

EPISODE 50

TO SUMMARIZE...

Hi there. Welcome to the end of the world. My name is Michael Folz. And this is Episode number 50 of my podcast Dial It Back Or Die. Now as I mentioned at the end of the last episode, we have finally come to the conclusion of our Science section. And, from the fine tuning problem to loss aversion and the trolley problem to three hundred thousand years of pair bonding/monogamy, a lot of science from several different disciplines has just been covered. And the ideas presented implicitly and explicitly make four major points, each of which directly refutes our current postmodern ideology.

First, an understanding of the actual parameters which are contained within physics, astronomy, chemistry, and biology should prove to you beyond the shadow of a doubt that the odds of our complex, intelligent life existing here—or for that matter anywhere else in the Universe—are incredibly, remotely small. Contrary to the feel good notions of science fiction enthusiasts, the billions and billions of stars out there do not at all imply that life, let alone anything more complicated than a bacterium, is a common occurrence. And one does not have to believe in a God or a Plan in order to recognize that we are at an inflection point, as it were, in our history where, through our utter foolishness, we are in the process of screwing up something that might very well be virtually unique in the Universe.

The second point is that, as opposed to a foundational belief that societies are merely an agglomeration of individuals, and that therefore individual rights are the essential building blocks of society, the indisputable reality is that we are first and foremost social animals. Moreover, that along with most all of the other primates we have been that way for around thirty million years. And further, that by increasing our basic social groupings to 150, and then by greatly expanding this in the Neolithic and the post Neolithic to societies comprised of thousands of highly interconnected persons, and then millions, we have become hypersocial animals.

As a result of this, and because of the demands of hypersocial living, we arrive on this Earth pre-programmed to follow authority. We arrive pre-programmed to be cooperative and to put the needs

of the larger group first. We arrive pre-programmed to be inclined to share resources equally. We arrive pre-programmed with a keen and strict moral sense which rewards cooperation and punishes the selfish and the anti-social. And we arrive on this Earth ready to, indeed with a *need* to, follow strict social norms.

The third major point is that, although we are certainly capable of rationality, most of the time our minds in no way act like stereotypical rational decision makers. Even when our 'subterranean' minds are churning away correctly and are spitting out the right answers, we really don't have a conscious idea of what's going on. And what makes it even more complicated is that if we just 'let go' and let our impulses guide us, this will often end up in addiction or even worse. So that true happiness only results when we don't immediately eat that marshmallow, when we struggle to *not* do what we want to.

Finally, because of the evolutionary requirement that human babies be born about a year premature and therefore essentially and completely helpless, human females have necessarily evolved to be soft, warm, comforting, and... also pretty much helpless against the outside world. Human males have thus also necessarily evolved to be both co-parents to the young and defenders of the mother and children, a role that few, if any, other male mammals assume. This can make for an awkward adjustment, and only the additional outside force of the greater society and its strictly enforced social norms have historically kept men in line.

Perhaps even more importantly, as a result of their completely different (and highly complementary) evolutionary functions, men and women have also evolved to become highly differentiated beings. This gives them broadly different personality profiles and broadly different strengths and weaknesses, outlooks and constellations of desires. Men are indeed from Mars and women are indeed from Venus.

And Evolution has made them that way.

Now, as promised way back in the beginning, all of these scientific findings are in direct contrast to those 'Enlightenment values' which I presented way back in the beginning.

For instance, let's consider the 'we've got this all figured out' attitude displayed in so much of the popular science that is written. After all, you'll recall that up until around 1750 just about every world civilization had taken for granted that posing and pondering such philosophical/theological questions as 'Why do we exist?', or indeed 'Why does anything exist?', was just about the most useful

and noble way that an educated person could pass their time. After 1750 this was seen to be so much useless intellectual wrestling, something that interfered with material 'progress'. Which is why that now, when there is so much evidence as to the sheer improbability either of the Universe or of complex life existing, and when such 'Why' questions would seem to be more important than ever, so many present day physicists and biologists cavalierly dismiss any discussion of such issues as beside the point.

Second, the Enlightenment was premised upon the ironclad principle of naked individualism. And Utilitarianism took this one step further, by angrily denying that Natural Moral Law could exist in any form, let alone that people could be born with a sense of it. What's more, both the 'free markets' of Adam Smith and the liberal democracy of John Stuart Mill were predicated upon the belief that pure self interest, not cooperation, would create the best of all possible outcomes not only in the economic world, but also in the political one. As a result any apparent altruistic behavior by humans had to be laboriously reinterpreted so as to show that it 'really' displayed a complicated game theory vision of selfishness.

In turn this 18th and early 19th Century thinking produced a supposedly 'modern' vision of our intrinsic mental state. On the one hand this posited a Blank Slate that would be completely malleable by a benign environment controlled by 'experts'. On the other hand the mind was a simplistic mechanism which sought nothing greater than to increase pleasure and decrease pain. On top of all this, though, said mind was also a remarkably rational economic decision maker. Like a skilled accountant it added up its accumulated utiles, its tally of preferred goods and services.

And wrapped up in all this was the radical 18th Century Benthamite/Godwinite idea that women, once stripped of their religious and cultural brainwashing, would recognize the totally unjust burden of motherhood, which had admittedly been placed upon them by Nature, but which had been greatly exacerbated by patriarchal power. And, once freed from this oppressive yoke of submissive servitude, the new liberated woman would be just like a man. Just as strong. Just as assertive. Just as independent and self interested. And, finally, just as lustful and just as innately promiscuous.

At least all of that was the theory on which this postmodern world is based.

But while I can assume that you can readily agree that even a simple understanding of quantum mechanics or of how brain imaging works pretty much shows how childish the 18th Century's vision

both of the Universe and of the mind was, you still might be having problems with accepting what I laid out both about our hypersocial nature and about the intrinsic personality features of human women.

So permit me to expand a little on each of these points.

Let's first look at the issue of individuality. After all, *I* don't like anyone telling *me* what to do. Yet that's what I'm saying humanity is all about. What's more, in everyday life it is normal to honor, even idolize, those who stand out from the group, whether it is in athletics, politics, academia, or entertainment. And didn't the failure of collective farms in the Soviet Union and of giant, bloated steel mills and the like in socialist countries prove that forcing people to become communal just doesn't work?

Well... On the other hand—when you think about it—isn't it that what has really tended to annoy you in life has been when stupid people have told you to do stupid things? And hasn't it usually been the case that when people in legitimate authority ask you to do reasonable things, that you have no problem with complying?

Next, most often when an athlete or a movie star or a businessman boasts about being the greatest—even in a supposedly 'individualistic' country such as ours—almost all of us tend to think that person is incredibly arrogant, and we can't wait for them to be taken down. On the other hand, when a star athlete says that he is just happy that his team won, or an Olympic athlete cries on the podium as their national anthem is played, almost always those emotions are real. And we all feel genuinely touched when they occur.

Finally, it probably goes without saying that *forcing* people to collectivize is never going to work. As I noted before, without a sense of timeworn legitimacy, such actions by faceless bureaucrats will only provoke the psychological state known as reactance. But those same peasants who fought their Communist masters, often to the point of being sent to the gulag and to death, had had no problem whatsoever living for centuries in villages which were to a large extent communes. And they had had no problem either with their local village or the (extremely communal) Orthodox Church dictating so much of their behavior.

And in that context it certainly bears repeating that the three—by far—most impressive economic miracles of the latter 20th Century were, first, Japan, then Singapore and the other 'Asian tigers', and finally China, each of which had a rigorously upheld 'Confucian' and communal ethical tradition.

In short, much of what we believe to be proof of the naturalness or superiority of individualism, when turned around, really isn't. The larger point to always bear in mind, though, is what even the earliest of classical civilizations noted: 1) There will always be a tension between the desires of the individual and the needs of the larger group. 2) The trick will always be to find the proper balance between these two competing interests. & 3) Unless the rights of the group ultimately trump the rights of the individual then social decay and collapse will inevitably follow.

And now let's deal with my characterization of women as having *of necessity* evolved to become full time wives and mothers. Because it occurs to me that by pointing out how the exigencies of child bearing and rearing forced human females to become relatively soft, dependent, and domestic you might have gotten the mistaken impression that I would somehow prefer modern women to spend their lives being, as it were, barefoot and pregnant.

Nothing could be further from the truth. After all, I don't expect modern men to be constantly forming war parties so as to attack the men in their neighboring cul de sac. And there is absolutely no way, what with modern medicine and all, that this Earth can support 6 or 7 children per mother.

What's more, as we shall see, the scientifically established natural differences of women—that they're cooperative, collaborative, and way more obedient at doing what they're told—make them into ideal workers for advanced service economies. And little girls have traditionally actually *liked* imagining themselves as nurses or teachers. Whereas boys have always involved themselves in totally unrealistic adventure fantasies, such as being astronauts or soldiers of fortune.

The problem then is not that women should be kept out of the work force. Or that they can't be highly competent scientists, doctors, or lawyers. It's that we have to recognize once again what all those classical civilizations did: That men and women have intrinsically different natures. And that bringing up girls to have the expectation of becoming 'strong' and 'independent'—traits that science has convincingly shown are *direct functions* of the male hormone testosterone—is worse than trying to get cats to fetch sticks or dogs to play with balls of string. It is just going to end up with misery all around.

Because, yes, females are certainly smart enough. And in many cases and circumstances they are way more competent. But if there is one thing that brain science and evolution have proven it is that they are also *different*.

Although this brings up another possible objection. Because you might well say: 'Okay, for the sake of the argument I'll agree that we humans have evolved to have certain inborn traits and a certain inborn moral code, and that the two sexes have certain inborn differences. But what's stopping us from changing those aspects that we don't happen to like? After all, one of the arguments that pro-Slavery people had before the Civil War was that virtually every prior world civilization had practiced it, and that therefore slavery was natural human behavior.

Well, that's actually a good observation up to a point. But to really answer that question we have to go back to the proper understanding of the word 'natural'. Because even a normal standard dictionary can have over twenty definitions. For instance, 'natural' can mean (among other things) 'something that usually occurs', 'something inborn and not acquired', 'something free from pretension or artificiality', 'being of a primitive state', 'something having a particular character', and 'established by moral conviction'. Thus it might be natural for us to love eating sugary, salty, and fatty foods, but we certainly wouldn't expect to see such products when we went into a natural food store.

And the plain facts is that the human nature which I have outlined in this section—for instance, the equality bias, our tendency to follow authority, the naturally cooperative nature of females—has all been tested and verified in different countries and different cultures around the world. So we can reasonably conclude that these behaviors are characteristic of human nature itself.

But there are other behaviors which have cropped up in various cultures and at various times which not only are not at all universal, but in fact actively contradict some of those other basics of human nature. For lack of a better word, let's call them *perverse*. After all, we do seem to be in the middle of that Cambrian Moment. And just as an individual person is capable of inappropriate hypersocial behavior, so can a group of people. As in a tribe.

For instance, take cannibalism. Now there have definitely been cultures which have practiced it, which therefore in a certain sense makes it 'natural'. But there are no doubt few anthropologists, even among those who would otherwise be fervently 'non-normative' and protective of native beliefs, who would campaign to allow such a practice to continue with any new tribe that they found. After all, cannibalism seems to both intuitively and automatically go against any one of a number of the hypersocial aspects of human nature.

The same sort of argument can be made against slavery. For one could also—given our inborn desire for equality, fairness, and hypersocial cooperation—extrapolate from the Natural Moral Law that

is encoded in our genes and point out that slavery is therefore perverse. Even though all too many cultures, even semi-advanced civilizations, have accepted that particular peculiar institution as normal.

On the other hand, there is an important distinction from the previous two examples when one considers, say, vegetarianism. Because on the one hand there is now pretty strong evidence that it was the killing of animals and the eating of meat, a behavior extremely uncommon in all of the other primates, which gave hominids enough energy in order to grow their brains large and complex enough to result in us. So that if there is one behavior which is 'natural' for humans it is to kill animals and to eat meat. Yet we still have primarily primate digestive and other systems, which were not set up for carnivores. Further, across cultures and throughout history various religious and philosophical thinkers have taken the doctrine of non-violence, which is certainly a necessity for successful hypersocial living, and extended it to the food that they consume. So that today many proponents of 'natural living' also praise the health and spiritual benefits of being vegetarian. Even though homo sapiens are 'natural' carnivores.

So in certain circumstances it does make sense, even strong moral sense, to try to change 'natural' human behavior. But in the context of the subject of this podcast: Can one seriously apply this principle in service to an artificial, man made ideology??? Especially one that glorifies the Self, self interest, and selfishness? Which are the exact polar opposites of the demands of a naturally hypersocial animal? What possible appeal to what higher moral law could conceivably be going on?

Yet that is unfortunately is what often does happen with scientists who are also tenured, card carrying members of the socioeconomic elite of this ideology. As I pointed out way back in the beginning, the psychologist Steven Pinker, even after totally demolishing the idea of the Blank Slate which underlies Utilitarianism, is then also an enthusiastic supporter of the secular humanism *which is a complete function of Utilitarianism*. Paul Bloom, the psychologist who discovered the moral life of babies, rejects those aspects of our Natural Moral Law which conflict with his previously held secular humanist beliefs.

In other words, some of the very people who work so hard to prove that our brains and minds are not infinitely malleable then turn around and assume that they indeed are when it comes to accepting the very belief system which they have just disproved!

Now, having said all this, I would naturally expect some people to naturally still have their objections. But this is in the nature of things as a result of folks growing up believing in an unnatural ideology which defies Nature itself.

Anyway, now that we've finally finished with science, the question naturally arises: So where does the podcast go from here?

Well, as you'll recall, when we left off of the History section we were around the year 1900. So the first thing that I'm going to do is to go back there and take up the history of the 20th Century. And follow it along so as to see how the ideas of Liberal Democracy slowly overtook, and then replaced, the common consensus of the 19th Century. Although now that we've covered all this science I'm hoping that during this presentation you'll be able to see for yourselves pretty clearly just how the West went wrong.

On the off chance that I'm wrong about that, though, once we've brought ourselves up to the 21st Century I'll be explicitly pointing out how just about each and every one of our various postmodern problems, paradoxes, and predicaments can be explained simply by specifically showing how so much of the world has been screwed up by our trying to force the round peg of our human nature into the square hole of secular humanism and liberal democracy.

And after we've done *that*? Okay, finally we're going to get to the place where I tell you what I think could possibly be done so as to get out of this mess. To turn this ship around. To at least give us a fighting chance to end up with an end product which at least approximates an atmosphere of peace and love.

Although I'll warn you ahead of time: I will certainly not be like most social critics who finish their books with 'policy prescriptions' which are neither plausible nor doable. On the other hand, though, I'm not Pollyanna. Because I fully realize that we have gone so far down this road that 'plausible and doable' solutions don't necessarily mean that anyone will actually believe in them or follow through with them.

And then, even if they want to, given how far down the road we've gone, threading that needle will take a lot more discipline, a lot more consciousness, and a lot more self denial than anything else that I can think of in the history of humankind.

But, in a Cosmic sense, in the end that's not my concern. It's yours. After all, I can only think what I think and do what I do. And share with you my conclusions. After that, as might have been said back in the Sixties... It's *your* karma, dude.

Although the very fact that there is an answer is—to me at least—highly inspirational. After all, to my knowledge, no one else out there is offering anything that is even remotely plausible or doable. And, again, as I pointed out way at the beginning, if you knew for a certainty that your life depended upon getting a bunch of toothpaste back into its tube, you very well might not succeed. But at least you would be highly motivated.

Anyway, before we end today, as a preview of our penultimate part, and also because I find the subject so interesting, I'd like to go over a couple of examples as to how the intersection of liberal democracy and actual human nature have so thoroughly bollixed us up.

First: Consider that fact that for those three hundred thousand years human females have not only accepted pair bonding/monogamy, but actively sought it out. Once again: This was the only way that they and their children could survive. But a lifetime of monogamy also meant that the only period when they were actively seeking a mate, when they were in the market, as it were, and that therefore when they *had* to be attractive, was for one or two years at the most. Now this doesn't mean that they would have no desire to be attractive after that. (If nothing else there would always be a residual effect. In a similar vein, older men still enjoy watching football, even though they can no longer play it, or engage in any sort of mock combat, themselves.) The main point here, though, is that up until the present day no woman ever had the *need* to attract a mate after a short period in adolescence. More importantly, the fact of her husband, and of both her larger society and its social norms, meant that she could feel perfectly safe for the rest of her life from unwanted advances or of the insecurities of continually being in a competitive marketplace.

In the 21st Century, however... Just as dogs can be seen as wolves which were held back at the puppy stage of development, the so-called liberated modern woman can be compared to a teenage girl who was never given the chance to mature. Because present day females often wait until they are thirty-five years old before they even start thinking about having their first babies. Or of taking care of anyone but themselves. Fifty-five year old women go out on dates and then gossip with each other about their boyfriends. And most all of them, up and down the line, have to obsess each and every day over makeup, hair style, and exactly which clothes to wear. Because they have to be *on*, they have to be attractive, whether at work or shopping or wherever.

And now let's also look at a couple of the many unforeseen consequences of gender equality.

As this Science section strove to beat into your brain, by now it is well established that women tend to be more cooperative. Men, due to their much higher levels of testosterone, are much more naturally assertive. And this has meant that groups of men and of women have developed quite different ways in which to work together with members of the same sex. Women are much more collaborative and consultative. Men are much more hierarchical. But that hierarchy is alleviated by a sense of respect and by a strict observance of the rules. Both approaches, of course, can be effective.

But what happens when children are brought up to believe that there are no innate differences between the sexes. And then they have to work together? A woman will likely expect a collaborative work environment, and will then be justifiably offended should a man act assertively. Likewise a man will become incredibly frustrated that the women are all sitting around discussing what needs to be done instead of just dividing the task up and doing it. In both instances the person thinks that the other sex isn't living up to 'natural' social norms. And although workplaces can try come up with some middle path that fudges the differences, in practice both sides will often feel constricted or thwarted.

And it can get much worse in personal relationships.

Because you'll recall that, due to evolutionary necessity, human mothers were utterly dependent on the protection of their husband and of their tribe. This meant that human females (along with virtually all other primate females) just didn't, as it were, talk back. And as a result male humans (and monkeys) never developed a coping mechanism for such a state of affairs.

On the other hand, well run cultures evolved so as to teach boys that girls were of a totally different order of being than they were, and that therefore boys and men shouldn't even think of acting aggressively towards them. In fact, it might interest you to know that up until the 1950s the social norm was such that all men of all classes, even truckers and longshoremen, were never *ever* supposed to curse or use four letter words in front of women or children.

This idea of two totally separate classes of humanity was critically important, though, because when men were among other men there was a whole different dynamic at work. For although the human male body has been highly 'feminized' in comparison with other apes, and although dominance displays no longer dominate, it is far easier for men to be physically provoked than it is for women. There's just all that testosterone. And there's also just all that basic biology that goes back to the beginning of sex itself.

And so human males, just like most other male mammals, have also learned ways to back off, so that every potentially tense encounter doesn't result in injury or death.

I've already mentioned avoiding eye contact, not just with monkeys and apes but also with other men in rough situations. Allied with that, especially in those rough situations, is the need to give other men their own space, to not get up in their face. After all, these are primal signals. And they induce primal emotions in men. Fortunately, most males in the process of growing up both consciously and unconsciously learn not to behave like that with other men unless they are indeed intending to start a fight.

But women don't know or understand any of this because they didn't evolve to take part in any of that. Which means that in the postmodern world, when supposedly the most humiliating position for a woman to be in is to appear subservient to men, said woman 'stands up' for herself by engaging verbally. Just as she would if she had a dispute with another woman. To a man, however, especially those men who haven't been over educated and somewhat emasculated by modern thought, such behavior comes across as 'fighting words', especially if she is not showing the respect that men have grown up learning to show each other, if only to avoid such situations. So he reacts aggressively.

Which freaks her out. Which makes her speak even more forcefully and emotionally. Which makes his primal mind think that this other *person*—no longer, because of his upbringing, seen as a 'different' and therefore in-need-of-protection woman—this other person really does want to fight. Which causes him to lash out at that other person. Which all too often causes the police to arrive.

Which all too often causes another relationship to fall apart.

But the worst tragedy here is that each of the parties sincerely thinks that they were in the right and that the other was horribly to blame. Because they were both brought up to believe that, absent tradition and culture, the other 'gender' would think and act exactly like they do.

Well, with that cheerful image it's time to truly bring the Science section to a close. And next episode it will be time to open our history books once again and turn our pages to the year 1900.

In the meantime, here's hoping that for the last bunch of episodes you've heard at least some science that you have found interesting. And maybe I might have even cleared some things up for you. At any rate, if you need to or want to go over any of it again, as always you can go to the website, dialitbackordie.com, and find a PDF transcript of each and every episode.

And, once again, as always, I would like to redundantly thank you once again for so far having listened.