, assuming you're not, as the vast majority of people aren't racist, or Nazi or transphobic, or any of this other ridiculousness, then you do survive and you emerge going that didn't kill me being being called that did not turn out to do the damage that they thought it would do.

**Bret** 58:55

I have never been less happy to disagree with you than I am right now. Okay. I disagree with you. I think that perspective is now out of date as of a couple of weeks ago.

**Heather** 59:11

Okay, so you think it was true when we were going through what we went through but it's not true now? Well, I

**Bret** 59:15

think there was a way in which it was true I don't think it was safe but I think there was a way to to jump but I think what we are now seeing is happening at a scale and with the ferocity that we are now back in a landscape where the hazard of saying what's true is high and that's that's putting people in a predicament where they're going to have to make a real choice it's not simple

**Heather** 59:42

but the but there's no winning if you if you lie, right if you if you do this like Please don't hurt may or I'm going to do everything I can to signal how woke I am. It's not like they won't come for you anyway, right there. Well, there's nothing you can do to appease the mob. There's nothing that you can do that sufficient and the bigger your profile, the more True that is I'm

**Bret** 1:00:00

not I'm not arguing that this is a difficult choice. I mean, in fact, I was in dialogue with Robbie George yesterday. And we were both remarking on the fact that people see standing up to the mob as courageous, but that actually there are certain ways that you could be wired, that it's just there isn't a choice, right? And I feel this way. For me for sure. It was like people say, I'm so glad you you stood up and you didn't kowtow to the mob. And it was like, well, I can't I so can't relate to what that would have been like that it's, you know, it was automatic. But But what I would say is, look, you are going to be offered a choice, whether you're going to stand up, or whether you're going to become complicit with and then part of this mom. And the problem is, I can't say that you will end up winning, if you say the right thing. This is a frightening moment, we are watching something with revolutionary potential, and it's telling us what it wants. And it's a frightening redo of some of the worst episodes in history. What I can say is if you do the right thing, you will definitely feel better about it. And although the number of people who will interact with you who will talk to you may shrink dramatically. And the vileness of things that are said to you and about you may go up, you will join the ranks of the courageous and the intelligent people who have both of those characteristics are going to end up separated from everybody else, by the willingness or the necessity to stand up and say what's true in the face of this nonsense, so

**Heather** 1:01:45

and they won't think like you in every other way. And that's important and good. But the number of people who we now know, and we can now see and who are now known to us, in the wake of what happened at evergreen three years ago, who are both intelligent and courageous, and who hold no truck with this nonsense is large.

**Bret** 1:02:07

Yeah, I, I'm concerned a little bit I've seen people decry the idea of the right side of history as if there's something defective about that claim, as if it's cultish to even imagine that such a thing exists. I regard this as nonsense, there is a right side to history, it is not always obvious to those in engaged in its unfolding which side the right side is. And

**Heather** 1:02:29

that's not to say that every interaction between two groups has a right side, right? You're not you're not making that claim.

**Bret** 1:02:34

Of course not. But there are times when they're just simply the right side. And we all know what some of them are. But the point is, what would you do? You know, it's very easy to look at the Nazis and know what the right side of history was no one imagines

**Heather** 1:02:45

they remember the German citizenry, right? No one behaved that way, of course.

**Bret** 1:02:49

But the point is to say, look, there was a right side, and it was right then, and it's right now and it will be right forever. And so the question is, what how do you restructure yourself so that when that moment comes, you'll be on the right side? That's a valid question. Even if you can't say I'm in possession of the knowledge of which one, the right side is when something important happens. But you do want to be on the right side of history. And in this case, if you are paying attention, I believe it is clear which the right side of history is and the thing that is so heartbreaking, is it is not obvious, that's going to be the winning side here. That's the question we can ask you join us on the right side of history, it's clear enough, we cannot say join us on the winning side of history, because frankly, the people on the right side of history at the moment, are pretty scared at what they're seeing. So this is a choice for individuals. And I can say I have no respect for the individual who has a choice who has enough security to stand up who doesn't do it. That person is complicit, and they are externalizing harm onto innocent other people. If you think you're helping black people by shutting down stem, you have not understood what's going on. Science is the key to avoiding bias. It is the key to escaping oppression, it is the key to discovering what it is about our system that is systematically biased and eliminating it. So you are doing black people no favor by challenging that mechanism. The question is, do you have the intelligence to see where we are? And do you have the fortitude to stand up to this nonsense and say, No, I won't be party to it. And if you do, then welcome. And all I can say is we will do our best to fight to turn the situation around. Let's hope we win our day. All right. We know we have reached an hour. There is of course a ton more to say I know you had a great deal more that you wanted to say and I did too, but there are

**Heather** 1:04:54

there are more live streams in the future.

**Bret** 1:04:58

So what we will do now is We will take a 15 minute break. We will return to the link that will be in the description of this video. We will answer your super chat questions. And I guess that's it in the meantime like, subscribe, comment and stay strong.