Bret and Heather 50th DarkHorse Podcast Livestream\_ Stop Bei...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:08

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast live stream number 51. It's number 50. It is no it's number 50. I am Brett Weinstein, I am sitting with the lovely Dr. Heather hying. And we have a another, another instantiation of the Dark Horse podcast in store for you. We do indeed with caps lurking in the background. Yeah.

**Heather** 00:28

And just want to mention that you released yesterday, your conversation with Greg lukianoff. I believe that was yesterday. Also an excellent conversation.

**Bret** 00:37

Yes, people should check that out. It's a great conversation, Greg and I had a really good time. for reasons that are not worth going into it got released late at night, which I think caused a hiccup in the algorithm. So people may not be seeing that it's out. But anyway, take a look on the Dark Horse channel you will find it.

**Heather** 00:54

Yeah. So this week, I would like to spend a lot of time talking. responding in effect to this excellent new book by Rodriguez live not by lies, prompted by my reading an excerpt from the social soldier needs an essay by the same name last week, which at the time, I did not know that Dreyer had recently released this book, named for this alternates essay, and someone in our super chat questions last week, pointed me to it. I bought the book, I've read it. And it's excellent. It deserves a full throated defense and discussion. And I think we're going to frame much of what we're going to do today around around that. That said, you have not read it. I have I have shared with you some of it. And what I'd like to do doesn't require that you've read it so long as you trust that I'm not misrepresenting what he's doing in the book, I have

**Bret** 01:48

been in contact with the author and I have paid attention to some of his interview material. So I am well aware of his direction, if not the precise details.

**Heather** 01:59

Yeah. So before that, though, I'd like to start with a brief reading a brief excerpt from another excellent piece of writing that that actually came out this week and that we both read this week, which is Barry weiss's new essay in tablet magazine stop being shocked, in which she argues much as Dreyer does in his book, I'll be at from a different perspective, that American liberalism is at risk. So Zack, if you would just share my my site here for a moment. This is this is the piece came out a couple of days ago. And I'm just going to read a bit starting here. To understand the enormity of the change right now living through take a moment to understand America, as the overwhelming majority of its Jews believed it was and perhaps as we always assumed it would be, it was liberal, not liberal in the narrow partisan sense, but liberal in the most capacious and distinctly American sense of that word, the belief that everyone is equal, because everyone is created in the image of God, the belief in the sacredness of the individual over the group with the tribe, the belief that the rule of law and equality under that law is the foundation of a free society. The belief that due process and the presumption of innocence are good and that mob violence is bad. The belief that pluralism is a source of our strength, that tolerance is a reason for pride, and that liberty of thought, faith and speech are the bedrocks of democracy. The liberal worldview was one that recognized that there were things indeed the most important things in life that were located outside of the realm of politics, friendships, art, music, family, love. This was a world in which Antonin Scalia and Ruth Bader Ginsburg could be close friends, because as Scalia once said, some things are more important than votes. Crucially, this liberalism relied on the view that the Enlightenment tools of reason, and the scientific method might have been designed by dead white guys, but they belonged to everyone, and they were the best tools for human progress that have ever been devised. Racism was evil because it contradicted the foundations of this worldview, since it judged people not based on the content of their character, but on the color of their skin. And while America's founders were guilty of undeniable hypocrisy, their own moral failings did not invalidate their transformational project. The founding documents were not evil to the core, but magnificent as Martin Luther King Jr. Put it because they were, quote, a promissory note to which every American was to fall air. In other words, the founders themselves planted the seeds of slavery's destruction. And our second founding fathers, abolitionists like Frederick Douglass made it so America would never be perfect, but we could always strive toward building a more perfect union. I didn't even know that this world you had a name because it was baked into everything I came into contact with very wise rights, my parents worldviews. The schools they sent me to the synagogues, we attended the magazines and newspapers we read and so on. I was among many millions of Americans cosseted by these ideals since world war two American intellectual and cultural life has been produced and protected by a set of institutions, universities, new newspapers, magazines, record companies, professional associations, labor unions, cultural venues, publishing houses, Hollywood studios, think tanks, historical museums, art museums that align broadly with those principles. As such, they had incredible power, power that demanded respect because they held up the liberal order. No longer American liberalism is under siege, there was a new ideology vying to replace it. may have my screen back, Zack, thank you. So earlier in the essay, just one more very brief quote from Barry, she says very wise, the confusion and there seems to be a good deal of it these days is among American Jews who think that by submitting to everchanging loyalty tests, they can somehow maintain the old status quo and their place inside of it. I share that first not merely because it is, as we have come to expect from Barry, both insightful and incisive in terms of its ideas, but also beautiful and careful writing. But also because you might imagine if you had fallen prey to the modern ideology, that someone like Barry, who was raised, who was raised, not particularly secularly, right, that she is she is Jewish, and she is proud of her Judaism. And Rod drear, who is unapologetically Christian. And indeed, the subtitle of his book, live not by lies, is a manual for Christian dissidents. That Barry, and Rod might not have much in common. But of course they do. And we do. And Dreyer has referred to, not just the two of us, Brett, but also Barry Weiss and James Lindsay as the secular liberals with whom he finds himself and ally ship. And this is a kind of ally ship that is that is honorable, and real and important, particularly right now.

**Bret** 06:57

So I want to place this in a little bit of context, maybe a couple of different kinds of contexts. First of all, I should say the essay is excellent and well worth a complete read. It is very much from a Jewish perspective. And I want to point out why this is so resonant. So Barry's thesis in her most recent book is effectively that when the center doesn't hold, it collapses on Jews that this is the explanation for many of the atrocities that history has seen. And so in effect, she is raising the alarm that the center is collapsing. And we can talk and we have talked over the last 50 episodes and elsewhere about why the center is collapsing. In effect, it is being punished out of existence by fringes on both sides. But nonetheless, the recognition that there is a kind of paralysis, which I must say I am seeing also in many of the sort of private discussions that we are party to these days where there's so much to be seen in the breaking apart of this agreement in the center. And I don't mean centrism, but this agreement about the basic principles that we should collectively defend that there is a temptation to simply catalog and Marvel and gawk at all of the various examples of things going wrong rather than to Well, maybe I shouldn't say that people do extrapolate to what this means about where we are headed collectively. But there is no agreement about what the details of that are like labeled to look like and what we ought to do about it. So we see people fleeing cities, for example. But there's no consensus about how much of this remains abstract how much this could turn into, you know, an atrocity on our own shores.

**Heather** 08:51

And this is part of why I find it you know, that we are going to talk about three of the things that I pulled from driers book that we have talked about separately, but that he really puts front and center that are ways that those of us who are maybe dissident Christians, or Jews watching the center collapse or secular liberals or you know, some combination of of those or or outside of any of those groups. And yet watching this, this what drayer calls a soft totalitarianism or therapeutic totalitarianism that we need to return to some principles that we will talk about here of the value of family, the value of privacy and the value of community and how is it that we can actually recover and, and reinvigorate our own our own selves, above and beyond the level of the individual, to return ourselves to family privacy and community?

**Bret** 09:53

right and so the orientation to those things which strike people in some way As conservative isn't is also an indicator of the reason for the Alliance, which I think once you spot it is all you know, it's very intuitive between, for example, Christians and Jews. Now, I hope we will not forget at some point to take the visible alliance that is emerging here, if it's even an alliance, if that's even the right terminology for it, and place it in an evolutionary context, because I do think there's something important to be said about whether or not you know, obviously, Jews and Christians are distinct. On the other hand, Judeo Christianity is something and so putting that in evolutionary context probably makes a lot of sense,

**Heather** 10:44

just just at its most simplest level, Christianity emerges from Judaism,

**Bret** 10:50

right. And so, you know, if you apply the tools of phylogenetic systematics in a place where admittedly, not all of the assumptions are perfectly met, but they're met well enough that we can justify it, at least at the level of a very strong analogy. It would be like a large clade of creatures emerging from a comparatively small clade of creatures, which, of course, is something that happened many times in history. So Christianity is in some sense, a form of Judaism, and Protestantism as a form of Christianity and so forth. But then there is also this other fact, which is that many of the belief structures that are innovated in Christianity have moved culturally into Judaism. And so in some sense, Christians are phylogenetically Jewish, and Jews are medically Christians, which is, you know, once once you spot the implications of that the whole thing makes a lot more sense. Yeah.

**Heather** 11:52

And so the secular liberalism, so named by Drea, her, which we will return to, is, in some ways formalized, it's formalized across many, many faiths. But we in the West, I think, are most familiar with it in Christianity, and it has become all of our birthrights right, it is it is, it is as as Barry Weiss writes in the essay from which I read and as Dreyer writes in this book, something that that we are all we are all born to, and most of us I think have expected would continue. And so you know, Dreyer is sounding the alarm, saying people who actually lived under totalitarian regimes, which is, you know, to say, in Eastern Europe, mostly, not very long ago, are seeing what is happening in the West right now and saying, no, this doesn't look exactly like history. But yes, there are too many things that are familiar, such that anyone who is not concerned right now is blind, either willfully or not. So I think it does weren't saying as well, since we're talking about the, the sort of phylogenetic relationship between Christianity and Judaism and the cultural, effectively the cultural borrowing of some of the so called liberal ideals from from the teachings of Jesus, by the vast majority of people who call themselves secular liberals, which includes, I think, a, you know, a majority of Jews, at least in America, that you and I, to some degree come from these two different traditions as well. All right, that you maybe you can speak in, you know, a couple of sentences about the home that you were raised in, but I was raised mostly without religion. But my father was a lapsed Catholic, who not as it turns out on his deathbed, but at one point when we thought he might not come out of open heart surgery did ask actually to see a priest and and talk to him which, which, as far as we know, he hadn't done for, you know, decades. And so he a man of science, a man of reason, a man who prized enlightenment values, was, in some ways, a man of faith as well. And although he took me into a church, I believe, once and only once to see the Midnight Mass, one Christmas Eve. And so, you know, never, never took to me the faith that he was raised with on a, you know, on a farm in northeastern Iowa, and in the 40s and 50s. That was part of part of how he was, how he informed his own view and, and my mother also emerges from a Christian tradition, although had had no was not raised with any faith herself, and they did not raise me with any. And

**Bret** 14:43

so for my part, I was raised in a home that was decidedly secular, both my parents are Jewish, but it was, you know, there were ceremonial observance, but nothing based on faith, I would say. And that went back, you know, a couple generations on my mom's side. But my best friend growing up actually was in a Jewish Home that was observant and kept kosher. And I think believing. And so anyway, I got exposure to it that way, among others. So anyway, I

**Heather** 15:21

think actually be before you go on. I don't, there's so many places that we could go today. And there's a lot that I do want to get to. And we may just be, we may just end up going longer than than we normally do. But one of the things I started doing in thinking about this book and Barry's essay, and really everything that's going on in the world for depending on how you count, you know, decades now was how is it that people end up resisting the the ideology, the what many of us are seeing as a creeping totalitarianism. And I was thinking, for instance of myself, you know, happened, I don't know, I don't remember how I ended up for instance, in a class on sultanates, and Nkunda, my first quarter in college as a literature major, but how lovely for me that I did. And, and, you know, and then that I pursued the writings of Jorge Luis Suarez, who you know, very different kind of guy, but you know, also brought just ideas from a completely different world that was informed by different life experiences than anyone I had ever met. Similarly, you know, you you can talk about, you know, your best friend growing up having been being being in quite a religious family, several, many of my friends growing up were Jewish as, as you know, and my mother's dearest friend, and for a period business partner was Jewish as well and, and the times that we had her house, and the ability for me to learn from her, her mother, who had come over from Poland, actually, who had who had fled to learn how to make lockers, for instance. And you know, I was sort of immersed in the stew of secular Judaism in a way, but then also surrounded by a tremendous number of gay men who were the artistic friends of my mother and her dearest friend, during the emerging AIDS crisis, as they didn't know what was happening, and they were watching their friends die. And so how what, how do all of those different experiences inform a person such that they grow up? And as an ideology shows, and says, follow me? Follow me? Or you're a bad person? What is it? What what all? Is it in a person's experiences that allow them to say, I'm not a bad person, and actually following you might send me down a path that could turn me into one.

**Bret** 17:46

So I want to connect a couple things up here. Yeah, one, there's something interesting in the fact that even now, I couldn't tell you whether or not the family that I had so much contact with growing up was had any faith in the supernatural, I assume there was some but there is something to be said, for on the Jewish side of the equation. It is very frequent for Jews to have a personal and I think complex relationship with the idea of faith that can go up through having no faith in the supernatural whatsoever, and still being observant. And so over time, I've come to understand, you know, if we take Barry's perspective, for example, at the center has to hold in order for Jews to have a place in most societies, that there is a, an anti fragility to Jews, because, frankly, they've faced so many of these different catastrophes. And I would say, as an evolutionary biologist, it's a little bit surprising that we haven't gone extinct, right? And that it has to do with certain kinds of wisdom about how to endure these things, often not very well, but simply to persist through an era in which the center has not held. And so one of the things, you know, on the Christian side, it's very frequent, that as people lose their faith, they also lose their tradition. And so one of the things that I think, maybe to be learned from the Jewish side is that there's a reason not to do that even at the point that something challenges faith that there is, you know, it's Chesterton's fence all over the place there are all of these protective traditions that may not be straightforward in the way that they protect In other words, you know, metaphorical truth may be offering some kind of immunity.

**Heather** 19:39

And we speak actually we invoke in the book that we are writing trusted them as gods, you know, abandon them at your peril. How do you know what all they are doing for you? And you know, we say this is people without faith.

**Bret** 19:51

Yep. So I think we are seeing and drear you know, is pointing to it. And Barry is in her own way pointing to it as well that it is not at all surprising that on you know if it's on the Christian side maybe it's almost exclusively people who have retained the kind of faith because they've also retained the traditions that has put a break on runaway liberalism and that doesn't mean ambitious liberalism. I think ambition, ambitious liberalism created the West. But runaway liberalism is very dangerous. And we've seen it drive societies into the ground before so there's a question about whether that's where we're headed, but to see people come from religious traditions of different kinds and begin to sound the alarm from different places and create alliances is it's at least hopeful

**Heather** 20:43

Yeah, no, I think it is exactly that. And that's that hope is part of why I wanted to start with with Barry weiss's essay before moving into a more expensive extensive discussion of Dreyer's book. So want to read just up just a page really, from the very beginning. And I am going to almost certainly butcher every name in here from Eastern Europe because I don't know. I don't know how to pronounce with the accents and I couldn't seem to find it almost anywhere on the web. So I think you should

**Bret** 21:17

just declare a kind of narrow postmodernism surrounding pronunciation that will protect you. Yeah,

**Heather** 21:22

I used to do this with regard to Latin names of organisms, when students would say how is it pronounced and you know, there are rules and I know some of them and I would tell them and then I would say, really, if you if you don't know and you're giving your presentation, you say it with some authority and, and you just be consistent. What you don't want to do is keep on moving back and forth between pronunciations

**Bret** 21:41

that is a terrible rule, but okay, I accept it.

**Heather** 21:44

So, Colaco Vic, I don't I don't know if that's the the name. The pronunciation chapter one of driers book, live not by lives is called calaca Vic the Prophet, sometimes three or writes, a stranger who sees deeper and farther than the crowd appears to warn of trouble coming. These stories often end with people disbelieving the profit and suffering for their blindness. here though, is a tale about a people who heard the prophets warnings did as he advised and were ready when the crisis struck. In 1943, a Jesuit priest and anti fascist activists named Thomas love, la Han, fled his native Croatia one step ahead of the Gestapo and settled in Czechoslovakia. To conceal himself from the Nazis. He assumed his Slovak mother's name calaca Vic, and took up a teaching position in Bratislava, the capital of the Slovak region, which would become an independent vassal state of Hitler. The priest 37 years old, with a thick shock of prematurely white hair had spent some of his it spent some of his priestly training studying the Soviet Union. He believed the defeat of Nazi totalitarianism would occasioned a great conflict between Soviet totalitarianism and the liberal ups and the liberal.

**Heather** 22:59

He believed the defeat of Nazi totalitarianism would occasion a great conflict between Soviet totalitarianism and the liberal democratic West. Though Father kolok avec worried about the threats to Christian life and witnessed from the rich materialistic West, he was far more concerned about the dangers of communism, which he correctly saw as an imperialistic ideology. By the time by the time father clock avec reached Bratislava, it was clear that the Red Army would defeat the Germans in the east. In fact, in 1944, the Czech government in exile, which also represented Slovaks, who refused to accept the nominally independent Slovak state, made a formal agreement with Stalin guaranteeing that after driving the Nazis out, the Soviets would give the United Nation its freedom. Because he knew how the Soviets thought Father calaca, Peck knew this was a lie. He warned Slovak Catholics that when the war ended, Czechoslovakia would fall to the rule of a Soviet puppet government. He dedicated himself to preparing them for persecution. drear then tells the story of how he Father kolok avec truly did create a number of small communities who created among other things, Sam is not you know, dissident literature published on tiny presses that were hidden from the authorities. And, and thus kept not just faith alive, but truth and an understanding of underlining lying realities and love and beauty as well. And one reason I want to share just that just that little bit from the book, is to point out that this is a man named clock Avik, who was an anti fascist in the I don't know if that was the original meaning of the term if that was when the idea was was first formulated, I think it was, but I'm not totally sure. But contrast that with the people who are now calling themselves anti fascists. It's not the same. It's not the same descent it's not the same resistance and we're We're going to get to why I think why we think some of the confusion exists. But, you know, please what, you know, we've heard from some people who really actually I think are legitimately confused, because the resistance at the moment has named itself and Tifa. And it's not the only part of the resistance that is in the streets and rioting and such. But being able to name yourself something that aligns with an historically important and uplifting and truth seeking group does not make you that thing. And yet people are being fooled.

**Bret** 25:38

Yeah, I think, you know, it occurs to me in this moment, I hope this works. That the tell with respect to antiva is that it is anarchist. Right? There's nothing about anti fascism in the literal sense that should travel with anarchism, right? In fact, I would argue this is in effect, a non sequitur. Right. And that, you know, that anarchism has put on the cloak of anti fascism in order that it can engage in destructive behavior and get away with it is not surprising, right? When you need to have some sort of a defense. And in fact, anarchism was a niche fringe idea that always lurked at some, you know, tiny, insignificant level in the Pacific Northwest, and then it's suddenly took up anti racism and anti fascism as those things became fashionable. Okay, it's obvious what the ploy is. And we have an obligation not to listen to it, right?

**Heather** 26:44

Yes, we do. Yes. Is that Yeah, I've

**Bret** 26:48

got that's effectively

**Heather** 26:49

Yeah, we absolutely do. And I think you know, that wraps into driers framing of I've already mentioned a soft totalitarianism, or also a therapeutic totalitarianism, in which, in his language hatred of dissenters from this utopian ideology comes in the guise of helping and healing. How could you resist us? We're just trying to help, or how could you resist us what we are doing is fighting a history of oppression. And therefore if you resist us, you approve of the oppression and you yourself are an oppression an oppressor. It's a not even a very clever, sophisticated sleight of hand sort of linguistic trick. And yet, yet many are fooled in part because being called racist, or sexist, or any of the things that people are now being called with, with wild abandon, is feels like such a terrible fate, that people who have not yet unjustly been called those things cannot imagine how they could possibly survive being on the other side of it. And yet, and yet you do, and if you simply know yourself, and have good people around you, who know you who also know yourself well enough to know that those slurs are not true, you know, only survive it, but it reveals a kind of anti fragility that you have upon being called these things, I believe.

**Bret** 28:12

Yeah, it's it's, you know, I think the pattern is pretty clear, which is you are raised to the extent if we grant liberalism, the full breadth of the honorable version, you are raised to understand the bigotry that you have overcome, right? sexism is bad, racism is bad, fascism is bad. But the problem is that these terms are inherently perfectly elastic. That is to say they can be stretched right down to the border of what can be measured, you can be zero. And in fact, we see this in Kennedy's absurd definition of anti racism is that it rules out that there's any gap, you know, where you can just simply be non racist, you're either racist or you're fully active on this other side. So, you know, it has been stretched to the point that the mind that understands I do not want to be a racist is then sort of susceptible to this command. Oh, here's how you avoid being a racist, you become an anti racist. What's an anti racist? Well, here's a list of things you would have to do, right? Yes. So yes, that elastics that elastic nature of the definitions, you know, is of course, a Kafka trap is, as we've mentioned, I do want to ask you, though, this term, soft totalitarianism, I have a feeling that we are about to, at a societal level, end up in a discussion over whether or not this totalitarianism that we are seeing is soft, whether it is just early, whether we are headed down some different road than we've seen, clearly some of the details are different. Well, I

**Heather** 29:49

think part of part of the argument is it is not state driven. And so it comes in looking quite different, and it comes in looking like the exhortations of your colleagues at work, or your children's teachers, or just neighbors. And of course, we know from history that some of the most effective totalitarian regimes have used the young and have used the ability to turn people against their own family members, against, against entire societies and certainly against against dissenters. But that this, this is happening, at least at this point, absent anything emerging from the state, in fact, you know, there there, there are many in you know, and you know, everyone knows that they exist. But you know, there are many among acquaintances and friends of ours even who do think that fascism is coming. And it's and it's Trump, right, that that's the that is the big threat to democracy, and the Republic at this point. And it is, it is certainly true that we are no fan of, of the way that Trump took power, and the kinds of ways that he played people off one another, that were indeed destructive of relationship and discourse. And, and you know, and for the most part, you know, we're just we're not Republicans, and so mostly don't agree with what his stated policies are, although there have been exceptions, as we've talked about, on this podcast. But a we are on the left, and so critiquing our own is one of the things that we think is is critical. But also it is true that we see the threat that is emerging on and really, depending on how you count emerging or decades old now, well, coming to fever pitch now, on university campuses, in corporate boardrooms, in cubicles, in the media, in the arts, you know, across every domain that you can imagine, that is nominally on the left as a bigger threat to democracy and the Republic, then, you know, frankly, a few well armed Kooks on the right.

**Bret** 32:12

Alright, so I still want to delve further here because the idea that soft totalitarianism might be defined by non state totalitarianism, I believe there's something important about this. On the other hand, I can't look away from the fact that I regard the state as feeble and parasitized, the corruption of the American governmental structure is one in which corporate forces effectively took it over. So it's not a strong governing force, what governs our lives most directly, is whether or not, you know, Twitter finds a perspective so abhorrent that it's going to shut it down. So in some sense, if you came at this as a biologist, or an anthropologist, and you said, governance is that which governs right, rather than governance is the thing with the built buildings that have the columns, right? If governance is the thing that governs, then governance has changed. And this is moving through the governance structure, right. And so

**Heather** 33:24

to play devil's advocate here for a moment, I could see people arguing that you are changing the definition of governance, just as the definition of racism, sexism, and fascism has been changed by people on the other side.

**Bret** 33:38

Well, I'm trying not to and as you know, I don't I don't

**Heather** 33:41

think that critique is fair. But I'd like to hear you defend.

**Bret** 33:44

I mean, let's put it this way. I'm sorting it out in real time. So I want to know that I'm not doing that also.

**Heather** 33:50

So but you I think you said governance, governance is that which govern governance is that which governance which seems both tautological and therefore hard to escape, as must be a definition that is at least true, even if it's not sufficient. No, I

**Bret** 34:03

would say, you know, let's take the British monarchy, okay. The British monarchy does not govern. Right. it governs in as much as it manages to fend off taxation and, you know, demand a certain amount of infrastructure to keep the monuments alive, but it is a ceremonial apparatus, even though it looks like a governmental apparatus from centuries back. Alright. In this case, what you have is this case being the United United States at the present, we know empirically, that the public will does not have a strong influence, it has almost no influence, in fact, on policy, right, we fight over policy we battle at the ballot box over policy, but then the policy manages not to serve any of us as it serves already in accidentally serves us as it serves the interests of Things that really do have influence. And so, you know, I mean, there's no clear line here. Does the government govern? Yes, in whose interest? Oh, those are the corrupted. So it's a puppet of something that governs, right. And that puppet thing is now going woke, right? So we are now seeing these sort of self imposed sets of guidelines flowing through, you know, corporate boards, and then we are seeing the government potentially being persuaded to institute, you know, quotas and things like this, and impose them on these corporations. And, you know, most importantly, we see the corporation's deciding the limits of actual speech. Can you still say anything you want? Sure, you know, in the confines of your own home? Can you say it where people are actually listening? Well, no, you know, Twitter had, you know, decided to shut down Twitter and Facebook decided to shut down this Expo, say, of the hunter Biden, Ukraine business this week, on the basis that it was somehow false, faulty, or dangerous, which is preposterous. It was embarrassing to a political entity that Twitter and Facebook favor. So we are seeing, you know, I guess the the other way, I would say it is that the founders at the point that they were protecting our ability to gather and speak with each other and voice opinions that were not popular, we're worried about the state itself, they didn't understand that something would evolve, that would have power that would dwarf the state that would take over the state and therefore the protections are inadequate. And so anyway, ultimately, is there anything inherently soft about the totalitarianism that is moving? Is it early in the trajectory? And will we laugh at the term soft totalitarianism five years from now when we've seen where it actually goes?

**Heather** 37:04

Well, I don't I mean, I don't think the term is meant to imply that it's nicer it's just that it's not an enforced with the backing of military and like I just made that up at the moment but you know, it's it's it's different. And this is one way of describing the difference. And I do find that his characterization driers, characterization of it as a therapeutic totalitarianism is actually even more apt. So he says, I said already, that he describes therapeutic totalitarianism as the hatred of dissenters from this utopian ideology that comes in the guise of helping and healing, right. But he's he specifically argues that therapy, that the therapeutic mode is a sort of postmodern mode of existence, which I think is apt. And again, this is written as a book, quote, unquote, for Christian dissidents. And so he talks about religious man, giving way to psychological man, religious man in his definition, is living according to a belief in transcendent principles that order human life around communal purposes. Right. And psychological man believes there's no transcendent order and life's purpose is to find one's way experimentally. And there's a way in which if you just took that out of context entirely inside Okay, psychological man, there's no transcendent order and life's purpose is to find one's way experimentally. That sounds a lot like something that we believe that you and I believe, as people without, without, without faith, and who do understand evolution to explain the current forms of life on Earth. However, the description of religious man, if you if you read it, metaphorically, is also something that we hold very, very dear, which is that, according if I just take out transcendent for the moment, lives according to belief in principles that order human life around communal purposes, that this that this is absolutely a huge huge value in human life and it is a last that we have seen as modernity has increasingly valued the individual and the individuals comfort and pleasure and thrills over anything that might in any way constrain those comforts and pleasures and thrills such as religion, okay. But also family, also community also just anything that reveals that you are in fact answerable to a greater good that may be of your own choosing in your in your friend group or not as much of your own choosing in your family. And this is not this is not to say that people don't sometimes you know, get a drug terrible and and are born into terrible families from which they must escape and therefore have no option to be part of a family. That is that is wonderful and loving, but most of us aren't in that situation. And the idea that we can and indeed, that we must overthrow family as a constraint that it is from the past. And we are interested only in moving forward and finding new ways that are filled with rainbows and unicorns in this utopian future. Well, it's it's not just delusional, but it's dangerous. So and we're still, let me just share a little bit more before you before you rip again because we're, we've gotten through very little of this so far. In communist Russia drear reports. Parents were choosing to avoid what he calls contamination, the humanities, by encouraging children to study natural sciences, the sounds a little bit like what is going on with critical race theory and intersectionality in the modern Academy, except, of course, in modernity, in modern times, we have this ideology has has marched right into the natural sciences as declared that male and female are social constructs, and don't really differ at all. And, you know, even even the natural sciences aren't safe,

**Bret** 41:09

even, it's not even limited to the natural sciences, even math, right? Even even math,

**Heather** 41:13

even math. So so it's in some ways, we've gone even farther than what was being seen in totalitarian communist Russia. They, he drear was told by some of the people he was interviewing that, you know, essays must conform to a communist point of view. While that sounds familiar, doesn't it anyone who's been in high school or college or know someone who has in the last 10 years, knows very well that in some classes in some fields, there is one and only one perspective that you're allowed to take all this talk of multiple lenses that the supposedly you know, liberal perspective allows? Well, only up to a point only if you know, only if you're writing about something that you yourself may have experienced. But in terms of the conclusions that you come to, really in many fields, there's only one conclusion you're allowed to come to

**Bret** 42:10

this. Yeah. So this raises a bunch of different points. And I don't know, I don't know where all you're headed, but I do think a, we have to understand some I now hear the this talk of communism and where we are with respect to this new trajectory. And I cannot help there's a part of me that hears it the way I would have heard it at 18. Right, and to hear

**Heather** 42:38

and share. I mean, I think I know, I knew you at 18. Yeah, how would you afford it at 18, I would

**Bret** 42:44

have heard it as a lot of breathless, fearful, over hyping of concerns that were really very scare remote, right. And I think the thing is, now, I'm beginning to understand, I do think that what we heard earlier in our lives was very overblown. And of course, a tremendous amount of harm was done fighting communism in the US, right? People who weren't communists were people who were sort of nominally interested in communism, but hadn't done anything wrong. We're obviously punished formally and informally, but, but that said, I now think I appreciate something about why communism causes people to lose their minds, especially people who've seen what it does, right? And so we have heard many people say that, you know, communism always ends in starvation and gulags, and I began to wonder if in fact it starts with them rather than ends with them. And if the reason isn't pretty obvious from our own discipline,

**Heather** 43:53

okay, so let me let me just interject one thing here that happens to be in my in my notes here that totalitarians exert a tremendous amount of effort to control the common narrative and you know, a point to which we have we have spoken before and will speak a lot again that we need, we need strong, true amazing narratives that we can point to that can become our myths upon which with which we can build an excellent world that is, it is fair for all but Milan coonara specifically spoken to the danger of forgetting one's past which I think is a is a big part of what we're experiencing here is that almost no one knows history knows no one, including our generation really was taught history well, and drearier, paraphrase and coonara says nobody defends gulags today, but the world remains full of suckers for the false utopian promises that bring gulags into existence.

**Bret** 44:47

Right and people are erasing it's not even just forgetting right So Kendra deals very well with the issue of forgetting and actually erasing vivid image that has a member who has behaved badly physically erased from a painting, I believe, or, you know, painted over. Yeah. But in any case, the there are a number of important things. One, I believe that it is simply the failure of group selection that forces totalitarians especially have a communist ilk to engage in this totalitarian overreach. In other words, to the extent that people have any freedom at all. communism is not game theoretically stable, therefore, the way you would stabilize it or attempt to stabilize, it has to do with penalizing people who act on the basis of reasonable incentives, right, you have to reschedule their incentives so that they behave, you know, for the same reason that a prisoner or a slave behaves because the punishment for not behaving is so great. Yeah. So anyway, that hazard is, is very large. Now, I want to return to something else that you said that you were talking about whether people need to believe something larger, and I've heard a number of people talk about this, maybe most recently, Douglas Murray, who is I believe, a non believer, but who regards religion as essential because of effectively what happens when people don't have something larger than themselves to believe in? And so, if this is all right, what you said and what Douglass said is correct. But if it is also correct that people like you and and and I get along without a belief in a supernatural, higher order, right, that there is something that we have supplanted, then this raises the question of, is there so I have the sense that basically, you remove the belief in a higher power, right, and it takes the safety off the gun, but it doesn't fire the gun, right? So the gun becomes dangerous at the point that you don't have that higher order, you can fall into one of these false ideologies and you can end up doing horrible things. Because it basically slots in where you know, a belief in something larger would go but it doesn't have to be that way. So

**Heather** 47:11

I'm wondering if we might actually just tell the story of dining with a mala Ghazi family in southern Madagascar, a judge and her family many years ago would have been 1993 her first trip to Madagascar. You don't know the story? Oh sure. Of course. Yeah. You want to tell it?

**Bret** 47:29

Sure. Yeah, this is always a danger when the story is that old How much will we will we agree on exactly what happened but

**Heather** 47:35

Okay, let me let me just set up that we had been traveling across the southern half of Madagascar for in my rendering in the book that I wrote about my memory six

**Bret** 47:45

years that six years Yes, it was. We

**Heather** 47:49

traveled 670 kilometers if memory serves and it took 67 hours to travel so we were going at a rocking speed of about 10 kilometers an hour which is about six miles an hour for wait a minute endless endless endless

**Bret** 48:02

in the back of a truck that had hard wooden benches that had been built into the back of this truck This is a common mode of transportation Madagascar taxi crews there so we were all night and all day and the particular vehicle had a lightbulb suspended from the roof by a wire that swung back and forth all night that they wouldn't even turn off while you were trying to

**Heather** 48:27

sleep and one tape of Molly as you pop music on loop one song one song over and over again over again. And you know there were people getting to know that there were chickens that would land on your shoulder there was breakdowns there they was it was unless it was only befriended a young mala Ghazi boy really who was very unlike anyone ever all Madagascar to travel that far. Who was going I think from his secondary school back home for a break we befriended him and at the point

**Bret** 49:00

that we stopped I don't know if we befriended him or he took pity on us

**Heather** 49:03

It may have been that but at the very the very last stop before we were there and we just hadn't had a paved road and it was like 30 more kilometers or like we're here like we're not going anywhere for the night. And we I think I may have burst into tears which is unlike me yesterday. Anyway, by the time we finally ultimately got to our final destination he had long since said please when we do get there if we're to get there, please come dine with my family and me and so we stayed with them. No, that wasn't the penultimate night at the at the judges house and what would have been for different I can't remember or if it's that the one at the northern

**Bret** 49:45

Diego Suarez for different setting, okay.

**Heather** 49:50

We know we'd gotten cleaned up, we'd gone over to this nice dinner and it was it was a female judge in Madagascar and her husband I think was a general contractor and you know this is Medigap. Oscar is often at the ranked as the as the least prosperous country on the planet like the lowest GDP, all of this. And they had a solidly middle class life going and we were having a very nice meal. You know, I spoke some French, which is the main language that people in the middle class and in Madagascar speak, although mala kasi is the main language. And they spoke a little bit of English as well. And then during the meal

**Bret** 50:29

during the meal, we were talking and they were curious about us, of course, I assume nobody in that family had been off island? I don't think so. I'm not sure of that. But I think so. In any case, they were curious about us. And they were, as is so often the case, they were so welcoming and generous and decent. And they asked us about our religious beliefs. And we maybe without quite enough caution, coughed up that we didn't really have a religious belief that we had, you know, historical backgrounds that trace their roots to these traditions, but didn't believe in anything ourselves. And there was this kind of inability to know what to do with what had just been said. And there was just became worried about us. Well, I don't think they did, but there was they voiced concern about well, okay, if we take you at your word, and you really don't believe anything, then what prevents you from doing XYZ?

**Heather** 51:32

How is it that you live good lives? How is it that you will continue to live good lives?

**Bret** 51:35

Right, which turns out to be a better question than you would think, is a terrific question. Yeah. And so the answer is something you know, I think the answer in our case, at least, if we can use our own minds as a place that we have some access, I believe what we've done is we have figured out what higher purpose could be constructed from a secular foundation. In other words, I don't think most people can handle the, the existential as existentialism of a lack of higher external purpose. But for those who can get through that part, you know, in one way or another, there are things that you can pursue as if they are ultimate, and they may not be, but it doesn't have to drive you crazy. But that said, I, you know, I guess the real question is, is there I shudder every time somebody makes the claim that we have to have religion, or else people go crazy and do terrible things. Because if that's true, then we're stuck in a very bad bind, which is that we are not. We are not getting any less capable of understanding what the universe is made of, which means that the necessity of God to the explanation of what we are and how we got here, and what it means is ever more remote. So are we just going to continue to go crazy till we destroy ourselves? Or can people actually get over the existential crisis and come up with things that work as well? Or better?

**Heather** 53:09

Well, and so in driers book, I don't think that there is really an invocation of God per se, there is certainly invocation of faith and belief, but mostly it is a way of organizing your life in line with principles that have been honorable and served truth and, and justice and beauty in the past. And we see no reason to think that they have started doing so if you if you and your family and the community with whom you choose to to interact, are also abiding by similar principles. And so it's you know, it's it is not primarily about is their God it is it is about the all of the other traditions that their religion is based on.

**Bret** 53:58

Right. So if I can go back to the, what I think is a fair characterization of at least the Jewish diaspora, and actually, I would think most of Israeli society, too. There is something that occurs where religion is practiced, and nobody is all that interested in getting you to unpack your level of belief. Right? The point is, do you behave actually matches very well, what I heard Jordan Peterson once say, which got him in lots of trouble in certain quarters. I think it was actually during the debates in Vancouver, where he was asked if he believed in a supernatural God, and he said, I behave as if I do, right which I made perfect sense to me what he was saying, but was taken by some to indicate a kind of hypocrisy or vagueness or something like that. But I guess the question is, if it was true that Jews were anti fragile, because of All the stuff that happens every time the center collapses. And that one of the things that you do is you teach people how not to shed their traditions because those traditions are serving on the stated goals, one of the things you might do is provide a kind of Don't Ask, Don't Tell over faith. And, you know, that does seem to be the nature of it. Right? People have complex relationships, and it's very hard to know exactly what they believe, nor does it matter.

**Heather** 55:27

Yeah, that's right. Okay, so many places to go here. Let's, we've already talked a little bit about freedom being responsibility, responsibility for and towards rather than responsibility from. And drear argues that, too often the secular liberal ideal of freedom in the West is about freedom from things as opposed to being bringing with it a responsibility for and towards those to whom you are, you are bonded with and tied to and indebted to and responsible for. And again, from father kolok, avec whose name I'm probably still mispronouncing, he has sort of a three part instruction, see, Judge, act, see, which means be awake to the realities around you. Judge soberly discern what those realities mean, in light of what you know. And he would have it, especially in light of Christian teachings, and act to resist evil. And that's not to say that sometimes passive disobedience or quiet disagreement isn't the best move, you know, you we are not instructed by this book, or by you know, honorable dissident Christians in general, that you must always take a stand and put your life on the line, every time you see, you see one of these things happening. But this this man who said, See judge act, oh, my God, the cat just did something very bad. See judge act. He succeeded almost instantly as he was moving. As he was, as he had escaped the Gestapo, he been on the run as an anti fascist. And he created this community of trust and mutual friendship from a diverse group of people. Because Because you can write because it is actually possible that when you engage with people, as individuals, we're cardless of their background, regardless of what they describe to you as their capabilities or their beliefs. And you're almost everyone can actually can be reached. And you know, we saw this in our careers as professors in the classroom, in the field in labs, that almost every human being is simply looking for connection is looking for someone to, to see them, and to look at them and say, I know something real about, you know, show a little bit of respect and learn their names first, but then also know something real about them that isn't somewhat arbitrary, and, and make a connection and crush. That's almost all it takes. And so much of that is missing from from a modern the modern ideology. This modern ideology is based primarily on hate. It's about what you're resisting only as opposed to what you're for. So we'll come back to that. But let me let me Let's spend just a little bit of time talking about family talking about privacy and a little bit more community. So family. Vox love Bender, who was a primary leader of the resistance to communism in the Czech half of Czechoslovakia, believe that the family is the bedrock of civilization, and must be nurtured and protected at all costs. And he saw communism in his country directly threaten the family, he wrote an essay in 88, called the family and the totalitarian state, which defends Yes, the Christian idea of family on three basis, fellowship of love, the gift of freedom, but again, freedom, which involves responsibility rather than freedom from responsibility, and the dignity of the individual within family fellowship. Quote, in practically all other social roles, we are replaceable and can be relieved of them, whether rightly or wrongly, we're gonna want to read the rest of this quote here. Bender writes in this 1988 essay. In practically all other social roles, we are replaceable and can be relieved of them, whether rightly or wrongly. However, such a cold calculation of justice does not rain between husband and wife, between children and parents, but rather the law of love, even where love fails completely. And with all that accompanies that failure, the appeal of shared responsibility for mutual salvation remains preventing us from giving up on unworthy sons, cheating wives and daughters and fathers. This is this is what is meant by responsibility for freedom involves responsibility involves obligation. A completely, frankly, anarchist liberation from all that has come before, including all relationships that have come before, is a descent of very quickly into a horror that no one wants to live with.

**Bret** 1:00:25

So I want to try to, I hope I don't regret attempting this, but there is something about step into our evolutionary lens for a second here, step behind the evolutionary lens, you've got lineage, lineage being the point of evolutions point, which is neither good nor bad, but nonetheless, it is the organizing principle we would argue for what it is we are to do. Family is the limits of lineage that you actually have contact with, that can be extended family, and in some cultures that can be very extended, it can then be, you know, modernity can wreck extended family, and it can reduce family to the nuclear version. The family in question is, in some sense, the Christian version, because the Old Testament is not a monogamous document, the New Testament is. And so in some sense, we have been handed a version of family that has been altered by modernity altered by somewhat ancient belief structures, but is stable for evolutionary reasons. What stabilizes it metaphorical beliefs about a higher ultimate purpose when you can't state the actual purpose, which is the longevity of lineage?

**Heather** 1:01:40

Well, but the other thing that stabilizes physics is exactly what I was just reading that, that within family, the social roles aren't replaceable, right? We can't just be relieved of them. This

**Bret** 1:01:49

is exactly what I'm saying is that to behave as if those are permanent Connections is a literal understanding of something beneath them that until very recently, we couldn't say anything about right, which is your genetic lineage. And so in any case, the point is when somebody sits down with pen and paper and says, I have a better way, will dissolve that stuff will collectivise everything will distributed beautifully, right? what they are, in effect doing is arguing an evolutionarily unstable strategy. How will they seek to stabilize it with violence, even if they don't know that that's what they're advocating at the point they decide this is the way forward, they are guaranteeing that they will have to avail themselves of violence and totalitarianism in order to stabilize it,

**Heather** 1:02:36

because it is inherently an evolutionarily unstable strategy and has no way of maintaining itself absent force and violence. Exactly.

**Bret** 1:02:43

So for those few of you who are tracking the fact that David Sloan Wilson, I are on a collision course about group selection versus what I call lineage selection, this is the point group selection is unstable, and therefore requires some sort of force to make it work. lineage selection is the thing that flows under all of these systems that have worked and lasted. And so the, you know, the ultimate metaphorical truths that stabilize the underlying lineage phenomenon that we can't exactly describe is the key thing that is being challenged. And in any case, we have to figure out how to repel that challenge. Without I think resorting to a primitive mindset about the supernatural.

**Heather** 1:03:28

Okay. So, I think, you know, we have already spoken plenty in past episodes of this podcast about how it is that the new ideology, the ascendant ideology is appearing to go after family, but let me just give up, provide a few examples here for those who imagine that we are speaking feverishly and, and, and making things up. So this is again voxalot Banda in this 1988 essay, writes a left wing intellectual terror achieve what it wanted marriage and the family became extremely problematic institutions. Interesting, by the way that problematic shows up as the word there in 1988. So I found, for instance, sec, just quickly put this on screen this 1994 article published in the history of European ideas, which is a history review of Marx, Engels and the abolition of the family. So that's just a piece of scholarship describing how Marxism actually argues exactly what you just said it dead. Black Lives Matter the organization rather than the true sentiment, which is supposedly what the organization is based on, but we have argued, I think, convincingly that it's not as gone after the family. They have since pulled it from their site, but in Episode 25, which, which was also clipped out. We pointed out that this was on their site we Black Lives Matter disrupt the western prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and villages that collectively care for one another, etc etc. There is a truly awful book called full surrogacy now, by one Sophie Lewis who argues what really matters to me is the abolishment of the isolate isolated privatization of human misery, the radical scarcity and overwork that is born of the logic of marriage and a family. Incidentally, she during this year during the coronavirus pandemic wrote a piece that was headlined the Coronavirus crisis shows it's time to abolish the family. When in fact, if at any moment, it should have been more obvious that intact families were useful and actually dealing with the chaos that has ensued. This should have been the one and then there's a piece I'm just not going to link to all of these but there's a piece published and commune at the very end of last year, called six steps to abolish the family. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. It's it's all over the place in the modern ideology. So benda further argues in this essay, quote, in a society of atomized individuals, as communist Czechoslovakia was it was important for ordinary people to come together and to be reminded of one another's existence. So that speaks to the importance of community that goes beyond family. But before we before we, I guess before we move over into talking about community a little bit, let me say, a couple more things about how how believing in your family and trust in your family has been useful. So we must actually trust our children and tell them the truth and much about modern parenting suggests doing exactly the opposite, protecting them from all things that are difficult, and lying to them when it seems easier or won't hurt them in the moment. And this renders them helpless and hopeless and frankly, incompetent and they grew up into well, anarchists, actually. So again, I will butcher this man's name, I apologize. As Hungarian boyscout Thomas, Sally's father had been linked to a typewriter on which someone composed anti Soviet propaganda. The year was 1946, in the Red Army occupied Hungary. All the scouts connected to the typewriter suffered punishment, death, exile, or in the case of the elder Sally in tournament without charge in a prison camp. In 1963. Less than 20 years later, when Tomas was only seven years old, he came home from school and told his father how the Soviet Army had liberated their nation. He said, Boy sit down, Thomas remembers, he began to tell me stories about the 56 uprising and Soviet invasion. He told me the truth. And when he finished, he warned me never to talk about that at school. Tomas glances down at the floor of his Budapest living room. We have so many problems today, because fathers never talked to their sons as my father did to me in 1963. Long before you and I thought that there was something potentially very dangerous on the horizon here, we without actually ever talking about it in advance,

**Heather** 1:08:29

parented our children by speaking to them from the time that they were far too young to understand them from when they were pre lingual. As if they were smart, and capable human beings who would come to understand what we were saying to them, we trusted them to be reasonable. We trusted them to be honest and honorable. We taught them to assess rules and to obey good ones, and to undermine bad ones. And sometimes we will all make mistakes about which roles are bad and which roles are good, but not simply to trust on the basis that someone told you, you need to do something. This points out why I think that is so important. Not only that, that our boys now 14 and 16 are growing into, you know, anti fragile, strong, compassionate, brilliant young men, but that they actually have the courage of their convictions. And when they don't know something, they know that they don't know it and are willing to say so. And they know from all the way back that we trusted them to be, to be honest and to be courageous.

**Bret** 1:09:40

So if I can just glance at this from a slightly different angle, maybe it's not but the there is something about a proper familial relationship in which there can be a kind of candor, because there is no optionality about the relationship itself. Yeah. And so the idea, you know, and if you think about, you know, the, the Stasi or whatever, and they're terrorizing of people by getting them to rat on each other and things, it breaks this fundamental bond, but it is normal and natural for your family members to be the only people who can voice certain things in an era where certain false ideas are spread as if they are truth, the place where you will hear Actually, that's not right is at home. And this has been true forever, right.

**Heather** 1:10:43

And not just from parents, from siblings, from Right, exactly cousins from whoever it is, that is that is in your home with you,

**Bret** 1:10:50

anybody who doesn't have an option. And this becomes very different when you may not know your cousin's right, when you only gather a certain ceremonial phenomenon, or whatever it may be. But it is vitally important that you recognize that there's a certain amount of lying that goes on in the world. You know, it's automatic, that there would be for all sorts of different reasons for business reasons, for reasons of you know, people trying to get into each other's pants, there's all kinds of lying out there. Where can you depend on people not to do that? Well, you should be able to depend on them not to do it at home? Yes. And yes, you know, so for example, you know, the idea that masculinity is toxic, and that you shouldn't engage in it, right? Because it's just bad. Right? Well, that could result if you were a boy, and nobody told you the truth about it, that could result in you weakening yourself, and emasculating yourself thinking that that might be the only way for you to have, you know, proper romantic relationship. And then you're going to find out what women don't like weak men. So you've gotten rid of whatever strength you had that might have been attractive. And so in any case, somebody has to sit you down and say, Look, I know that that's what people are saying, but it's garbage. And here's why. Yeah. And

**Heather** 1:12:08

strength is non violence. Those are two different things. Right? Women don't want violent men, but they also don't want weak men,

**Bret** 1:12:14

right. And in fact, strong men don't have to engage in violence very frequently. The point is they they have the restraint and the discipline to deal with it. So the point though, is that going after the nuclear family is necessary in order to disrupt the imagine that every household somebody is saying, actually, you know, that's bullshit, you got to say it outside. But here, you don't have to say that because we know better, that would weaken the revolution. So the revolution has to break apart the family or render it suspect or something in order to do what it does

**Heather** 1:12:45

go after the family and you go after men. And you've done a lot of the job that you need to do if what you're trying to do is weaken the links between people.

**Bret** 1:12:53

And this also explains why we are seeing such a heavy concentration of this in schools of Ed in schools themselves and especially schools where we're dealing with very young children because the complexity of raising children where you tell them the truth at home and then wondering if they're going to say something at school that is going to reveal that your family isn't on board. Right? Is

**Heather** 1:13:19

Yeah, no and they're trying to say the least I think it's not from this quote that I'm about to read but Dreyer also reports in the book, how you know, in, in many of the totalitarian regimes, of course, schools are used as replacements for family and and students are taught that when they have when they hear a discrepancy between what they hear at home what they hear in school, they must trust the state, they must trust the school. And in this case, in you know, 21st century weird countries, including the United States, it's not about the state versus the family, but it is about the schools versus the family and, and the on the schools are well captured. They they truly are with this ideology. So Maria moromi was a Catholic teacher in Budapest says it's no accident that every dictatorship always tries to break down the family because it's in the family that you get the strength to be able to fight you have the feeling that they have your back so you can go out into the world and face anything. It is just as true today as it was under communism. She said that to drear in modern times. So I would say that this is exactly right. And it strangely points to Well, it's not strange, it won't be strange to you or me but it seems to point to a danger in two distinct modern parenting styles that would seem to be at odds but there are actually two very bad sides of a bad of a bad coin, which is that helicopter parenting which protects children from all risk and insult and would seem to you know, then creates the need for safe spaces and you know, creates creates young adults who were in, you know, adult in body only and really have never experienced anything to push back against to learn how To be in the world, in combination with letting babies cry themselves to sleep, and alone and putting them on schedules, right. So that's that's equally is insane, right? A tiny, tiny child who does not yet have relationships in the world who does not yet know that there is anyone or anything to trust needs the connection more than anything so that once once that child knows that they have one, hopefully two parents, hopefully more even, but who 100% have their back who are with them all the time, who will pick them up, if they cry, and we're not going to be bullied by them, we're not going to let this child be a terrorist, but we're going to 100% have their back, then fairly early, you can let that child start to go out and take risks. And you know, and handle knives in the kitchen and go out on a bike ride at ages that most weird parents most modern American parents wouldn't imagine letting their children do but but children become capable very, very quickly. But only if they 100% know that you that there is a hopefully two parents absolutely with love and adoration for them watching their back who will step in if they at all can to help them if they get into trouble.

**Bret** 1:16:20

So I think this is a brilliant and a really important connection. I have not not understood this before but the so it's not even know that their parents Well, it's below knowing Yeah, right attachment, which is one so early, is the basically wired insensitive security that actually allows you to be bold and face danger. Because you know that you can always go back to the thing that remains true. And that raised you. So breaking attachment with the you know, rather insane and counter evolutionary belief that somehow you must not be too responsive to your infant. Lest you, you know, give them the expectation that they're going to be taken care of and want to cuddle the baby. Right? That nutty belief structure, which was so prevalent in the 60s and 70s. is clearly connected in some way. You've got people who are alien to their own families, right? Which makes them more susceptible to the message that's coming from outside that they are entitled to certain things. And what is it they're being told that they're entitled to, they've been told they're being told that they are entitled to be comfortable and feel safe at all times, which is not life, right? The ability to be durable and know how you know to not be paralyzed by a sense of discomfort or a momentary lack of safety is essential to being a functional adult. And so basically, the idea is we've hobbled these kids we've broken their sense of where they might be safe we've then externally allowed them to be told that they're entitled to be safe at all times and the fact that they are constantly feeling jeopardized is somebody else's responsibility and that they are in a position to demand redress now it's a it's all the way down Yeah, it is. And you know, I have to imagine that most of these things came together in one ugly disastrous package by accident but now that it's here Wow, you can see it

**Heather** 1:18:31

Yeah. Now it's it's it's it's truly awful and in part what we see right now in the modern instantiation of this sort of revolutionary attack on the family is predicated on the fact actually that most family many families already had this destruction at their base that they had this crazy combination of make sure the babies are effectively abandoned so that they don't have safety and then create a dynamic where you keep them from all risk once they're old enough where they should be experiencing risk. Like you know, of course at some level some people will will grow up and decide that the family needs to be abolished well yes those kinds of families should because that really doesn't deserve the name that you know that that kind of parenting is so confused and frankly so so dangerous to children that it's it that should be a thing of the past. Okay. Yep, we have we have just a few more things that we want to we want to get through. Okay, so with regard to the community Actually, let's let's let's move on first to speak to hear another another quotation from this dream book live not by lies. Here is a If I can find it. Yeah, this is a disillusion check communist whose husband was murdered in 1952. Speaking in modern times, I believe it is not hard for a totalitarian regime to keep people ignorant. Once you relinquish your freedom for the sake of understood necessity, for party discipline for conformity with the regime for the greatness and glory of the Fatherland, or for any of the substitutes that you're so convincingly offered, you seed your claim to the truth, slowly drop by drop, your life begins to ooze away, just as surely as if you would slashed your wrists, you have voluntarily condemned yourself to helplessness. So why we are asked after hearing that, do people surrender the moral responsibility to be honest, which is is a responsibility that I think we should we all should feel a moral responsibility to be honest. Well, in some cases, it's out of misplaced idealism. It can be out of a simple desire to transgress and destroy, that's the anarchism. And it can also be out of a greater greater hatred for others than love for the truth. And I do think that this the hatred at the base of so much of what we're seeing is, is critical that there is, and, you know, this, but, you know, I've been getting these texts from the Democrats, right, telling me that I really, really, really need to donate and, and, and vote. And you and I both have been responding to these people. And you know, maybe we'll share a little text exchanges at some point, Not not today. But in the latest one that I got, yeah, I said, Yeah, Trump did this and Trump did that. And you know, you need to go out and defeat Trump. And I wrote back and I said, I understand what you're arguing I should push against but you've given me literally no reason to vote for provide me one reason to vote for as opposed to vote against I'm listening. I literally ended with I'm listening in Yeah, I got nothing back in that case, it's crickets in some of these cases I have gotten an exchange with with some of these some of these people who are who are writing who were speaking on behalf of Democrats trying to get other you know, registered Democrats to, to, to get out the vote. And it's at the moment it's so based on hatred, and it's like love is so far from people's minds and even put aside love but like what what are you what are you fighting for? Like what what what is it that we are that we are fighting for? So let me just be before you speak, say that Hannah Arendt, amazing. historian of totalitarianism wrote that in pre totalitarian states heating, respectable society was so narcotic that elites were willing to accept quote, monstrous forgeries in historiography, for the straight for the sake of striking back at those who in their view, had excluded the underprivileged and oppressed from the memory of mankind. And Neo see as item number one at the top of the list in people's minds at the moment, of course, the 6019 project, just a complete revisionist history, that is about divisiveness, and hatred. And it's,

**Heather** 1:23:34

I'm sure there are some true things in it, but it's mostly simply not true. And yet it is being it is being lifted up as this amazing piece of scholarship and beauty and the way that we should teach our children about the origins of the United States, when it should be actually exactly the opposite. And it seems to be frankly, and everything I've seen from the author of it seems to be based, not in any desire to heal, to build, to create, but out of a sense of hatred and divisiveness and an interest in destruction.

**Bret** 1:24:12

So I think above all else, it's not that it's false. It's verification just right. It basically compiles pieces to paint a false picture. Yeah. Out of things, some, many of which are true, but I want to kind of synthesize the model that I think you're building here because it's, it's really quite, quite good. We've hobbled people, right, we hobbled them in part just by throwing a totally Novel World at them, and them failing to know what's actually good and what feels good, but is bad and so they're, they're hobbled in due course they are badly mis educated, and among the worst ways they are educated is that they are not Given a self motivational capacity that would cause them to be able to figure out how to accomplish things. So they're always waiting to be told what to do. And what they're told to do is of no value and is basically, you know, you spend your time doing somebody else's bidding, right? Right. So it's not so much anger at other people, or maybe it's a flavor of anger, it's resentment of those who are more capable. And that resentment then results in a listening. So these people, we all have the experience of advertisers telling us, oh, there's something wrong with you. And we have the solution. Here it is you just do 1995, three times a month, whatever it is that they, you know, whatever it is that they want us to do, right? So they're using our dissatisfaction to get us to buy stuff, right, in this case, the woke revolution, is using people's very understandable dissatisfaction with a life that isn't coherent, and that, you know, they're constantly harming themselves. And they're being told, this isn't your fault, which it isn't. And we have the solution, right? In fact, those people who are doing better than you This is their fault. Yeah, right. Okay. So that's nonsense. What are you supposed to do? Well surrender all of your tools, right? Two plus two does not equal what you were told that equals right. You can't even rely on that stuff. But listen to us, we've got tools they work, just go with us. But the point is, it is it's not even learned helplessness. It's a step beyond learned helplessness. It's cultivated helplessness, right? It's snakeoil helplessness Yes, it's it's some sort of exponential self inflicted expanding helplessness that causes you to have no option once you've signed up with this thing and given up your tools effectively you're just going to ride that thing you know you've you've you've signed up for it because you don't you know you're like at a epsi with no you know craft that you could leave the boat and you know set off on your own you're just committed

**Heather** 1:27:02

and once you've given up on those tools there's no going back

**Bret** 1:27:05

well especially if it takes you know if you know a you forget how to use them and be you stopped being educated in anything other than woke ideology, then you know, of course all you can be is a foot soldier in that battle. And you know, you're hoping that once the spoils are collected, they will be distributed to you which of course they won't because the game theory suggests that what will happen is that the the the coalition that has assembled to win those spoils is going to break down as soon as the spoils are won. And it's going to become, you know, crony capitalist at best, right? It's not going to be distributed in the way people think it knows people who were foot soldiers are actually suckers. Of course

**Heather** 1:27:50

it won't. Okay, let's talk about privacy for a moment. Actually, no, first, let's just finish up we were we were just talking about what a former prisoner of conscience in Russia told Dre her Christians needed something he called a golden dream, okay, something to live for a consumption of hope. He said you can't just be against everything bad you have to be for something good otherwise you can get really dark and crazy and and later in the book, Dreyer is is talking to a central leader of the second wave of the Slovak underground church who's now in his 70s. And he says, quote, when I talk to young people today, I tell them, they have it harder than we did in a way it is harder to tell who is the enemy. I tell them that what is crucial is to stay true to yourself, true to your conscience and also to be in community with other like minded people who share the faith. We were saved by small communities. And I feel like we're kind of coming full circle here but it strikes me that some of what has happened what you were just talking about, is that we have handed all the tools of resistance to people with nothing actually to resist like they're they they were harmed by a bunch of things over which they had no control. But pretending that the people who have the stuff are the people who left them without any tools or any ability to modulate their own moods is is wrong and so you know you have you have these sort of historical tools of resistance like like blog posts that look like they might be like psalmists dot and looking around and not knowing who the enemy is and imagining therefore that you have to find one and the enemy is you know you like you must be the enemy and the oh we saw that three and a half years ago on on the campus where we then where and this the lack of community that people have is, is terrifying. It was very bad before For 2020, that people raised with helicopter parents and on screens all the time, had an easier time engaging through screens rather than in real in real flesh and blood. And of course, the lock downs that are persisting in most places in some form or another have made it even harder to come together and community. But I would argue that we are actually at particular risk right now. Because shared visceral experience is a huge part of what Bond's people of what brings people together. And in part, we just don't even have the scientific understanding or the language of exactly what all that is. But we all know that a conversation in flesh and blood is not the same as a zoom call, zoom calls cannot replace visceral flesh and blood shared space in a room conversation. And so right now who is allowed, who's allowed that it's the people who spilling onto the streets protesting and then, and then some fraction of those people who are riding, they are the ones who are establishing right now their own history and their own community, and the rest of us are watching in horror or ignoring them. But we are also managing to create our own community, because many of us are actually engaging in the social distancing that we are being told that would that we must, and it is creating potentially, a real asymmetry in terms of what history is being is, is happening right now. And what history will be capable of being told because the people coming together and community do not have all of our best interests at heart, we need shared experience, we need shared community, we need shared history, and we mostly are not managing to build that right now.

**Bret** 1:31:48

We're not and if I can link that back up to what you were talking about with respect to family is a way in which modern sensibilities about romance are getting in the way here. Because, you know, in the world from which we emerged, you for very easily understood reasons ended up finding a partner and bonding yourself to them. And the production of children, especially the production of children early in life. results in a phenomenon that's gonna sound counterintuitive, but a partnership, a man and a woman who produce offspring, though they are not blood, relatives of each other, are effectively blood relatives of each other related through their children. Right? You become blood relatives of somebody when you produce children with them. So the idea that the point of life is now very remote from the production of children means that to the extent that people have those partnerships, they're much closer to friendships and family relationships. People are, you know, experimenting with all kinds of new configurations, and none of its going to be stable. So in one sense, I wonder if some of the insanity that we're hearing from otherwise reasonable young people, is actually the result of the fact that at the end of the day, you don't even have that one person with whom you can be candid about what you actually think because you're not related by something, you know, as thick as blood. Yeah,

**Heather** 1:33:22

no, I that's, that's important. Here we've got just one more quote from a woman who, whose name may be pronounced from Azusa, probably not an 80 year old, quote, grande Dom of anti communist resistance who was critical in the solidarity trade unionist trade union movement Poland, who sees the danger of soft totalitarianism coming fast and urges young people to get off the internet and get together face to face to build resistance, quote, as I see it, this is the core, this is the essence of everything right now. form these communities and networks of communities, whatever kind of communities you can imagine. You don't have to be prepared to give your life for the other person. But you do have to have something in common and to do things together, do things together. Yeah, we need to be doing things together. And there's a ton more but let me just the one thing that we haven't spoken to yet at all, here is the question of privacy. So drear devotes an entire chapter to what he calls capitalism woke and watchful. And basically it is it is certainly true and anyone who's read any any of the relevant literature or knows any of the relevant history, knows that to be free to speak the truth you have to create for yourself a zone of privacy that is inviolate. You need the privacy to to think without anyone looking into your thoughts and to speak. Where people whom you don't want listening, can't listen. And into that into that truth that that universal never will change human truth. We have Smart speakers, right? which apparently over 25% of Americans have invited smart speakers speakers into their homes for convenience, because it's nice to be able to say, hey, Alexa put grapes on the list or whatever it is we you know, we don't we haven't we shudder to think when they came out. And I think you've been to one of our children's friends houses once where you reported that they were they were there and came out kind of be shuttering afterwards going, I didn't actually know that we knew people who had those things in their homes. They are potentially so dangerous.

**Bret** 1:35:39

Yes. On that topic. I would just amend what you said slightly. Alexa, please put anti racist grapes on the list. Yes, yes.

**Heather** 1:35:47

Yes. Thanks, Alexa. I get that right. Alexa. Right. Yeah,

**Bret** 1:35:51

I don't know. Yeah, I guess

**Heather** 1:35:53

um, and, you know, add to that. Polls now suggest that millennials and Gen Z customers are especially prone to seeing their consumer expenditures as part of creating a socially conscious personal brand identity. So this is human being as consumer This is add add to the fact that these are kids often raised on legal drugs that prevent them from understanding their own moods, or forming their own identities who've been protected from all risk and danger and intrigued by their parents who've been hiding behind screens their entire lives, because at first they were cheap, babysitter's, then they became safer ways to engage socially than actually risking a one on one or real group interaction. And now you have, of course, the fact that they are seen by, by Market America, by by corporate America, mostly as organisms with money to spend, and how do you how do you profit most off of such an individual? You make them view themselves, primarily through the branding, the branding lens? Who know what kind of person? Am I a person with an iPhone? What kind of person am I, I'm a person who aspires to drive a Tesla, right? And you know, who, who wears these kinds of shoes and those kinds of glasses and on all of us, and that is far older than the modern algorithms, and then the particular instantiation of revolution that is brewing in weird countries right now. But it is it is circling around the same the same goal of basically relieving individuals of their human agency.

**Bret** 1:37:42

Yes, and there's a there is a deep flaw in the psyche that does not recognize that effectively consuming is a debt that you owe to the world. And to the extent that you are going to consume and consume, then it's all that now the question is, can you bring something of value to the world that begins to address the, you know, the fact of your having consumed all that stuff? That's the hope. And, you know, I am not intending to blame anybody who doesn't have the tools to be productive. But the fact is, we should be thinking in these terms, what is the point of a life in which, you know, the most productive thing you did was, you know, basically curate a series of brands into some kind of, you know, slightly personal identity, right? That's not that's nothing to aspire to. And so anyway, yes, I am increasingly disturbed by the fact that it seems to me that we have a very immediate problem, the solution to which is obviously several generations of work. Right, what do we do about the fact that if you solved the problem of woke ideology in our slide towards totalitarianism, tomorrow, you still have a large population of people who have been hobbled by the stupid way we have dealt with education and development and pharmaceuticals and all of that stuff. And, you know, there's no way around it that has to be dealt with, and it is actually our collective obligation to deal with it. Yes. And if we don't, it will come for us.

**Heather** 1:39:33

And, and it seems to be doing so. So maybe that's, maybe maybe that's the place to and for right now, we went close to two hours, I think. Right? So we will, however, be back in I guess not the second hour, but call it something like the third hour to answer some of your questions that were asked in Super Chat this hour and next hour. You can find a bit more from us at either our websites or on our Patreon is where you can join the discord server and be part of a conversation of some such like minded people. And as in the quote that I was just reading. If you want access to a private q&a once a month, join my patreon if you're interested in extended conversations in small groups at a higher level, join Brett's and we'll be back in 15 minutes. All right.

**Bret** 1:40:33

See you in 15