

## EPISODE 72

### WHAT ELSE IS LEFT TO SAY?

Hi there. Welcome to the end of the end of all this. My name is Michael Folz. And this is Episode number 72 of my podcast Dial It Back Or Die. 72. Three squared times two cubed. One of those really interesting numbers, if you're any kind of math nerd. And it thus, in a math nerd kind of way, provides a fitting end point to this project which I started some two and three quarter years ago.

And if you've been listening all along, then you might have noticed kind of a gap for three months or so. It had to do with the phenomenon of old bodies falling apart. After all, that is the way it goes. For me, as well as it will be, for you.

Anyway, if you have been one of those who has listened to each and every one of the episodes, I'd like to start off by letting you know how impressed I am that you did this. After all, that was some 360,000 words that you just spent the time to hear. Now there's a lot of words. Although I dare say that your time was no doubt better spent listening to me rather than, say, reading door stoppers like Karl Marx's 'Das Kapital' or Adam Smith's 'The Wealth of Nations'. Because I'm not only a much better writer than those two notoriously obtuse guys, but I also ended up covering a whole lot more relevant information and theory.

Okay, I don't want to get too flippant right here at the end. Especially since I've been trying to be extra careful and somewhat serious all along. Employing the previously well regarded method of presenting historical and scientific evidence, and then setting about to prove my case through rational argument. Which is no doubt why it has taken so long. Although it could well have taken even longer. Because I have also still had to condense so much, and to edit out so much more. As I might have mentioned earlier, just about every one of these episodes could have been expanded into an entire book.

And I do know that I did mention right at the beginning of this that it would have been a lot easier if my evidence and conclusions had fitted neatly into the category of 'right' or 'left'. Because then I would have already had a huge pre-arranged choir to preach to. And all that I would have had to do was to confirm that particular side's pre-existing beliefs. Score points by getting a whole bunch of people angry at *those other people*.

Although I do have to admit that for the last few episodes I've had to keep reminding myself that my original motivation was to, as simply and clearly as possible, analyze the postmodern world of today. To honestly present the real underlying causes of what's going on. And then to suggest the real changes in attitude and behavior which would be necessary if we were ever going to get ourselves out of this belief system corner that we have painted ourselves into. Regardless of how 'practical', 'realistic', or most importantly, popular my prescription would be.

Because I'm not a total idiot. I know only too well that there's way too much forward inertia. I know that there are just too many true believers who are now firmly in control of the media, the culture, the woke corporations, you name it. Nor, even though just about everyone everywhere is dissatisfied with this postmodern world which is going on around them, do I see any signs that this means that anyone really cares all that much, or, more importantly, is able or willing to get it up to do anything about anything. Especially when it becomes apparent that they themselves might be expected to change any of their behaviors, let alone be willing to suffer any of the consequences of standing outside of the herd.

So that, no, I don't have a realistic expectation that anyone will take me up on any of this. After all, if you remember from Episode 14, a semi-analogous situation happened back in the first century B.C. The Roman Republic was falling apart, the politicians had become venal and corrupt, the old moral code that had been expected of Roman citizens had more or less evaporated. And yet almost everyone was in full blown denial that this had happened. And back then one of the contemporaries who wasn't in denial was the Roman historian Livy. And he wrote something to the effect that no one around him any longer had the strength to resist all of the vices. Nor did they have the strength to take up the cures.

And as my little tour through history pointed out, after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars people in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by and large did have the strength to resurrect pre-Enlightenment discipline and virtue. But by the 1960's, when there was another short burst of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Romantic spirit, we were far too weak, and the lack of collective strength or necessary discipline meant that the incipient re-awakening almost immediately dissipated. Which made the incipient re-awakening almost immediately morph into a weird co-opted version of itself.

And that was way before smart phones, social media, 24 hour Netflix/Amazon/Hulu blah, blah, blah. I mean, even the people who are running Silicon Valley are becoming more and more frightened by what they have unleashed on the world. Yet still the dopamine feedback loop addiction gets tighter

and tighter. Still we deny that *our* comfortable, tried and true political and ideological beliefs might in any way be to blame. Still we unleash all of our anger on whatever *them* that we can come up with.

Even though the center stopped holding a long time ago. Even though that rough beast has by now not only slouched to Bethlehem, but has kept right on going.

So... If there is no point, then what was the point? If, at the end of all this, I'm not going to demand that you rally around *my* flag, or start some new political action committee, then why did I go to all this trouble, and spend so much of your time, not to mention even more of my time, in this long, drawn out, overly intellectual Jeremiad?

Why indeed?

Well, for one thing, I like to solve problems. And you must admit that the question of why, especially now that science has learned so much, and especially now that technology has solved so many of our day to day problems and made our everyday living so much healthier and wealthier, why now, as a result of all that, we should all end up being so lonely, so unfulfilled, and so downright miserable... Now that question certainly is a real doozy.

I mean, even Roman emperors, or Louis XIV, didn't have access to fruits and vegetables remotely as varied, as large, as delicious, and as year round as you can find at your local Costco. As recently as the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century almost half of all newborn children still died before their fifth birthday, and the majority of houses still didn't have indoor plumbing. In my own life: At the time I first went to college I had never lived in a place which had more than one bathroom. It was extremely rare for one family to own two cars. When I placed a phone call to India in 1970 I had to schedule it two days in advance, and in present day money it cost over \$30 a minute.

What's more, changes in the rest of the world have in certain ways outpaced even changes here in America. For instance, life expectancy in the United States is now 79, which is around nine years longer than when I was born. But today in poverty stricken and crime ridden Honduras life expectancy is still actually 76. And in 1982 when I first visited China, right across the border from Hong Kong there were still coolies in conical hats working the rice fields. Today in that same area not only are there glossy skyscrapers much, much further than the eye can see, but China has also lifted over 800 million people out of poverty.

And my mind isn't totally senile yet. And thankfully my memory continues to have its relative sharpness. So that I can clearly recall, even with all of the change and upheaval and uncertainty back

in those fabled Sixties, and even with my naturally non-reflexively upbeat disposition, how much more positive everything felt back then. Because it honestly seemed to most of us, even in the lowest depths back then, that we really could remake the world. That the energy was absolutely there.

So that, in conclusion, if there were anything to the idea that happiness was really related in any way to wealth, or even to expected outcomes of health, then just the economic and technological changes in the past fifty years or so should have resulted in unmitigated happiness throughout the entire world.

Instead, of course, just about the opposite has happened. And so this would certainly seem to be a mystery just crying out to be solved.

Well, like any good mystery, it turned out that the answer had been staring us in the face all along. It had been hiding in plain sight. What we had been presented with our entire lives as good and wonderful—freedom, democracy, equality—were nothing less than sham words covering up for a creepy ideology of atheistic materialism, which not only denied that we had souls which could or should be either saved or satisfied, but an ideology which, when finally allowed to come to full fruition and to then dominate in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, would actually lead all of us to both a present and a future which struggle to be even two dimensional.

Okay, explaining all of that is part of what the past 71 episodes have been all about. And hopefully all of those episodes about history and philosophy, especially the many episodes about the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and the Age of Enlightenment, have served to, well, enlighten you as to how we got here from there.

But to me at least all of those episodes about Science were really the most fascinating parts. Because it is really amazing how much, were it not for our ideological blinders, we have actually found out about the realities of human nature. We are really close to figuring it all out.

What we have also found out, though, again were it not for our ideological blinders, is that we, being human animals, are also bound by certain parameters. I mean, for instance, it would be great if we could all just flap our arms and fly. But we can't. And if any of us were ever dumb enough to follow some stupid ideology that said we could jump off of cliffs if only we believed hard enough, the results wouldn't be very pretty, now would they?

And likewise, the simple damn truth is that at this stage of our evolution the siren song of 'sexual freedom', for example, or for, say, unlimited fantasies of violence or sex, will necessarily lead

to just as dreadful results. Our dopamine addled brains can't handle it. The sensitive balance of our social order can't handle it. Because we are not gods. We are not even Faust. We are simply little human animals which somehow found ourselves here some four billion years since evolution started, now both learning and changing our environment at a ridiculously exponential rate, with not the foggiest idea of where we are really going or what we are really doing.

Which is why it is way past time that we dial it back. Or die.

Which is what the last bunch of episodes has been about.

But by now I've done my best at trying to lay it all out. I've shot my wad, as it were. And if in these past 71 episodes I have failed to convince you, then there's not much more to say. So I won't.

Although, in the future, if you ever want to go over any or all of the episodes, hopefully this podcast will still be up. And, if for some reason it is not, then you should be always able to go to its website, [www.dialitbackordie.com](http://www.dialitbackordie.com), and read PDFs of any episode which you may care to. After all, there is a whole lot of information which I have tried to impart.

So much information, in fact, that it would be foolish, here at the end, to attempt any kind of complete summation.

Nonetheless... There are a few key, important, central points that I would hope that you keep with you going into the future. Indeed, thinking about it, if you really succeed in internalizing these critical ideas, then I would think that in the future, even if you don't remember all of the specific facts and figures and arguments that I have thrown out there, that you'll still be able to re-formulate all of the relevant conclusions on your own.

So here goes.

And let's start with the Cosmic. Because there's a lot of light pollution in our postmodern world. So I don't know how many nights you have spent gazing up at the stars, and pondering what this Universe is all about. But I do know that if you follow popular science at all you've no doubt seen any number of stories recently about how probable it is that Life arises easily and abundantly throughout it all.

Bull crap. The reality is that the majority of scientists and science writers who express such opinions grew up immersed in science fiction. And they really want to believe. Further, if such a state of affairs were to exist, then that would be an unstated feel good pill for postmodern consciences which

otherwise might freak out over the reality that we just might be screwing up the entire past four billion years of evolution. Because, hey, there's plenty more life out there!

But, whatever, wishful thinking is not science. And, with the obvious caveat that there are bound to be new discoveries in the physical sciences, here—as I went over in Episodes 35 & 36—is the real reality as it stands right now: Because combining the parameters of astronomy, organic chemistry, and biology, the odds of a complex cell, let alone intelligent life, evolving anywhere else in this galaxy of 200 billion stars, is vanishingly small. Which means that, even if your day job is being a shoe salesman, and even forgetting all religious or philosophical ideas, still *you* are incredibly special and precious. *We* are incredibly special and precious.

And don't you ever forget that. Especially the next time you do something self absorbed. Especially the next time you partake of some pointless dopamine rush. *You* are carrying the Cosmic weight of Something on your shoulders. Whether you are conscious of it or not. Whether you care about it or not.

So... Welcome to the first part of the human condition.

And here's the next thing I'd like for you to always keep with you. It's that concept which I've dubbed the 'Cambrian Moment', and which you can re-familiarize yourself with at Episodes 37 & 39. And the idea has to do with the fact that for the past four billion years of evolution, there have previously been only two big changes in the panorama of life. The first happened about a billion and a half years ago, when one microscopic microbe found itself inside of another one, and the two somehow co-evolved to form the first complex cell, as in blood cells or amoebas, both of which are orders of magnitude larger than are bacteria. And biologists are certain that, given DNA lineages, of all the quadrillions of microbes before and after, this could only have happened exactly once.

The second major change, multi-cellular life, occurred about 500 million years ago. And this time it happened twice, first with Edicarian life, which lasted for about 20 million years before dying out. And, second, with the Cambrian Explosion, which is responsible for all multi-cellular life today.

Anyway, my argument is that the species of homo sapiens, with its giant brain far larger than it needs for simple survival, is so far different in so many ways from all other forms of life—witness speech, language, capacity for music and art and mathematics, use of tools, planning for the future, motivation to teach others, and, ahem, consciousness itself—our species is so different that we are, right here, right now, in the middle of a third major change. Because, yes, there are a few animals with

rudimentary forms of some of the above. But comparing a chimp poking a termite hill with a stick to us sending a rocket ship to Pluto is somewhere beyond silly.

And, of course, we would have to wait a hundred thousand or a million years, and to be past the step change, and to be looking backwards, in order to prove that we've gone through it. But I truly think that this is the most probable state of affairs. And I also truly think that you should strive to always keep this understanding as close to your consciousness as you can. Again, the joys of self absorption or of dopamine rushes should pale in comparison to the awesome reality of this, such an essential part of our human condition. And it is a cross of responsibility which each and every one of us bears.

And another of those unique human behaviors leads us to the third point which I hope for you to carry with you. And this is our, not just social, but hypersocial nature. And this particular step change is hard to overemphasize. Because biologists may be right that up until this point in evolutionary history it has been every organism for itself. But both the extreme altruism that humans often show and the incredible complexity and the interdependence of human societies are far, far beyond that shown by any other creatures.

Now this doesn't mean that we also don't each often have incredibly unique individual personalities. And, of course, therein lies the rub. Because somehow a system needs to be developed and maintained which sincerely values each individual, while also recognizing that of necessity, being hypersocial animals, the individual must be subservient to the larger group. Sorry, but there's no way around it. All intelligent literate civilizations have had to deal with it. And it's just another critical, critical part of the human condition.

In light of that, always keep in mind this essential point: People are basically good. And we are also basically pre-programmed to be good hypersocial citizens. So that we certainly don't need a totalitarian police state to keep us in line.

But we are also right in the middle of that Cambrian Moment. And right here, right now, in this transition from one way of being to another, this means that most of us are also flawed. So that we most certainly do need a set of smart, and competently enforced, social norms to keep us in line. Because social norms are what create social glue. And without social norms there is no social glue.

And without social glue we become atomized individuals. And then that does lead to a totalitarian police state.

And please: Never, never forget that.

And here's an allied sub-point, as it were. Because, being good hypersocial animals, we are also pre-programmed to, more or less, do as we're told. So, as outlined in Episode 40, never forget that Milgram experiment. Or, as your grade school teacher might well have told you, never forget that if everyone else jumps out of the window, you probably will, too.

This means that those in authority—and don't kid yourself, there will always be people in authority—those folks not only must be held to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. They must also be indoctrinated from a young age to respect those who they will be in authority over.

Because I don't care what system it is—Communism, Fascism, Liberal Democracy, Utopian Socialism, you name it—the plain fact is that, we humans being flawed creatures, whether one is a Commissar of a Congressman, or indeed any bureaucrat or anyone else anywhere above the lowest rung of the ladder, it's really, really easy, and also really, really seductive, to power trip.

And, again, it's just an undeniable part of the human condition. So that instead of denying it, instead of thinking that some flow chart is going to solve the problem, instead we have to fully internalize that we're all in this together, the rich and the poor, the weak and the strong.

Okay. This brings me to the final major point. And this, too, is so important for you to carry with you on into the future. Namely: Contrary to the mental noodlings of certain 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century individuals, and as outlined in Episodes 46 to 49, men and women are in many essential ways, qualitatively different creatures.

In the main, this has to do with, first, the exigencies created by our being born with those giant brains inside of giant heads. And, second, it has to do with the need to convince squalling, conscious, freaked out infants and toddlers that this heartless, soulless world which most definitely is so red in tooth and claw, instead is a happy and wonderful place which they can feel safe and secure growing up in.

The result, which I've gone over any number of times, is that women of necessity had to evolve to become sweet, gentle, modest, accommodating, ultimately dependent beings. And this has been going on for up to three million years. Of necessity. And no amount of ideology or technology or



wishful thinking or anything else is going to change that. Period. And any attempt to do so is only going to create innate cognitive dissonance on the most massive scale possible.

So kindly remember that. And also kindly remember that, in terms of evolution in this Cambrian Moment, and in terms of our being hypersocial beings, those women who embrace that sweet, gentle, modest state are in fact by far the more evolved of the two sexes. Grace is what civilizes.

But also be sure to remember the corollary to this. Over those millions of years, of necessity, human males and human females have co-evolved to become mutually interdependent. Yes, women with their gentle natures and soft bodies and numerous utterly dependent children, have had to rely upon men for their physical protection from the outside world, which always continued to be cruel and nasty. But men have large brains and large consciousnesses and large emotional lives, too. So that they absolutely need the gentleness of women to help them get through all of their fights and all of those nights.

It's the final, crowning touch of the human condition. We are not complete unto ourselves. We need the Other. We need to dance a harmonious dance of the yin and the yang.

So those are the main points which I would hope that you can internalize. And if you do internalize them, then I have done my job. After all, I'm at the stage of life where I'm going to be out of here soon enough. And I never had it in my power to change the world anyway. I suppose that the only talent which I ever had in that regard was to see things clearly. And to then point them out to you.

But, here at the end, *you* certainly have the power to do something about it all. Even if it only concerns your life. Because look around you. It's all dead. It seems like everything, but actually it's nothing. And all you're up against, for all of their sound and fury and for all of their seeming power, is really a bunch of sadly devolved adult humans who watch comic book movies.

And, as I've noted before, it might well turn out that we humans, at this stage of evolution, are just literally too dumb to ever figure it all out. I mean, dogs are pretty smart animals, and they can easily tell that when the can opener is working dog food is going to appear in short order. But try explaining how a dog food factory works to them.

Even if our intelligence is too limited cosmically, however, we do already know what to do. Most of our minds may be racing. But, if difficult, it is still possible to slow them down. To dial it back. What's more, almost all of us, at least at some point of our lives, have experienced positivity. And that means that we each have more positivity to emit. And not to get too sappy at this late date,

but guess what? Love really is the answer. If not the ecstatic kind, then maybe we can at least agree to strive for a sort of calm love. Or at least cooperation.

And I know that I still haven't covered everything. For instance, no one can pray or meditate for twelve hours a day. If they try to, almost undoubtedly they'll go crazy. So someone is going to have to come up with some feasible cross-cultural definition of good, clean fun. Without being lame or churchy, but also without the sad, endless addiction of those sad, endless dopamine feedback loops.

But, hey, do I have to solve *all* the problems of the world? I mean, it wouldn't have been fair to not have left at least a few for you to figure out, now would it?

And I sincerely, sincerely hope, though, that you will take me up on it. And that you, yes you, as a result of these 72 episodes, will have at least a wisp of motivation to try to move the ball a little further down the field.

Because as for me, this podcast is now officially over. And so for one last time I would like to take the time and to thank you one more time for so long and for so far...

But wait. There's more. Because, as it turns out, I've only finished half of the project.

You see, so far I've only been looking at the problem of our Earthly existence from what you might call the academic side. History. Philosophy. Logic. Science. I've only stuck to facts and stories that you yourself can check up on on Wikipedia or on other sources. I've been careful that all of the history and science have been such that relevant professors would agree that they are within the mainstream. And I've tried to be careful to stay away from anything that could be labeled 'spiritual' or 'occult' or in any other way not subject to study in serious academia.

But that's only the half of it.

Because, since I was doing that, I haven't really been able to tell you why you should continue to be getting up in the morning and why you should continue to be keeping on keeping on. I haven't been able to tell you how and why there is that juice that makes living worth living. I haven't been able to tell you the point of existence.

So, assuming that I live long enough, I'm about to do that. I'm about to start another podcast, this time one that deals with the, um, spiritual realm. That deals with the existence of, and the ins and outs of, what can be termed the religious experience. Although, surprisingly perhaps, this new podcast won't require for you to believe in God, either.

It will be entitled ManWomanSexGod. A title which, hopefully, you will find intriguing. Although, just as I don't think that anyone else has ever come up with an analysis similar to what resulted in Dial It Back Or Die, I am even more convinced that not only has no one come up with a similar analysis to mine of the religious experience, but also that the content of ManWomanSexGod will not be remotely what you might imagine it to be.

Got you at all intrigued? Well, if so, it will probably be starting in around two or three month's time. And you can look for it at its website, [www.ManWomanSexGod.com](http://www.ManWomanSexGod.com), or on the various streaming services. Alternatively, you can drop me a line with your email, either at the Dial It Back Or Die website, or directly at [mfolz@q.com](mailto:mfolz@q.com).

In certain ways I think it will be even more important than Dial It Back Or Die. Because, again, I think that the synthesis which I have come up with is extremely important insofar as helping all of us sort through all of those experiences and phenomena which are lumped together into the term 'spiritual'. And although I will be drawing from sources which are not your typical mainstream academia, still I will endeavor to be using the same level of dispassionate reason and logic which I have endeavored to use in this podcast.

And, again, you won't have to believe in God to understand or enjoy it.

So there. Now I am done. Except... that I'd like to make a few final announcements.

First, it occurs to me that if you are one of those who has diligently listened to all 72 episodes, you deserve to be rewarded. So that, if you are one of those persons, and you would like a free gift, send me an email, once again either through the Dial It Back Or Die website, or at my personal email, which is [mfolz@q.com](mailto:mfolz@q.com).

Second, I would like to take a moment to thank my recording engineer friend, Sam Weedman, for having not only removed all of the blips and squawks, but who has also somehow magically made my voice sound so much better than it does in real life.

And, finally, I would like to thank my wife, Maureen, who has so graciously put up with me putting all of this time into this project. And who also, of course, has provided the wonderful short vocal which comprises the intro and the outro.

And now it's time to hear her once again. Because it's also finally time to really, really thank you one last time for so far having listened.