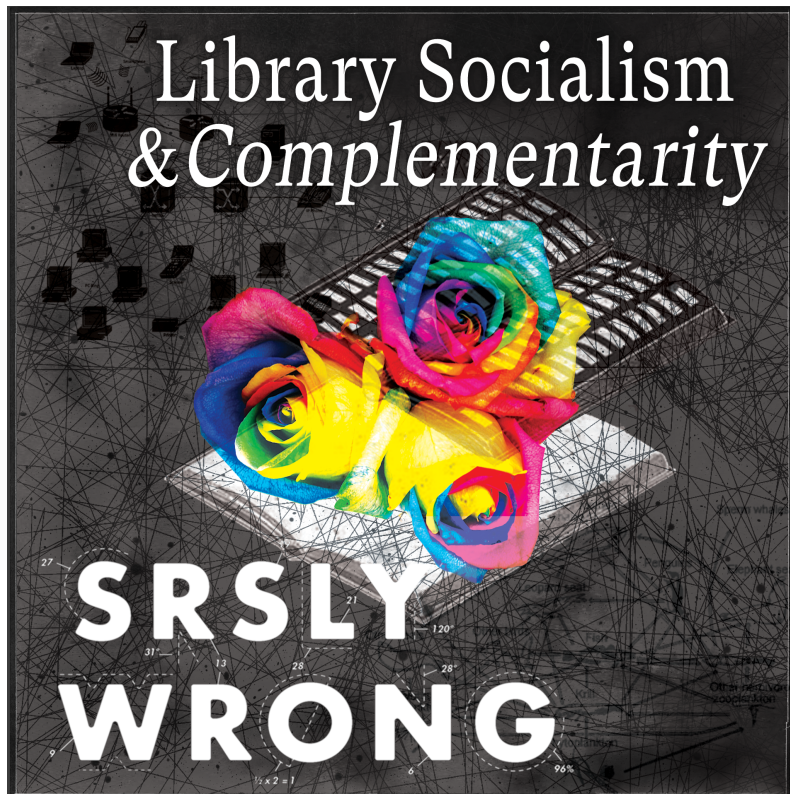


Library Socialism & Complementarity — Srsly Wrong Ep. 200



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgQ6GZpvDGY>

Narrator

Warning: This is the 200th episode of Srsly Wrong. Celebration sounds. (Celebration sounds) Yay!

Shawn

Yeah. Two hundro.

Aaron

My name's Aaron.

Shawn

And my name's Shawn.

Aaron

We are back from our little break.

Shawn

This is our bicentennial. Bicen...

Aaron

Yeah, bi- or...

Shawn

Bicentennial would be 200-year celebration.

Aaron

Right. Two hundred years, not 200 episodes.

Shawn

Bicent...

Aaron

What's the ending that means, "episodes of a podcast?"

Shawn

Bicentisode.

Aaron

Bicentepisode.

Shawn

Yeah. So before we go on, I just want to thank everyone for listening. But I want to thank in particular the people who donate to our show to help keep it going. We wouldn't have made it to 200 without you, and without more of you, we're not gonna make it to 400. So... (Laughs)

Aaron

Oh, no! We really want them to make it to 400! (Laughs)

Shawn

"I want to hear 400 so bad." But no, yeah, really, like, you- you make the show happen. And I anticipate that we will make it to 400 thanks to you and people like you. So, that's just awesome. It's on Patreon, and you get bonus episodes.

Aaron

Heck yeah.

Shawn

So today's episode's about complementarity. And I want to say, you know, we did 200 episodes. Well, there's some complementarity between myself and you, Aaron. We-

Aaron

Oh, you think? (Laughs)

Shawn

—we work well together.

Aaron

Well, thank you. I thought so, too. I was too embarrassed to say, but.

Shawn

Well, I wasn't too embarrassed. I was brave.

Aaron

You're shameless. (Laughs) Just absolutely shameless—

Shawn

I was shameless. And know what? I'd do it again. (Aaron laughs) We have to acknowledge this type of stuff. We're being positive male role models right now by sharing a moment.

Aaron

Mm. Yeah. Welcome to the show.

☒ *Intro theme by Far Flowers*

(00:02:07)

Shawn

So this is the third Library Socialism episode.

Aaron

Part Three.

Shawn

The trilogy, complete. Library Socialism and Usufruct, the use and profit of property but not its destruction, a changed version of property relations that we propose based on the principles of a lending library. There's Library Socialism and the Irreducible Minimum, which is the level that no one should ever fall below. All human beings deserve housing, food, shelter, community, affection, and so on. And finally, Library Socialism and Complementarity. "Complementarity" is a way of looking at non-hierarchical difference as something generative. Complementarity is, a bunch of different members of a team all do specialized things in relation to each other, and the outcome is greater than the sum of its parts.

Aaron

It's when the elements of a system complement one another, rather than clash with one another, or insult one another. It's the basis for any functioning complex system. It's the basis for functioning complex ecosystems. It's the basis for functioning complex community groups, technological systems. And for the library society that we want to build, the parts of the society have to work together in a complementary fashion.

Shawn

And we can see the library as an embodiment of the principle of complementarity in action. You have this massive collection of books of all various kinds, and what makes it a library is that incredible diversity of opinions, perspectives, subject matter, and so on, that together cumulatively creates something that has its own character, that is, the library is a place that you can go and learn anything. And the fact that it's not restricted, that it's open, and that there's cooking books and history books in the same place generates something that's better than if we had cooking library, a history library, and so on. Even within that, say you did have a cooking library, the diversity of cookbooks by different authors from different traditions within it is generative. That access to knowledge and experience and context creates a positive social outcome.

Aaron

And the librarian, but also, like, the library system, and the organization and cataloging and curating the sum of the history of human knowledge condensed down into these individualized libraries or into the larger inter-library global library exchange system, that system, the library, and those people, the

librarians, facilitate the complementarity that exists between a person who's seeking information about history and history books. There's a complementary relationship between that person and those things, but you need this institution and these human mediators in order to facilitate that complementary relationship. Otherwise, the person seeking information about history might not be able to find it, or might not have access to it.

Shawn

But you can also think of the librarian and library patron relationship as having complementarity to it, in that we wouldn't expect everyone to know everything about the library. But you can expect one person, or a group of people, to together know everything about a library, and then help be able to connect people to what they need.

(00:05:17)

☒ *Upbeat Infomercial Music*

Ad Man 1

Today's episode of Srsly Wrong is brought to you by: Working well together. Some things just work well together. For example, you can take three or four different weak metals, make an alloy that's stronger than all of them put together. Where does that extra strength come from? That's just how it is.

Ad Man 2

Imagine canvass, covered with dobs of paint that create a beautiful picture. But then imagine if all those paint drops were spread across a million canvasses. All you would see is one tiny dot on each canvass. It wouldn't be a picture. The dots of paint are all that's there. When they come together, you get a picture.

Ad Man 1

In the business world, they call that "synergy." I'm reminded of the delicious French soup mirepoix. You could put carrots in water, and it's all right. You could put celery in water, and sure, maybe it's edible. You could put onions in water, and it's probably the best of the three. But you put the three of them together in hot water and make a soup— oh, boy! That is such a tasty soup. It's called a mirepoix. It's just got its own character. It's, like, distinct from each of them. The sum is greater than its parts, you know? It's— it's just, they work well together.

Ad Man 2

All this talk about food makes me hungry for combinations of food that are better together than apart, like peaches and cream.

Ad Man 1

Oh, or peanut butter and jelly.

Ad Man 2

Cereal and milk.

Ad Man 1

Roast beef and potato.

Ad Man 2

Bacon and eggs.

Ad Man 1

Lentils and sesame seed into hummus.

Ad Man 2

Curry. Just all curry. Take all these individual little spices, mix 'em together into a symphony of, like, the perfect, delicious spices.

Ad Man 1

Now, I love fruit. But give me a good fruit bowl and you've made my night.

Ad Man 2

Yeah. And if a bowl of different kinds of fruit mixed together doesn't make you realize that working together is working better than working apart, then I don't know what to tell you.

Ad Man 1

Working well together: today's sponsor of Srsly Wrong.

(00:07:07)

Shawn

So the place that these three concepts—irreducible minimum, usufruct, and complementarity—first were introduced to us and became the basis of our discussions on Library Socialism, in "The Ecology of Freedom" by Murray Bookchin, he briefly mentions preliterate societies basing their societies on these three principles. So there's anthropological, historical examples of Neanderthals that were born disabled, and were able to grow up to maturity. The only way to understand these disabled Neanderthals being able to reach maturity is that they were taken care of and made part of the community in some way to be allowed to grow and die of old age, rather than die of the disability they were born with.

I think this example in the human realm about complementarity is important to underscore, because we have this common liberal conception of diversity which is criticized by, like, reactionaries and the right— "Oh, you know, liberals like diversity for diversity's sake." Like, more diversity, like, there's no logic about it— blah-blah-blah, blah-blah. And it's probably true that, like, liberals don't think deeply about what it means for diversity to be strength. But diversity is strength in a really real sense. Just to make an extreme example, a tall person and a short person might be useful in different situations. Maybe a short person could fit through somewhere. A tall person could reach a high shelf. And together, the short person and the tall person are able to provide mutual benefit to one another.

And this same principle applies to the young and the old, to people with various levels of abilities in various ways, and also, I think, really underscores the need for decency and humanity towards people who are differently abled, who have physical disorders, or developmental disorders, or whatever, is that there's room for them in the human tapestry. Now, this is, like, something that the Nazis were against. The Nazis said that disabled people needed to, like, do stuff to prove that they were worth it. Like, it's worth keeping them alive. There's nothing more horrifying and disgusting than that. And obviously, I think we all listening stand in opposite to that. But what's the basis for that? The basis for that is that we don't let anyone fall below a certain level, and we understand that extending our circle to include everyone gives us benefit. There's a shared benefit. It's not a transactional benefit. It's a generative benefit. It's a positive, emergent outcome.

Aaron

Talking about diversity as our strength or, like, the positive benefits that come with diversity and the criticisms of that, like, obviously having difference doesn't mean there's going to be complementarity, that it's all gonna work together. Diversity is a strength when there is complementarity, when there is non-hierarchical difference between groups. And so, there are major clashes going on that stem from the hierarchical differences in how people are treated. And then these right-wing people who are like, "Oh, diversity doesn't work," are the ones, like, actively against all of the efforts that are made in order to foster complementarity between different groups of people in a culture. So, for example, in United States culture there's, like, ongoing efforts by antiracist activists to foster complementary relationships between historically marginalized racial groups in America and the white majority. And one of the ways in which the right-wing critique of diversity is so toxic is that it just becomes this self-fulfilling prophecy, where they're fostering the opposite of complementarity. They're fostering tension and clashing, attempting to enforce the hierarchy.

Shawn

Maybe we can jump back to sort of what we mean by hierarchy. 'Cause there's often a misconception about what hierarchy is or, like, the naturalness of hierarchy. Like, our position is that hierarchy is not, like, a normal relationship in nature. That it's not comparable to say a boss and employee versus, like, a predator and prey— which is often the metaphors used by, like, neoliberal capitalism to describe competition. Because hierarchy refers to specifically sort of a command and control structure where one person has authority over others and the ability to punish them. And there's, like, different sort of flavors of hierarchy within that, but that's the commonality.

Lobsters don't have hierarchy in the sense that there is an institution where a lobster is in charge of all the other lobsters, he tells the lobsters what to do, if they don't listen to him, those lobsters are punished, maybe lose their homes, have to go to lobster jail. So there might be instances of, like, proto-hierarchies within nature where you have, like, say, a pecking order within a group of roosters. But these are temporary arrangements which can be upheaved and are individualized. It's not that boss monkey picks his son, pick the Donald Trump Jr. monkey, and then makes him the head of the monkey corporation.

The point is that hierarchy is a social relationship. It's often institutional. And what we're criticizing when we criticize hierarchy is not that when there's a group of people together, one person might talk more, and maybe people look up to them, listen to what they have to say, and that sort of, like, mild social relationship isn't the hierarchy that we're talking about. We're talking about institutional, long-term, command and control structures.

Aaron

Yeah. Especially when there's compulsive participation in some way. Like, you need it to get your needs met.

Shawn

Anarchists are often criticized for their anti-hierarchy stance of, like, "What, you think there should be no leaders? Are you saying that I shouldn't defer to a boot-maker on the issue of boots?" And then the anarchist says, "No, there's a quote about that. I actually specifically do defer to the boot-maker on the issue of boots. It's fundamental to anarchism." So what's being described there is an understanding of difference, rather than hierarchy. It's not that boots-maker is in charge of everyone's boots, and can punish you for building boots the wrong way. It's that there's a difference between someone who really knows a lot about boots, and someone who doesn't know very much about boots.

And so, whether you call that sort of, like, deferring to someone a hierarchy, some people might use language that way. I'd argue to reframe that. To, like, talk about that in different terms. Because also another key thing about this, about this type of hierarchy, if you want to call it that, is that the relationship between a student and teacher is eventually eliminated. The role of the teacher is to bring the student to the level of the teacher. So there's theoretically, someday, through this mentorship, through this peer relationship in difference, where the gap is closed and then they're both teachers.

Aaron

Or at least both have the same amount of information as the teacher.

Shawn

Yeah. They both have the capacity to teach.

Aaron

Yeah. And, like, those kinds of hierarchy relationships, command and control relationships, are, outside of some very specific contexts, antithetical to any kind of complementary relationship, because the hoarding of power that makes that type of hierarchy possible prevents the people who have the power from adequately meeting all of the needs of the people in the system. Like, the lowest-down employees at a company are the ones who are the most aware of the fact that they don't have healthcare, or that they don't have enough money to pay their rent, or have a vacation, to learn things, do skills training—anything. They have all the awareness of those problems and what those problems are, and they feel the immediacy of those problems, because they're happening to them.

But then the people at the top hoarding all the power needed to meet those needs, they don't have a very high awareness. They have an abstracted understanding from people who've made the case to them, but they don't have the same visceral awareness and, like, connection to those problems. So, hierarchies subvert complementarity by enforcing that distance, keeping all the power in one very small, concentrated place, and not letting it get to the places in the system where it could do some good.

(00:14:59)

☒ *Smooth Jazzy Music*

Wrong Aaron

Welcome to the Library Socialism Films About Libraries Film Review, the segment of the show where we review films about libraries.

Wrong Shawn

And, obviously, we review these films on a scale from, "Don't borrow it," to, "Borrow it," and then, "Borrow it and renew it," which is our highest—

Wrong Aaron

Kind of a clever nod to libraries, with that ranking system.

Wrong Shawn

So, this week, Aaron, you watched a movie, a film—

Wrong Aaron

Film, yeah.

Wrong Shawn

—about libraries called, *Ex Libris*.

Wrong Aaron

More than one person recommended this film to us. And when I looked it up, it was actually one that I almost went to see at the Vancouver Film Festival, but ultimately decided against it because it's three and a half hours long.

Wrong Shawn

Ooh, that's long.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. But it has, like, rave reviews. And I was always interested in libraries, even in 2017, I think, when that was, before we did any library socialism stuff. I was like, "Oh, a three-hour documentary about libraries, rave reviews? Maybe I'll check it out." It's a non-narrative documentary. So they're not, like, making any arguments or anything like that. It's just kind of, like, immersing you in the world of the New York Public Library system.

Librarian (recording)

"This is a really special library. This library is part of Lincoln Center. So we share its mission of presenting artistic excellence of the highest caliber. We're also part of the New York Public Library. So we share the library's mission of being a warm, welcoming place that's committed to education, and committed to nurturing everyone's individual passions and curiosity. And we like to think that we're a great marriage of those two missions. And this recital tonight really represents that well, in my opinion. Carolyn is an incredible pianist, a great artist. She's performed in many of our city's great performance halls, and she's also, I think, a wonderful embodiment of that welcoming, generous spirit that the library tries to embody as well."

(00:16:55)

☒ *Piano Music*

Wrong Aaron

It's kind of, like, this series of shots that show all these different elements of the library experience. So you'll see some people sitting on the computers in the library doing whatever they're doing. Playing Minecraft, watching videos. One of them, like, pokes the other one or something. Then you're, like, in one of the back rooms with all the people on the telephones talking to callers who are looking for specific books. They're, like, helping them look stuff up. Listening to people read poetry. Or it's a job fair that's going on at the library. Or you're in the back room listening to this guy who loves talking about public-private partnerships way too much. Assay that over and over again, in different contexts.

It's really great. And it gives you just this, like, immersive glimpse into how all these different disparate pieces work together to make something that's more than the sum of its parts. Everything a library does, they're these just, like, amazing institutions that offer so much that doesn't immediately come to mind when you just think about lending books. And, yeah, it's really slow-paced, it's chill. You can put it on in the background and do other stuff, and just kinda let it catch your attention when it

does. Or you can sit there rapt in attention for the whole three and a half hours, your choice. But either way, I do say– what was it? Check it out, and renew?

Wrong Shawn

“Check it out and renew” is the highest.

Wrong Aaron

Check– check it out and renew.

Wrong Shawn

Whoa. A “Check it out and renew” library documentary film. I’m gonna have to check that out and then renew it.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah, you do have to.

Wrong Shawn

Sorry, everyone, if you were trying to take that out of the library, I renewed it because it was so good.

Wrong Aaron

Should’ve placed a hold, which would have prevented him from renewing it.

Wrong Shawn

And that wraps up another Wrong Boys Library Socialism Documentary Films About Libraries–

Wrong Aaron

–Film Review.

Wrong Shawn

Thank you.

(00:18:56)

Shawn

Complementarity– it’s something that you can find in nature, or you can find in human societies. But it isn’t a guaranteed thing. It’s not just, like, a rigid naturalism that we’re arguing when we’re talking about complementarity within societies or ecosystems or whatever. It’s something that’s contingent. It can be created, it can be destroyed, it can happen by chance. But I think it’s worth noting that we sort of come alive, we come awake in a system that’s really complex, and that complementarity is already happening.

Aaron

Complementarity is necessary for function in all complex– and, like, take that as many levels back as you want, but, like, there’d be no biology. Like, it’d just be, like, a chaos of atoms, like, you know, that don’t cohere in any way to create anything that works. Like, everything’s a complex system of some kind or another. Even if on one level of analysis something’s pretty simple, there’s other levels of analysis where you can look at, where it’s a complex system in and of itself. Like, a single person’s body or whatever is a complex system.

But it’s also just simple. It’s one unit, it’s a person. It depends on how you’re looking at it. But in order for anything to function there needs to be complementary relationships between the pieces of that system. And that’s just, like, a descriptive claim that we notice from looking at nature and looking at complex systems that do work. So it’s not that everything in nature is always complementary to each other. It’s that we observe in nature that when aspects of a system are complementary, they work together. And when they aren’t complementary, the system degrades.

Shawn

I like this framing. I’ve been partial to political plurality. Like, I’ve always sort of liked the idea of there being room for difference and exploration and, like, this in many cases is a straw man, but maybe also in some cases real, this idea of, like, a party line, or the way things that are supposed to be being enforced rather than, like, through discussions and difference, I’ve always favored the difference and plurality side. And I feel like complementarity gives us a good lens on how to talk and think about these differences. And it’s also sort of why, rather than using market metaphors, we try to use ecosystem

metaphors, so you could talk about, like, the ecosystem of ideas, or the ecosystem of tactics, rather than a marketplace.

Aaron

Because the way to talk and think about these differences in opinions has to do with, can they all work well together, more so than, can they crush the other one in competition or whatever the marketplace metaphor is there, it presumes a very particular type of relationship. In ecosystems, there's, like, a lot of different ways that things can work in complementary ways to one another. Sometimes it could even be a type of competition in some instances. And the ecosystem metaphor I like, too, because it— you can use it to defend a diversity of ideas, or to express worries about groupthink or whatever, while also having a strong framework for understanding that the reason we want to have differences of ideas is to create productive complementary outcomes.

So, like, certain ideas— like, "Hey, genocide's really good," doesn't help produce productive complementary outcomes. So the— that's an extreme example, obviously, it's gonna depend on context which ideas work together in what situations. But the ecosystem metaphor really helps grapple with the way that ideas actually relate to one another way better than the marketplace idea where, you know, everyone goes and sets up their idea stand, and then they try to sell the most ideas and fight it out in the marketplace, and one idea crushes the other one, totally destroyed, go out of business forever.

Shawn

Yeah. I mean, and it's sort of a broken metaphor because, I mean, companies going out of business don't go out of business through triumphant conflicts where they're, like, "These are my products," and then they're like, "No, these are my products at these prices," and then at the end one is vanquished. I much prefer the ecosystem metaphors because it allows us to choose which parts of nature we want to highlight, which parts of nature we want to actualize or recreate, what sort of socio-biomimicry we want to do.

Much, much preferable to the market metaphor, which was incoherent to start, and is based on this conception where we take human ideas about hierarchy and markets and then we project it onto nature, and then we say, "Oh, look, we found in nature examples of hierarchy. It's evidence that hierarchy, and command and control systems are natural. Because, look, all the other lobsters are afraid of that lobster. That lobster's really proud, and all the other lobsters are shameful and follow that lobster. It's just like our society. It's just like a landlord or a boss or a police officer." That project of projecting our relationships onto animals and then using those animal relationships as justifications for what we do is the basis of, like, social Darwinism, and is just factually wrong.

We can do something much more interesting with taking metaphors from nature, where we look for what it is that we want to actualize in nature, look for examples of it. Say, like, different species who have symbiotic relationships. They're greater than the sum of their parts. They can do things together they can't do alone. We know that humans are in these relationships also. So it's not to deny that bad things happen in nature, like nature's only this beautiful, pure place, in perfect balance until humans showed up and threw everything out of balance, and before that it was all like cats and dogs living together, it was beautiful.

Aaron

(Laughs) Just every cat finds a dog and they, like, pair up, and they just, like, trot around the earth together, like, having adventures, fun? That's what the planet was like before we got here.

Shawn

Yeah. So, I mean, I reject that naïve view of nature and say, like, "Oh, we just need to live according to nature. We just have to take all the patterns from nature and actualize them in our lives." Because there are patterns in nature which are disgusting, like laying eggs in each other.

Aaron

(Laughs) Yeah. No humans should be laying eggs inside other humans.

Shawn

Absolutely not. But we can use aspects of nature, find structures that work in this iterative, repeating process of evolution and complex ecosystems to find hints about the direction that we should go, and apply natural metaphors to what we do.

Aaron

Yeah, again, it's looking at what actually works in nature, and then trying to mimic that.

(00:25:22)

(Video game sounds)

Non-Gamer Father

Hey, Gamer Son?

Gamer Son

Oh, hey, Non-Gamer Father. What are you doing? I'm just playing some games.

Non-Gamer Father

I know you can't pause all of them, but is this the kind that you can pause, or...?

Gamer Son

Yes, I can. I can pause it.

Non-Gamer Father

Like, I'm not a gamer myself, but from previous interactions we had, I know that when you're playing online you can't just pause, because then they can still shoot you and stuff, and I get that. It's totally—but, cool. Thanks for pausing.

Gamer Son

Thanks for asking, being aware that I might be in a situation where pausing's difficult. I appreciate that.

Non-Gamer Father

Yeah, well, I'm not a gamer, but I try.

Gamer Son

Some of the other gamers are like, "Oh, you have a non-gamer father?" And I'm like, yeah, it's not so bad. He listens.

Non-Gamer Father

Well, yeah, it's like, some of the other parents are like, "Oh, your kid's a gamer, you know what that means?" And I'm like, "I don't know what you mean. He's the same conscientious, helpful son that he's always been. Now, he just plays games in his spare time and it's a release for him, he enjoys it. And—"

Gamer Son

Thank you. Non-gamer fathers do understand.

Non-Gamer Father

Yeah. I was just thinking about something really cool, and I wanted to share it with you, and I even thought of sort of a way that I might be able—like, although we have different interests, and I'm not a gamer, that I could maybe connect with you. Let me know if it's lame to try, but— I was reading about this thing called "companion planting," in gardening. Like, if you put certain vegetables and fruits together when you're growing them, there's mutually beneficial relationships between the different vegetables. So, like, dozens and dozens of examples where you just have this sort of, like, natural, little combination of plants. Like, a really famous one is the "three sisters," squash, beans, and corn. You plant squash, beans, and corn together, and all three of them thrive and grow better together, because squash prevents weeds from growing, corn stalks help the beans grow up faster, and the beans make the soil better for squash and corn by pulling nitrogen out. Super cool. And I thought it was super like Minecraft. So, from what I remember, and correct me if I'm wrong, in crafting, you'll put down, like, here's a piece of wood, here's a piece of wood, here's a piece of stone, and then together you make a sword with it, or something like that.

Gamer Son

I guess that is good— it's just kind of, like, part of how things are, that those things work better together.

Non-Gamer Father

Yeah, exactly. It was part of how things are, and that this is what really blows my mind about it, is out there in the world, in nature, there's these secrets to discover. It maybe sounds trite, but there's this natural way of things in our relationship to nature where we can put certain vegetables together and make vegetables grow way faster. And it's just the way it is, and then we figure that out. And it's—maybe we observe it in nature first of all, or maybe we experiment to get there. It's like a video game or, like, cheat code or something. It's just, like— it's out there, you know, like—

Gamer Son

Yeah, no, that makes sense. Like, if you know the cheat codes you kinda, like, make the system work for you way better. Like, hacking the system, kinda. That makes sense. Garden hacking.

Non-Gamer Father

Yeah, yeah, like hacking the system, yeah. That's what's so cool about it. It's sort of, like, garden hacks.

Gamer Son

You need to know the source code in order to hack something.

Non-Gamer Father

Yeah.

Gamer Son

So you need, like, the natural wisdom of what plants work together, in order to hack gardening. That's really cool, Dad.

Non-Gamer Father

Along those same lines, like, there's biomimicry, where in technology we can take inspiration from nature and then in our design, when we're creating technology, to make our technology more effective. So, like, we can actually find examples of things that have evolved in nature, that have a certain form that serves a purpose that we might not have guessed, and then replicate what we find in nature, which was sort of hardened by evolution, that was created through the process of evolution over a long period of time, and then take those features from, you know, plant life or wildlife, and then apply that to technology, and generate good outcomes from observing nature and then implementing the wisdom that nature shares with us, that was created through the process of evolution. It's so cool.

Gamer Son

Isn't that kinda like how they made airplane wings? They based them off of bird wings, the shape of them, to get the lift?

Non-Gamer Father

Absolutely, no, there's tons of examples of successful biomimicry. For example, in the United States they invented forms of wind turbines, they took inspiration from the lumps on the fins of humpback whales, and it turns out those lumps actually served a purpose about generating more drag. So they used the whale lumps as inspiration for wind turbine lumps which generate more power with less speed. At the 2008 Olympics Speedo produced a form of bathing suit that replicates these little tiny hooks on the skin of sharks that helps them move forward in the water faster. For whatever reason, this little shape of hook at a tiny, microscopic level makes the water move aside easier. 98% of people who won medals in the 2008 Olympics for swimming were wearing this type of swimsuit. And as a result, the Olympics actually banned that material for giving an unfair advantage. There's also a shopping mall in Zimbabwe that uses 10% less electricity to cool it than other shopping malls, because in the design process of building the shopping mall, they emulated cooling dynamics that exist within termites' nests.

Gamer Son

Wow, yeah, that is really cool. My mind's just reeling with all the possibilities, looking at how nature works and, like, using those cheat codes. That's brilliant, Dad. Thanks for interrupting my game for this.

Non-Gamer Father

Yeah, no problem. You know the 20/20/20 rule, right? For every 20 minutes you spend looking at a screen, you should look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. That reduces eye strain.

Gamer Son

Probably won't do that. That's hard to do. Maybe we can just biomimic me some new eyeballs after I break these ones.

Non-Gamer Father

You know, I- (laughs) that is some edgy cynicism, but fingers crossed that we perfect self-driving cars or replacement eyeballs, because there's no way in hell anyone's doin' that shit. And, like, your genera- I mean, my generation, we've got bad eyes. But your generation, your eyes are gonna be god knows what. Dried up.

Gamer Son

Yeah. Wrinkled like prunes.

Non-Gamer Father

Extra space around the eyeball in the socket, a little prune in there.

Gamer Son

Ugh, it's creepy.

Non-Gamer Father

A little unblinking prune.

Gamer Son

Well, I better get back to causing that to happen.

Non-Gamer Father

Okay, cool, see you later. I'm gonna go watch TV and my phone.

Gamer Son

Cool.

Non-Gamer Father

Two screens.

Gamer Son

Two screens, two eyes.

Non-Gamer Father

You enjoy the games.

Gamer Son

Always do.

Non-Gamer Father

Part of a balanced lifestyle.

(Video game sounds resume)

(00:31:20)

Aaron

Talking about the social-ecological idea of first nature, second nature, third nature. First nature being nature that exists pre-humans, or without humans, the-

Shawn

Wild nature.

Aaron

Wild nature. (Laughs) And then second nature is human artifice, human society, human existence, what humans have built. 'Cause that's all natural, too, that's part of nature, we are part of nature. And then the idea is, third nature is the complementary melding of these two things in a way that makes sense. Because we're destroying the habitability of our biosphere. And, like, broadly the process through which we're doing that is by not having a complementary relationship. We're having a type of relationship where we clash with nature, where we insult nature, where we destroy nature for our own immediate benefit, but long-term loss, because it's all part of the same system. We're not mimicking

what works in nature by finding ways to exist in a complementary relationship with our ecosystem. We're mimicking what doesn't work in nature, and we are—

Shawn

We're innovating new ways to not work in nature.

Aaron

(Laughs) Yeah. We're innovating new ways to insult nature, to exist in an insultarity type of relationship with nature, because of this kind of, like, ideological view that humans are above nature, separate from nature. That our rationality has uplifted us to this place where we can impose our will on nature. That nature's subordinate to us, rather than something we're a part of, and we must relate to in a way that makes sense.

Shawn

We have a human hierarchy, like a boss and employee, and—

Aaron

Yeah, yeah.

Shawn

—and humans are at the top of the hierarchy, and then everything else in the world is our employee. Literally, that's, like, the problem with anthropocentrism is this idea of human hierarchy over nature and the use and abuse of it.

Aaron

Yeah. It's our particular weird fixation on this hierarchy, on the— on this idea that there's this master/slave, employee/employer, that there's always these hierarchical relationships. That fixation has, like, truly messed up our relationship to the planet and the biosphere that we live on. So, like, a hierarchical view of humans' relationship to nature might be, "We should use nature for our benefit." Whereas a more reciprocal view of the role that humans play in nature could still be, "We can use nature for our benefit," but also we must allow ourselves to be of use and benefit to nature, to first nature, outside of ourselves. If we aren't providing back sufficient benefit for the benefits that we are provided, then the system's gonna fall apart, and we won't be able to continuously maintain that relationship as an ongoing support system for everything else that we want to do.

Shawn

I sometimes worry when I'm trying to express my thoughts on complementarity, they're so— I've got so many thoughts, and I feel like it connects to so many things, and it's just— where I'm worried that I'm being too open-ended or not specific enough. But, like, really, to take it to the extreme with that, like, I remember being a teenager and first hearing Carl Sagan say, "We are a way for the universe to know itself," and how my teenage atheist mind was so blown by that. And what makes it a profound statement, to me, connects in with my concept of complementarity so profoundly, in that, like, humanity needs to have a complementary relationship to the world around us. We need to not just thrive ourselves, but we need to mutually thrive. We need to help other things thrive, or it'll lead to our own destruction. And the difference, and not hierarchy, between humans and other things in the natural system that we're a part of, because of our, you know, specialized language, our complex social relations, our use of technology, our aspirations to be greater than we are, our aspirations to carry ourselves with ethics and forethought—

Aaron

Our ability to retain information, technology, knowledge, culture, society, through generations and, like, build this continuous legacy of all that we have known, and have been in the past, and, like, to build on that.

Shawn

And our aspiration to better ourselves and the world around us, and our capacity to actually do that, it's unique in nature.

Aaron

Yeah.

Shawn

Like, I love whales. I love whales as much as anyone. But they can't do what we do.

Aaron

Yeah. And we can't do what whales do. But they can't do what we do. Like, there's many things whales do that we can't do. (Laughs)

Shawn

Yeah. We're a way for the universe to know itself. Whales are a way for the universe to be enormous things of fat that echolocate around the ocean. So we are a way for the universe to know itself. We're also a way for the universe to exercise ethics, a way for the universe to take responsible. A way for the universe to love, in a real sense. In the deep, like—

Aaron

Yeah.

Shawn

So we've got a special little place in nature. And that distinction between difference and hierarchy becomes really, like, potent here, 'cause I think people sometimes go too far in the opposite direction where they're, like, "Oh, humans aren't in charge of the universe. Humans think they're so great, and all they do is destroy things and they're awful." And this, like, sort of misanthropic, envirocentric, sort of, "We're a bad case of fleas, and the earth's just gotta shake us off."

Aaron

Yeah. The problem isn't our lack of complementarity in our relationships to the other aspects of nature. The problem is us itself. We're corrupted.

Shawn

And that logic is, like, the logic of insultarity. It's the logic of not relating to each other. It's the logic of not fixing problems. That the people themselves are the problem, rather than the roles and the relationships is the problem. Like when we look at the climate crisis, the problem— and, now, the climate crisis is absolutely caused by the rich. You know, the oil companies knew about this stuff decades before the rest of us, and paid millions of dollars to try to confuse us into not taking action. It's crimes against humanity.

But the people themselves, it's not like we just get rid of those people and the problem's suddenly solved. Like, oh, those were the evil people. It's the relationships, the power differences, between oil executives and the rest of us, and the— the motivations and systems that led to that, that are the problem. So, like, when I think of misanthropy and my opposition to misanthropy, I think of it in a much, much broader sense than just hating humanity in general, but in times where we find ourselves hating human culprits rather systems and roles, as a type of misanthropy. And it might be justified in some— and people, you know, there's cathartic reasons to hate when you've been wronged.

But at the same time, I think the really rigorous analysis, we're looking at the roles and institutions, not the individuals. Too often, people assume, like, for example, a politician or a political party you don't like, throw that politician out, and it's gonna solve the problem. Well, guess what, they just get a new guy to step in there and the whole system and institution stays the same. It's, like, chop off the king's head and pick a new king. You know, close, sweetie. Close.

Aaron

Yeah. You gotta chop off the role of king.

Shawn

Yeah. And you have to institute a directly democratic commune of communes that pays people according to need, with 10,000 years of world peace, make the rivers run with lemonade.

(00:38:46)

(Forest sounds and footsteps)

Tom

Oh, it's nice to take a hike up this mountainside with you, my triplet brother.

John

Yeah. It's our little tradition, two of three triplets, us two.

Tom

Something to do just without Artemis, because we spend so much time with Artemis, and he'll be around forever.

John

Huh, so we thought. Now I'd give anything to have him on this hike with us, to see him one more time.

Tom

Yeah. Freak accident, what took Artemis out. I'm not saying, like, "Oh, we should have brought Artemis on every private hike with two out of three triplets." It was needed. I love him, I miss him, but he was a little much.

John

Yeah, but then I see, you know, there's three shelves in the fridge. One of 'em's empty now.

Tom

Three bedroom condo with just two out of three triplets.

John

Yeah.

Tom

And, I guess, I mean, we should just throw out that bicycle built for three. Not gonna be riding that again anytime soon.

John

Also, when we order milkshakes now, only get two straws—

Tom

Two straws. Or we're gonna get a third straw, and just—

John

In honor of—

Tom

—let it sit there. Yeah.

John

Yeah.

Tom

Oh, look. Baby deer.

John

Yeah. Here we are, thinking about death, and the miracle of life right before us. Keeps things in perspective, anyway.

Tom

That's beautiful. You know, every piece of the ecosystem plays its part. You know, the deer, the grass, the—

John

Yeah. It all working together produces the beauty of nature.

Tom

Sort of like the beauty of me, you, and Artemis.

John

Yeah. The triplets. The singular, one from three, is now two-thirds.

Tom

When we put our heads together, we had the brainpower of four or five brothers. We just clicked.

John

Oh, easily. Yeah, easily. [Q sighs] I've had so much trouble concentrating in the reading group lately. Interesting stuff. I love the basics of library science. But I keep seeing Artemis's face dancing before my eyes whenever I close them, you know?

Tom

Artemis's party trick of face-dancing? I miss it, too.

John

It's, like, of course I want to learn about collection management, information systems, research methods, cataloging, preservation, information architecture and management. But, like—

Tom

Well, yeah, I mean, the sociopolitical revolutionary project to overthrow society as it is and replace with a usufructian library society, you know, you have to study library science. But when your triplet brother dies? Come on. That's fucked up to experience. Like, we can't be revolutionaries all the time. Sometimes you've got to go for a walk in nature and mourn our death brother. No one's making us do this. We put this pressure on ourselves.

John

Do you want to hop over that stream, or just find some way to see if we can go around? I think we can make it over—

Tom

Yeah, I think—

John

—without getting my shoes wet.

Tom

—worst case scenario, a little ankle wetness.

John

All right. (Footsteps and jump) Let's— hyup!

Tom

Whoa, good jump.

John

Oh, thank you.

Tom

Kay, here I come. (Footsteps, jump, and splash) Oh—! A little splash. That's okay. I'm all right. A little wetter in the sock a bit, but— can't jump as far as you.

John

Oh, yeah, but you have lots of other great qualities.

Tom

No, c'mon, we work tog—

John

Drawing, for example.

Tom

We work together, you know? Sometimes you need to jump far, sometimes you need to draw. It's a...

John

Yeah. Are you all caught on the— on the reading for tomorrow night on the five laws of librarianship?

Tom

Yeah, I just skimmed it. I was gonna, like, rush—

John

The founder of library science made these five laws, right? They're pretty good. The first one's, "Books are for use." You know, we're not keeping these books in libraries just to keep 'em, right? It's no good having all this stuff if people can't access it and use it, you know? So you need libraries that are open, accessible, well-cataloged, available to everyone, regardless of class, race, sex, anything, you know? It's just open access to all books are for use, for people, to use.

Tom

And as a library socialist, I take that one step further and say, things are for use.

John

Yeah. Some more modern librarians have updated it to, "media are for use," because of media richness in library environments now, but definitely, once you have libraries that archive and provide to people on a usufructian basis, not just media, but all kinds of items that people need, things are for use, absolutely. And then the second law: every person, his or her book. Meaning, you know, anyone who comes to a library, they're looking for something. And the mission of the library is to have that book for them. So you want to have complete collections. You want to have broad collections that cover wide arrays of topics, so that any person who comes in, it has their book, it has their media, or has what they need, you know?

Tom

Hm. To each according to their need.

John

Exactly. Every person, his or her book. Second law of librarianship. And then the third law is just kind of a corollary of that: every book, its reader. Meaning, you know, books have a place in the library even if smaller demographics of people might choose to read it, you know? Every book has its reader. And in a library of the future that meets all of people's needs, even if only a few people might need something, you still want to have it in the library, just in case, so that people truly can get their needs met.

Tom

It's interesting. That duo, "every book its reader," and "every reader its book," when metaphored up to society-level like library socialism, it becomes very similar to, "each according to their ability, to each according to their need."

John

Yeah, absolutely, the kernel of socialism's in libraries from the start, yeah. And then the fourth law is one of my favorite: save the time of the reader. And, sometimes, save the time of the reader and the librarian. Just meaning, you want the library system to be efficient, you want it to be easy to find what you need, get 'em in, get 'em out, or you know, if they want to leave or stay, whatever— it's a community space as well, of course, but efficiency needs to be part of managing massive collections of books. It needs to be a part of managing a library society.

Tom

Absolutely. I mean, a principal that us library socialists uphold is that ease of use and efficiency, user experience, are things that are beneficial. Convenience is good.

John

Absolutely.

Tom

The— the— it's amazing that we have these libraries in our pockets. The access and convenience of it, it's incredible. And, you know, we celebrate and uphold the convenience store.

John

Yeah. Time is a limited resource.

Tom

Yeah. We need to do more from less.

John

And then, of course, the fifth law: the library is a growing organism. Just meaning, you know, you don't collect all of history's work, and then it's done. There's always new stuff being written. There's always older works you don't have yet. There's always things that maybe the library doesn't need anymore, duplicate copies, non-notable works that might need to be culled, curated. It's a growing organism. It's shifting, changing with the needs of people. And of course, like, media richness is part of that, too. Libraries didn't used to have DVDs.

Tom

That's such a cool fifth law of librarianship, "the library is a growing organism." That's, like, sort of psychedelic. That's neat. That, like, that made the cut. The laws of librarianship, according to the founder of library science. "The library is a growing organism."

John

Yeah. It's a recognition that, you know, a library— it's more than just a collection of books. It's the gestalt of all of the books there, and the people there, and the reference materials. It creates something more than the sum of its parts. The library itself is a force to be reckoned with, an organism in itself that grows and changes.

Tom

And the library society has to be a growing organism itself. You know, we're never gonna have a perfect revolution, where all of a sudden everything is just, like, a perfectly ticking clock for the rest of history.

John

No, of course not.

Tom

There's forces and counter-forces, and there's growth and curation and development and change. And— and we acknowledge that, you know? We acknowledge that there isn't an end in sight. There's always just new beginnings, over and over again. That's something that we embrace. That's— that's library socialism in a nutshell.

John

Yeah, absolutely. And it's rooted in the history of library thought. Like, these laws were published in 1931. Almost a hundred years ago. The seeds of a future library society being planted. Oh, but yeah, just all this talking about libraries, cohesive whole, just reminds me that our whole, the whole three triplets of us, is no longer cohesive.

Tom

Yeah. (Sighs) Artemis was a hell of a guy. Needless to say, our band is not gonna be the same without a guitarist.

John

I play drums, you sing. Where's the riffs gonna come from.

Tom

Yeah. That sounds like it might be challenging and artistic music.

John

Yeah. And we were never trying to make challenging music. Just—

Tom

No. General, like, fun music for people to dance to.

John

Yeah. What you'd expect from three triplets in a band havin' fun. (Bird and water sounds) Here, let's have a seat under this tree. Sun's probably gonna be setting. I feel like this might be a really good spot to watch.

Tom

Hell yeah. Don't get between me and a beautiful sunset.

(00:47:08)

Shawn

Trying to talk about library socialism here without talking about the meaning of life. I wanted to sidestep talking about the meaning of life here, but I just can't. Of these three component parts of library socialism, complementarity is the piece that touches closest to the meaning of life. When we're talking about our relationship to nature as a species, and our relationships to each other...

Aaron

Yeah. Fostering relationships that work, between ourselves and the people that you relate to, the social systems and environmental systems that you are embedded in, the meaning of life is always gonna

be about that relationship between you and— what else? The— the else. The elseness. And complementar— like, it's just saying, we want those relationships to work, and to not not work. That's what people find meaningful in their everyday lives, is creating things that work, and produce positive outcomes. Like, we can say the meaning of life is what you make of it, or, like, people choose, or just happen to find different things meaningful, but producing positive, workable outcomes between relating parts, between yourself and things that you're relating to. Like, I can't think of anything that anyone would say they found meaningful that you can't describe as an instance of that.

Shawn

So we, like, face an environmental crisis, and all these overlapping social crises, and I— I just don't see any way that we can do it that isn't going to engage in some form of, like, biomimicry on the technological side, and being kind to each other on the social side. And complementarity can broadly touch on both of those concepts and many other concepts in a really useful and fruitful, interesting way. I'll give the example of death. Like, death is bad. Death is usually, like, pretty bad to be involved with. Like, if someone that you care about dies, that's horrible. If you die, and you don't want to, that's horrible.

Aaron

It's a painful experience.

Shawn

Loss is painful. It's negative. And it's something, like, that ideally in most circumstances you want to try to avoid. Although, it happens. It's part of the world. We come from a system of evolution, an iterative, natural sequence of individuals, our genetic materials passed down for millions of years in ways that we can't imagine. And it's impossible that all of our ancestors would stay alive in some sort of weird pure retention system, where just, like, "There's my dad, he's older than me. My grandpa, even older than him. My great-great grandpa, even older than him," and so on and so on, all the way back to single-celled organisms. The world doesn't work that way. The world that we've found ourselves in doesn't work that way. So our very existence, our very life, is owed to this heritage of death. Like, our very— our existence is owed to the principles of the system that will kill us. And in that sense, there's sort of a philosophical complementarity between life and death. The things that we love about life are caused by death.

Aaron

Complementarity implies limits to what is acceptable, and what produces positive outcomes. And one of the most fundamental limits we have on our existences is death, is that we all will die. Like, it's really hard to accept that. It can be really difficult. But it's— I think it— I think it's important to highlight this one specifically, because of how extreme it is, and because of how it highlights that, like, complementarity doesn't necessarily mean everything holding hands and singing kumbaya together. Like, lions are holding hands with rabbits, and humans holding hands with the lion on the other side, and we've all got our ukeleles out. (Laughs)

Shawn

Life without capitalism.

Aaron

Yeah, it's, like— this is a complementary society, and it's all good, all the time. Everyone's only always nice to each other. Nothing ever dies. Part of complementarity is pain and loss.

Shawn

Complementarity is, like, the generative, positive, emergent outcomes of complex systems through non-hierarchical difference. And in the case of death, there are complex, positive outcomes generated through the interplay between life and death. Although, like, death is a social tragedy, the overall outcome of it in the long term is an incredible amount of diversity and wonder and unpredictability, and lack of fate. An uncalcified, open, thriving world is the result, fundamentally, of death, among other things.

Aaron

Yeah. I mean, like, I'm open to the idea of overcoming death, or attempting to overcoming death. But, like, it creates urgency. Like, the fact that you know you're gonna die— especially just, like, the more you age, and you notice those numbers always go up, and they never go down. (Laughs) And there's fewer of them left than there were before in front of you, always, yeah, it creates this sense of, like, oh, if I want to do something while I'm here I have to actually do it.

Shawn

So I was recently a campaign manager for the NDP in Canada and we lost, we came in second place by about 1,500 votes. First time ever running an election where we totally lost. Like, where we just— there was no victory at the end.

Aaron

For you. First time you've—

Shawn

Yeah. First time that I was in an election where I was a serious part of making it happen. My goal, my singular goal, was to elect someone and make them win, and then election day came, the ballots were counted, we were short of winning. We lost.

Aaron

Yeah.

Shawn

There's no way around it. There's no silver lining. Second place, we did better than last time, blah-blah-blah, blah-blah. It's, like, I went home at the end of the day having not won, having not elected the person.

Aaron

Yeah.

Shawn

Which was my goal. And my goal wasn't, "Oh, we're gonna get closer than last time." My goal was straight up, get this motherfucker in. And I lost. And so, obviously I thought a lot about that. I wasn't just, like, "Oh, whoops, well." (Laughter) "Oop, meant to win." I thought a lot about it. And so, one of the things that I thought about was the benefits of losing. Now, like, I wanted to win. But what could I get from it, is I've got more experience than I had before. I had never lost an election before, now I have. And I got all the experience that came through running that election the entire time. The pain of loss was always a part of the joy of the victories that I had had before. I just never got to experience it myself. So this is my third election. Two times, we won. The second time, we more than half won. There was multiple candidates, it was municipal. Third time, I lost. But every time I won, there were four other campaign offices that lost, nearby. And I didn't think for a second about what it felt like to them.

Aaron

(Laughs) Yeah. Not a second thought.

Shawn

(Laughs) And I wouldn't. I wouldn't be, like, "Oh, I'm about to win this election. Oh, but what about those guys? Oh, better lose." Like, no. That's just part of the system. It's part of this broken system, honestly. And I think the system needs to be overthrown and redesigned in our lifetime. That understanding of the way that my victory was connected to people's past losses, and that my loss was connected to someone else's victory and stuff like that, this sort of stuff helped me sort of center my thoughts on the fact that, no, it's— you don't just automatically win every time. And sometimes you can work really, really hard for a really, really long time and, like, put your heart and soul into something, and try your best, and sacrifice so much to make it happen, and then still lose. This sort of helped me think about this. Because we were thinking— I was already thinking about complementarity because of this being around the corner.

Aaron

Loss is always painful. And, like, the loss of a human life is, like, the ultimate loss that most people can imagine. But, like, losing an election is similar in a lot of ways. Like, you're mourning the loss of this thing that you wanted, or that you were expecting, or hoping for. You were hoping for MP Svend Robinson in office. But what you got is MP Terry Beech— what's his name? I got it right? Damn. Liberal Terry Beech. (Laughs) And, like, so there's— there's this distance between what was desired and what is, and the loss of the thing that was desired is always painful. And, like, in this instance, it's probably— like, it's a bad outcome morally, broadly, at least from our perspective. I'm sure the Liberals disagree.

Shawn

Well, they're not gonna meet the climate change targets. So they can eat my ass.

Aaron

And, like, everything about how we need to change the system and, like, even first past the post and the way winners and losers in that specific system are decided is bad. And the pain of loss is something that we all need to be comfortable with, because it's part of all systems. Like, we can't hold on to everything forever. We can't hold on to anything forever, because we die. But, like, as a collective, we do our best to hold on to some things forever, and that's part of, like, what the library project is about. It's not— it's not just the history of human knowledge. It's the history of human knowledge that's been written down, that's been attempted to be preserved over time.

And that— that attempt to preserve is, like, this human impulse against loss, this human impulse to, like, prevent loss through the generations, to retain. But retaining information, retaining knowledge, what can be retained cross generations is made meaningful by a selection process and, like, curation, and keeping what is most necessary, and what is most useful, and allowing what else there is to be gone, to disappear, to be lost. You can't have one without the other. You can't have a body of knowledge without pruning, without, like, cultivating.

So there's always this, like, interplay between this desire we have to prevent the pain of loss, this desire we have to retain, and— and the fact of loss. The fact that time causes degradation. That time brings about loss. It brings about loss through death. It brings about loss because your book will eventually disintegrate. The, like, paper doesn't last forever, even with the best of, like, maintaining it in, like, temperature-controlled, humidity-controlled environments. Like, we can keep things for a really long time. But, like, nothing lasts forever. Loss is inherent to the universe. It's part of the march of time.

And libraries are just, like, this beautiful stand against that, this beautiful legacy of human knowledge and human capacity, stored, cataloged, and interacted with in a way so that, like, people can interface with it and make use of it. I don't know. It's weird. It's hard to explain what I'm saying but, like, it's a stand against loss, in a sense. But at the same time, it's dependent on loss. It's dependent on the loss of curation and on the loss of what isn't deemed worth the effort required to maintain, to retain something forever.

Shawn

Yeah. There's some, like, naïve part of me that wants to just retain everything, and be like, "The library should have every book possible, and just keep on piling them in, and just get the library bigger and bigger forever until everything— and I mean everything, forever. All the news things that are gonna come out, just keep on growing that library. Never decrease. Only increase. Only retention. Never loss. But it doesn't make any sense.

Aaron

It'll end up defeating the purpose.

Shawn

I think it's a good thing to work with physics. So it's, like, we need to understand the system, and then work within it to the best that we can to actualize the most ethical outcomes that we can imagine. That's the point of life. That's the purpose of life, obviously.

(00:59:14)

☒

Narrator

Welcome to Keyboard Warrior Radio Theater!

☒

(Keyboard sounds)

Warrior 1

Hey, I'm a library socialist, too! Ew. Wait, don't tell me. Yuck. Library Socialism-Shawn Vulliez thought? Splitters. Turncoats. That is just as bad as fascism.

Warrior 2

Seeing you show up in the comments on my posts makes me want to vomit into the trashcan. Aaron Moritz took a beautiful idea developed, let's be honest, mostly by Shawn, and completely destroyed it so thoroughly that you have to assume it was on purpose, and that he was a seditious, evil man.

Warrior 1

You people are just part of a cult. It's the cult of Shawn thought. We're free thinkers over here, and you guys are just cultoids. You're just, like, humanoid people made of shadow energy. You barely can form a coherent thought.

Warrior 2

I believe there's a famous quote that says, "He who calls someone else in a cult is the one who's actually in a cult." So therefore it seems that you are the one who's in a cult. Aaron Moritz is the deviation. If you weren't a completely braindead, worm-brain-infested brain idiot who can't rub two thoughts together, maybe you would see the truth. But as it is now, it seems like you just sitting in a bathtub with a rubber chicken slamming it against the keyboard pressing enter on whatever it happens to type.

Warrior 1

Okay— dot, dot, dot. I guess we threw all pretense of good faith out the window. I won't waste anymore of your time. I thought I might come here for an open-minded discussion of differing factions of library socialists. Instead, I've gotten nothing but abuse and gaslighting. I get strength from the knowledge I'm right. And I get strength from the knowledge that you're a fool. And with that, I block you.

Warrior 2

You contradict yourself, sir, for if you were strong, you would not block.

Warrior 1

Adieu.

☒ *Music Stinger*

(01:01:10)

Narrator

And so, that day, a playwright just coming down from the high of releasing their second Off Broadway initiative happened to stumble upon that very comment section. This playwright was so taken by the mastery of the arguments, the strength of ideas, and the tension of great minds, that that playwright adapted that comment section into an award-winning Off Broadway play, "The Keyboard Warriors", which toured across the country, becoming one of the top-performing plays in American history. We now go to the last show on the tour, where two actors are typing on their keyboards, and the text is appearing up in a projector behind them. They don't speak. Acting out that famous scene.

(Furious keyboard sounds, chime)

(Crowd gasps, applauds)

(Keyboard sounds, chime)

(Crowd laughs, applauds)

Announcer:

And now, the director of "The Keyboard Warriors". (Applause)

Director

Yes, thank you, thank you. Oh, jeez, that's the spotlight on me, and the audience, I'll never get used to it. But- (sigh) As you all know, this is the last stop on the tour. This play, we started on Broadway, went on tour, and a lot of people have been asking me, "What's next? Where's the show gonna play next?" I have an announcement regarding that, which is- it won't. It won't be playing next. This was the last performance ever, that will ever be done. I own the rights to the play, and I will use every lawyer at my disposal to prevent anyone from every getting access to it, now or in the future. I believe we had a perfect run. Anything beyond this would just be overstaying our welcome. I want to make room for new plays, for innovative plays like this one. Thank you again, I know you're all disappointed you won't be able to see it again. But all good things must come to an end. Thank you.

☒ *Music Swells*

(01:03:16)

(Tape ejecting sound)

Wrong Shawn

Maybe I'll just pop out the tape. That's the end of the movie. It's just credits after that.

Wrong Aaron

Oh, wow.

Wrong Shawn

Not all of it holds up, but it's-

Wrong Aaron

Was there ever any sequels to that movie, or maybe a reboot, or...?

Wrong Shawn

No, no. No. No. That little monologue is the end of *Keyboard Warrior*. It's over. They didn't do any after that.

Wrong Aaron

Oh. Why?

Wrong Shawn

There's something to be said about renewal.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. Like, rebooting an old thing and doing it over again.

Wrong Shawn

Or just sometimes it's just retiring something.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah, yeah...

Wrong Shawn

And that loss- I mean, we can mourn the loss of the potential, the thought of, "Oh, there could be a sequel. What would it be like?" may be enticing, but is it really necessary? Maybe it's good to close the book on some things. Experience that loss, feel that loss.

Wrong Aaron

Now I just want more.

Wrong Shawn

It's like when you read through a big book series, you get to know all these characters, and then at the end you're like, "Oh, my friends."

Wrong Aaron

Yeah, they're all gone.

Wrong Shawn

Like, they didn't technically die, but they don't exist anymore. Just, like, "Oh, last page of *Animorphs*. Whoa, damn, all my friends are dead. There's no more stories about them."

(Tape ejecting sound)

Wrong Aaron

All right, and let's play a tape popping out sound effect, and pretend that we're popping out a tape, as we often do on the show.

Wrong Shawn

So that tape that we were pretending to listen to, but we were actually making, was characters in a universe where a "Keyboard Warrior" movie was made discussing whether or not that was the end of the "Keyboard Warrior" franchise, or if it came back again in their universe.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. And really, that ending of the Keyboard Warrior sketch we just did grew out of our desire to kinda do something really special with this particular Keyboard Warrior sketch, something we hadn't done before. And the reason that we wanted to do that was because, well— oh, it's— it's hard to even say it, but...

Wrong Shawn

Re— retiring Keyboard Warrior. That is the last Keyboard Warrior sketch. It's the last sketch.

☒ *Faint organ music*

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. I mean, we've been doing Keyboard Warrior basically longest of all. Right from the beginning. Still use that same intro music.

Wrong Shawn

It's, like, several Facebook sounds ago, at this point.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah, yeah. Definitely. People love the Keyboard Warrior sketch, but you know, maybe sometimes we rely on it a bit too much. You know, we just want to open things up and do something different.

Wrong Shawn

I mean, there's only so many endings. There's, they disagree to the end, it's unreasonable. One of them unreasonably starts agreeing, or they come to a synthesis of some kind. Or something weird happens, like they get married or one of them dies, or a third person joins the conversation. But, I mean...

Wrong Aaron

Yeah.

Wrong Shawn

Done that. (Aaron heavily sighs) But we want to send it off right. We've invited everyone in Wrongtown to come to a funeral to mark the retirement of a good one. A good part of the family.

(Crying mourners)

Mourner 1

Keyboard Warrior... Why them? Why not Synchronicity Book Club? (Cries)

Mourner 2

At least it wasn't Dad and Son.

Mourner 3

(Whispering) Did you see the body? It looks unreal.

Mourner 4

Yeah. They didn't do the best job.

Mourner 3

It's like a painted doll. Open casket's weird.

Mourner 4

Well, that's your opinion.

Wrong Aaron

(Into the mic) Dad and Son— do you want to get up to say a few words about Keyboard Warrior?

Son

I always really liked the Keyboard Warriors because of the typing sound effects that go "clickety-clack." And then people got mad at each other, and it's funny.

Dad

I'd watch the sketch with my son. He asked me, "what does libertarian socialist mean?" I'm, like, well, okay, let's start at the beginning, Son. Great educational tool. Fun sounds, as my son mentioned.

Son

Yeah.

Dad

Will be missed. Definitely part of the Srsly Wrong family, and to retire a sketch like this, it's too soon.

Wrong Aaron

Anybody else want to- Stopping The Tape, and Popping It Out? No? Too embarrassed to say anything. Recently Resigned In Disgrace Peach of Chalief? Haven't seen you in a while.

Recently Resigned In Disgrace Peach of Chalief

Yes, I'd like to say thank you to Keyboard Warrior Radio Theater for always holding it down in Wrontown, for all of us, and not afraid to speak the truth, not afraid to push boundaries. I also want to apologize to everyone here for some of my behavior tonight at this funeral. I will be resigning as a eulogist. The things that I did today were inexcusable, and I will be stepping down. Thank you. I won't be taking any questions.

News Anchor

If you don't mind, I'm gonna say a few words? I'll just- the music here... (Music) Today on a Confirmation Bias News Special Report from the retirement funeral of Keyboard Warrior Theater, Keyboard Warrior was a great sketch. A sketch that was beloved by many, liked by even more, and hated by very few. This just in, Keyboard Warrior was a penetrating look into the strange new realm of internet arguments and online debates. And this just in, Keyboard Warrior was a fundamentally human project, putting all of our collective foibles, disagreements, and- sorry, I'm just breaking up a little bit. Foibles, disagreements, on display. You know, I usually don't break down like this reading the news, but- no, just play me out. Just play the song. (Stinger fades)

Mayor of Wrontown

(Ahem) On behalf of all the residents of Wrontown, let me just say, as the one good politician, this was a treasured sketch. This was a treasured sketch. And to know that it- no matter what happens, no Keyboard Warrior will ever happen again, from here on out, forever. It just... It hurts to sit with that knowledge. Let's just have a moment of silence to think about what it means for something to die. (Pause)

☒ *Trumpet playing "Taps"*

(01:09:17)

Shawn

There's something to be said for the impermanent, the ephemeral, the had-and-lost. Maybe the Library of Alexandria is more beautiful as a metaphor for the loss of information than what we would have actually gotten from it. Maybe it was just mostly bullshit anyways.

Aaron

More commentaries on Plato. Eh. I haven't read any of the (laughs) generations of commentaries on Plato that already exist.

Shawn

Yeah. A good part of the Library of Alexandria is shit that we already have copies of anyways. But since it's gone, we can be like, "Oh, wow, it's this amazing thing we don't know." And then the rest of it was mostly, like, comment section stuff. (Laughter) I don't know. Like, I can mourn the Library of Alexandria with the best of 'em. But isn't there some sort of meaning in its loss?

Aaron

Yeah. Everyone knows about it. And even people who don't visit any libraries, and don't care about libraries can be like, "Oh, it's so sad that that was lost." It's become this, like, cultural touchstone to, like, talk about loss of information. Maybe that's more valuable than it would have been. But, like,

just to give some other examples of times when that instinct to prevent loss, like, the grasping-ness becomes a problem. Like hoarders. Where these people are so afraid of losing anything that they— they might need later, that they fill their spaces with all this junk, like stacks and stacks of newspapers from decades ago that, "Oh, just— I just want to keep it, just in case." It's this furtive desire to keep as much as possible, and to not let anything go. In service of, you might need it someday. You've turned your living space into something that's completely— something that's—

Shawn

It runs contrary to a life worth living.

Aaron

Yeah, it—

Shawn

To have all of your free space filled up with newspapers in case you need them.

Aaron

And it runs contrary to, like, enjoyed a concert to spend the entire time watching it through your cell phone screen because you're, like, desperately trying to save this moment forever, so you can experience it again later. And then you don't even end up really experiencing it as well as you could in the moment, because you're focused on this desire to retain something that actually can't be retained. At least, not very well with a cell phone video. Maybe if you had, like, a 360-degree camera and surround sound to record it for, like, a virtual reality thing, or something maybe like that. I don't know.

Shawn

That's a fine idea. But can you imagine everyone in the audience brings out their 360 surround sound cameras and holds them up? (Aaron laughs) You could just have one guy do that. Like...

Aaron

Yeah. Someone who's getting paid to do it.

Shawn

But yeah. It's, like— oh, man. You know, I'm a fireworks head. I love fireworks. I check out fireworks every chance I get. (Laughs) But when I'm at the fireworks— it's not very often. I'm joking. I don't really care about them. But occasionally you get the opportunity, like, "Oh, there's fireworks, and there's people here watching fireworks. Let's do it."

Aaron

Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Shawn

I'm not like, "Oh, I'm better than this." It's not my favorite thing in the world. But—

Aaron

(Laughs) Shawn got made fun of for liking fireworks too much when he was younger.

Shawn

I'm just trying to clarify where I stand on the fireworks question. It's fine. And I'm not— it's not that I don't watch it. It's just that it rarely blows me away. Just because I was about to say, any time I'm watching fireworks it sounds like, "Oh, you fireworks chaser." (Laughter)

Aaron

That's what people immediately think. (Laughs)

Shawn

No. I see people with their little digital cameras or, like, smartphones recording fireworks. And if you ever watch video of fireworks— it's such a good metaphor for this over-retention bullshit.

Aaron

Yeah.

Shawn

Because video of fireworks is so much, just exponentially, a whole level dumber and worse than regular fireworks. Which are already just, like, pretty good, if you're an adult. You know?

Aaron

Yeah. I mean, like, it's cool. It's really big. Like, the thing that's awesome about fireworks is the whole sky is this canvass for these, like, big, brilliant lights. It's awe-inspiring. Like, especially if you're a kid and you haven't seen it very much or before. But even as an adult. It's this big thing— like, the sky is huge, and it opens up to the universe and, like, just against that background, you're having these colorful explosions of light. It's very pretty. People put effort into the shows. But almost none of that comes through on a cell phone camera video.

Shawn

Yeah. So you've taken your experience of this thing, you've degraded it by 40% to record the video of it, to have a copy that's only worth 10% of what it was in the first place. You're losing 30 per—

Aaron

Like, one percent. It's, like— (Laughter) Think of how many times you go see fireworks. But then think about how many times you've been, like, "All right, everyone..."

Shawn

I'm gonna go on YouTube and watch some fireworks vids.

Aaron

Or, like, let's— let's sit down as a family around the large-screen TV and watch our old videos of fireworks that we got. (Laughter) "Wow. Ooh. It's pretty." It's just, like... It's just bad. It's just— it's just a bad experience that nobody wants. But, like, you think you want it in the moment.

Shawn

And so, yeah, that over-retention, I think, is a real silly thing to do. Anxiously xeroxing your experiences as they happen—

Aaron

Yeah.

Shawn

—for no purpose, except the most vague promise of somehow keeping it.

Aaron

Yeah. You can't keep experiences. You can take a couple pictures, you'll have a memory of the experience, sure. But, like, experiences aren't something that can be bottled up and stored, and then taken out again and had again. You have to have them while you're having them. They are inherently fleeting, inherently ephemeral. And, like, you just have to embrace that. I mean, you don't have to. I'm not gonna make you. But (laughs) it's better.

Shawn

Another place that we get tension on this over-retention thing is, like, with the internet age that we're in now, conversations that we've had that in any other time period that would be ephemeral become part of the record.

Aaron

Yeah.

Shawn

Which can be really damaging. It can be damaging to people's lives. The fact that this stuff is stored in, like, Facebook or Google databases, private conversations, say, like, a fight with your lover from 2011. I'm just trying to trigger someone specifically. (Laughter)

Aaron

Who?

Shawn

Like, maybe you said something you really, really, like, mean about your mom to your brother over email in 2005— who knows. There's a million different things that should be ephemeral but which aren't in the internet age.

Aaron

Yeah.

Shawn

The NSA has these huge databases of all these communications from all these different people. Copies of text conversations and all this stuff. I've sure they've got it in some form. They claim that they only look at it in patterns. They don't look at the individual pieces. In a sense, it's like the Library of Alexandria. It's one of the biggest compendiums of information on humans that have ever existed. You could treat it like a database for historical research in the future and it would no doubt be really, really useful to historians to piece some stuff together and piece some details.

Aaron

Yeah. Or even just, like, human psychologists. Like, to take a look at one person having a crisis and then, like, what did they post publicly on their social media streams? What did they say in private conversation? Like, you could learn a lot about how humans are when they feel like they're not being watched, but actually are being watched and recorded, (laughs) in perpetuity. Like, yeah, it's— it's a fuckin' treasure trove of information that could give out a lot of benefits to, like, have and study and analyze, to— to add to the library of human history.

Shawn

Yeah. But at the same time, it should probably all be deleted.

Aaron

Yeah.

Shawn

For the purposes of, like, human liberation.

Aaron

Sometimes it's best that certain things are just gone. When I was younger we mostly used MSN Messenger to chat with each other. So I don't have any of those conversations. I don't know if that's store somewhere, or if that's gone. It's gone to me. Like, I can't get it. And part of me, like, wishes I could. Because it'd just be like, I don't know, just check it out. Like, what was I saying when I was in, like, 7th grade, when I was 13 on the internet chatting with my friends. But then part of me is, like, "Eh. Yeah. Maybe it's for the best that that's gone."

Shawn

I mean, it would be interesting. It's been long enough now that I wouldn't be, like, upset by it. But it's also, like, me at 12, 13 is, like, not me at my best.

Aaron

No.

Shawn

So for it to exist means for people to find it, potentially. And it's just, like, I don't know. Like, there's so many interactions I've had in my life that are ephemeral that I'm really glad were ephemeral. There's not something specific and big I'm thinking of, but just as a general rule. Like, as I grew up and became who I am today, there were a lot of parts that happened off the record. And I'm glad about that. And I think all— I think all of us are glad. Like, just an extreme example, to just— I think we're all in the same boat here. So the part of your brain that wants to catalog and keep everything, just bring that forward. And then think, okay, for whatever reason, there is a complete record of every time you've masturbated. Should it be retained or deleted? (Laughter) It's not a hard choice for me.

Aaron

Ah, but what if you need it? What if you need it later? Just to check...

Shawn

Mm— yeah, okay. I'll keep it.

Aaron

"Oh, what if I used to masturbate differently than I do now? I can always check. It's there."

Shawn

Look, I'm gonna keep it until I have a chance to go through it and separate the good from bad. So I'm just gonna hold onto it until then. Because some I want to keep. (Laughter)

Aaron

Yeah. Yeah, no, I'm fine with that not existing. It'd be a lot of times. A lot of videos.

Shawn

Yeah.

Aaron

Embarrassing.

Shawn

Yeah. It's a lot.

(01:18:55)

Grandpa

Garion, did Grandfather ever tell you about the Great War? When the Library Socialist Army overthrew the privatizing profiteers who were sending Wrongtopia into a dark age? The year was 2119. The Stationaries had taken over all of the libraries and kept out the Nomads. But we banded together in cells. The first step was narrative work. We spread the word about the change that we wanted to make, and the fight that we wanted to bring back. Then we used a mixed strategy of creating the institutions that we wanted to exist, and using the resources of existing institutions to eventually overthrow the social order, and bring about full usufruct-based library society that pays everyone according to need, meeting their irreducible minimum. We used these different tactics in a complementary way and, uh, overthrew it.

Garion

Is that when they changed the slogan of the Wrongtopia to, "More with less?"

Grandpa

Yes, "More with less," that's exactly the war. Yeah, that's the one. The "more with less."

Garion

Oh, yeah.

Grandpa

And that was also the start of the retention project, to record every aspect of— or, as the slogan goes—

Both

"Every moment, from every angle."

Grandpa

When we perfected library socialism, we also perfected total surveillance.

Garion

Yeah. Otherwise your library will have massive holes in it.

Grandpa

Yeah. And what if you need that?

Garion

Yeah.

Grandpa

Let me get my notebook. I want to record just some hand-written notes on reflections of this conversation.

Garion

Oh, yeah, I will, too.

Grandpa

Every moment, from angle.

Garion

—every angle. Grandpa told me a story, and we said the motto... (Writing sounds)

Grandpa

Because, I mean, if you're going through the log book, and one note is 2:30, and the next note is 2:45...

Garion

(Laughs) Yeah, what happened?

Grandpa

The inspectors would probably go, "Huh? What happened then?"

Garion

Yeah. And then they'd place us under solitary surveillance, right?/

Grandpa

That's right, yeah. Placed under camera, completely by yourself.

Garion

'Cause then at least we'll know what they're doing.

Grandpa

The first job of every citizen is to complete the record. And I've done that my whole life, my whole long life.

Garion

The amount of information in history that was never recorded is the greatest tragedy of all.

Grandpa

And I can see that you've retained some of the great family features.

Garion

You always said our family has the hearts of archivists.

Grandpa

Oh, right, "the hearts of archivists," and I'll just make a note, it was touching.

Garion

And then Grandpa made some notes, and I made a note about his notes... Okay. I think we're up to date.

Grandpa

Ooh— I just had some private thoughts I should record. One second.

Garion

Okay. I'm gonna head to the washroom.

Grandpa

Okay. Well, remember to turn on the camera in there when you go in.

Garion

Oh, yeah, of course.

Grandpa

What if we need it? Recording yourself go to the bathroom is the building blocks of library socialism.

Garion

Grandpa, did you know we've almost reached 18 trillion records of humans using the washroom??

Grandpa

Oh, that brings a tear to my eye.

Garion

Okay, you record that tear, and I'll be right back.

Grandpa

Had a tear come to my eye as I imagined 17 trillion perfect records, lined up in rows of clean millions, the collection complete. Its beauty, immaculate. The library. The archive. Growing.

☒ *Music fades*

(01:22:00)

Ad Man

Today's episode of Srsly Wrong is proudly brought to you by Perfect Complement, a fun new dating app for people who are looking for someone who matches them perfectly. That's right, you heard me, perfectly.

Consumer

Hold on a minute. Are you telling me if I sign up to your website you will find me a partner who complements me perfectly in every aspect of myself and theirselves? Like two perfectly-cut puzzle pieces snapping into place? Or two gears turning in to one another perfectly, teeth matching, as we live our lives without arguments, disagreements, complaints, friction, or negative emotions of any kind? The perfect ticking clock forever with no challenges?

Ad Man

Yes. That is exactly what Perfect Complement promises. Now have you ever heard that old nursery rhyme, "Jack Sprat"? This nursery rhyme was the founding ethos of our company. "Jack Sprat could eat no fat, his wife could eat no lean. But together both, they licked the platter clean." Now imagine this. You hate doing the dishes. She hates cleaning the toilet. Our experts will match you up with someone who will do the cleaning you don't like, and you can do the cleaning that they don't like.

Consumer

What if I don't like cleaning at all?

Ad Man

Then we'll find you someone who likes cleaning always.

Consumer

What if more than half of the world's population doesn't like doing more than half of the cleaning in total?

Ad Man

Then you can get to the top of the list by paying for Perfect Complement Gold.

Consumer

Wow. I'm gonna head to my computer right now and sign up. But wait a minute. You have to tell me, how does this work? How do you do it?

Ad Man

We're more than happy to answer that question.

Consumer

And I'm more than happy to listen to your answer.

Ad Man

When you sign up for the first time, there is a terms and conditions...

Consumer

Pretty standard.

Ad Man

...giving Perfect Complement the right to legally request any and all records that relate to you, your life, and your identity from any private or public body. So after we do that, we build a pretty detailed profile of who you are as a person, and we use complicated data analytics to compare you to millions and millions of people that we have access to the profiles for, from our other products and services. Now, not everyone's in the dating app, but all of these human profiles are used to create general trends, which we then apply to you and others, and look for optimal pairings.

Consumer

So does that mean you'll have access to all of my private messages on all social media platforms?

Ad Man

Yes.

Consumer

Does that mean you'll have access to any recordings of calls I've made that are in government NSA databases.

Ad Man

Uh- yes.

Consumer

Does that mean you'll have access to any time my face has shown up on surveillance footage anywhere in the world, based on facial recognition algorithms that have picked me out from everything that ever existed?

Ad Man

Yeah. But I— I should stress, this is a pretty standard clause in terms of services in the year 2035. We're not different in asking for this.

Consumer

Well, it makes sense that you would need all that, in order to know enough about me to match me so perfectly. So that checks out. It makes sense how your service works, now.

Ad Man

That's what I like to hear. Sign up today for Perfect Complement.

Consumer

If anyone's gonna have access to all my private data, it might as well be someone who's gonna match me with my perfect romantic partner forever.

Ad Man

And it's a pretty standard contract these days. (Please note that Perfect Complement is unable to purge all the records under the Emergency Retention Act of 2031. All records, public or private, are held indefinitely.)

☒

Jingle

"It's our time, we've got nothing to lose, so baby..." (Fades)

☒

(01:25:24)

Wrong Shawn

Now it's time for the Q&A, where people hold library socialism to account, and we put all doubts to rest through vigorous answers to tough questions.

Wrong Aaron

Can't wait. Let me just— (Claps) clap my hands and rub 'em together in anticipation. Do you got the first question?

Wrong Shawn

Yes. Here it is. (Question chime) "I hate traditionalists. I think traditionalists cause all the most horrific things in the world. You know what we'd have without tradition? Utopia. And I think this library socialism stuff, I get some weird traditionalist vibes." First of all, I think you just need to check your premises here, bud. The idea that we're gonna set up a dichotomy between novelty and tradition, and then just, like, pick one side? Bizarre thinking. Obviously we have no choice but to embrace a hybrid between novelty and tradition.

But, I mean, what specifically we have to do with tradition is see what is the liberatory potential of the past, and try to actualize that potentiality. So pull on history, not in explicit, like, xeroxing terms, like reproductive terms. But use history as a piece of the puzzle in— in building new combinations to create an ever-better society. Tradition has an important part in library socialism, but it's a remix culture. We don't just follow tradition from on high, but we certainly acknowledge its existence, and— and respect it. And there's— some traditions are better than others.

Wrong Aaron

Absolutely. And novelty comes from tradition. It can only exist in reference to something else that isn't novel. The idea that our current ideas, or the newest ideas, are inherently always the best ideas, and we must destroy traditions from the past completely that don't align with our values has led to some really horrifying things in the past, like cultural genocides, or things like residential schools where First Nations peoples in North America were forced to go to schools run by white people that specifically meant to quash their history and traditions. Obviously, many traditions are problematic. Novelty is

great. Novelty's part of the equation. But pure novelty with nothing as a reference point or a basis to start from isn't even a coherent concept that makes sense, unfortunately for you and your question.

Wrong Shawn

And, I mean, I think it's just worth noting before we move on here that a true and full novelty that isn't just a novel combination of pre-existing characteristics has got to be extremely rare. You know, like, we're talking about the creation of a new mineral or something, you know? Like, most of the time it's just a novel combination of already-existing repetitions from the past. And I think tradition can be a source of wisdom, both by listening directly and learning from the lessons of it. So I just absolutely disagree, and reject this incoherent criticism about the synthesis of novelty and traditionalism that underpins library socialism, and I won't have it. Can you please read the next question?

(Question chime)

Wrong Aaron

All right. It says here, "Earlier, Shawn, you seemed to imply the only or main reason to keep disabled people alive is because they're useful, unlike the Nazis you disagreed with, who said they weren't useful, which was why they killed them. Are you saying that the only reason to keep disabled people alive is because you find them useful?"

Wrong Shawn

Hey, thanks for the hard-to-answer bad faith question. No. Okay, so, let me just be clear. The reason that we should keep all human beings alive rather than kill them in a genocidal way is because we have a responsibility to other human beings, as human beings, to help meet their basic needs. And that includes their human rights. The human dignity is the— the center of this argument.

Wrong Aaron

The system works better when everyone is kept alive. That's what makes a coherent, wonderful society. And it just happens to be true that the Nazis were wrong about disabled people never being useful.

Wrong Shawn

Yeah, it's just that underscores the collective ideological poverty of the Nazis. They're just factually wrong on so many things, it's incredible.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. So don't confuse a mere statement of the facts— we should keep disabled people alive, disabled people are useful— to saying that the first one is dependent on the second one. That's not— that's not what anyone's saying.

Wrong Shawn

But it is absolutely true that it is good for us as a species to give everyone the potential to thrive within their context. Society is better for everyone when we all are able to express ourselves, be supported in having our basic needs met, and being able to thrive. That's the core complementarity argument there. And also key to this is the idea of difference, rather than hierarchy. People with differing abilities, it's different. It's not a hierarchy, you know? Like, it might be true that most people are born with ten fingers. But if someone loses a finger in an accident it doesn't make them any less human. And everyone's welcome to have a seat at the table and contribute and thrive. And if we let everyone do that, we're gonna have the best results. That's the point.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah.

Wrong Shawn

Next question! (Question chime) "It's unclear to me, Wrong Boys, you seem to be contradicting yourselves. Do you support or the permanent or the ephemeral? Pick a side."

Wrong Aaron

Yikes. What's with all of these poor assumptions in the questions?

Wrong Shawn

It's like picking a side between left and right.

Wrong Aaron

Sometimes you need to turn left, sometimes you need to turn right.

Wrong Shawn

And the two exist only in relation to each other.

Wrong Aaron

Absolutely. And, like, permanence, true permanence, is a fantasy. It's maybe potentially possible, but it would require work forever, done by a succession of conscious agents in perpetuity. And so, it's not really a real thing. What we talk about with permanence is more staving off of degradation, which is inherent to time.

Wrong Shawn

So there's a need for an interplay between both degrees of permanence, and degrees of ephemerality. They're both part of a coherent, singular worldview on information. So, next question. (Question chime) "There has been a major divide recently on the left. On one side, fully automated luxury communism. Its opposite, degrowth. Where does library socialism stand?"

Wrong Aaron

You know what? I like this question.

Wrong Shawn

The answer is: library socialism is fully automated luxury degrowth. It's doing more with less. The principle of usufruct, and the principle of complementarity help generate the irreducible minimum. Usufruct is generative of more instances of use cases for objects. Complementarity's aspect of, like, synergy, where you can get more than the sum of its parts means that you're getting more from less, also. So when you're combining these things together, you've got something really powerful, where you can actually decrease carbon emissions, decrease the amount of carbon output and garbage output. Decrease the amount of pollution while giving people a higher level of access than they've ever had in history to what they need and desire. It's both.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. I mean, that really just covers it. What else can you say? (Laughter)

Wrong Shawn

Next question. (Question chime) "So does complementarity just mean that whenever anything good happens, that's complementarity? Seems like a tautology." Thanks for your question.

Wrong Aaron

Quick answer: no, it's not a tautology. It's not just, like, any time something good happens you're like, "That's complementarity." But any time something good happens, you can look for the complementary relationships in these complex systems that allowed this good thing to happen. And you'll usually be able to find them. You'll want to look for relationships that are reciprocal, and sustainable. Two sort of elements of a complementary relationship. When you have non-hierarchically different elements coming together in ways that are reciprocal and sustainable, that's complementarity, and that will produce good outcomes.

Wrong Shawn

So this analytical lens of complementarity is also tied to an ethics of complementarity, which is sort of, like, the basis of anarchism. Non-hierarchy. And in social ecology, in particular, a description of the way that humanity's relationship fits into nature, we've inherited a historical legacy of domination where nature was treated as something that humans could conquer, were above— the entire world is just one big slave for us to enslave, and humanity's fate is to enslave the stars.

Wrong Aaron

Right. So, yeah. The ethic is, like, we shouldn't do that. We shouldn't enslave the planet. We shouldn't enslave the stars. We should form sustainable, reciprocal relationships with these things.

Wrong Shawn

Yeah. And that human beings should have a relationship with other living beings, and nature as it exists, that's complementary. Where our unique features contribute to making the universe a more lush

and beautiful place. That human beings could use our capacities to produce a richer and more creative developmental whole, not as a dominant species, but as a supportive one.

And I also just find that this ethic and lens of analysis inspire all of these creative— so many different things that I just feel like relate to this dynamic, and this generative capacity of non-hierarchy. It's so fascinating and awesome, and so well-encapsulated in the library, where the library is more than the sum of its parts, not just because it's a one-stop place to do any sort of generalized learning, but also in the way that it functions on usufruct means that people have access to what they need rather than ownership.

And it's just, like, such a complementary process to be like, "Oh, you get this book while you're reading it." It's basic, but it's so profound at the same time. Like, the thing that needs to be somewhere gets there. And when it's no longer needed to be there, it is put somewhere else where it's needed. The only reason this blows my mind is because I live under this regime of private property and ownership. Like, "Wow, it's crazy. Like, when you're not riding the bike, someone else can ride the bike. And then it's like there's two bikes. It's like a bike comes outta nowhere."

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. And forming these complementary relationships where you use it when I'm not using it makes the whole process more sustainable, because we end up using less things, and that makes our relationship to nature more supportive and reciprocal, which is a good outcome. One of the many good outcomes that complementarity fosters.

Wrong Shawn

And so, through these forces of complementarity, usufruct, and the irreducible minimum, libraries hold the secret to tackling both the crises of inequality and climate change using the same principles. That's so— that's— it's not just any good thing. It's that. It's, like, all these sort of psychedelically-connected related concepts that have to do with the generative functions of non-hierarchical relationships and conceptions.

Wrong Aaron

So that should clear that up. And we'll move on to the next question. (Question chime) "Hey Wrong Boys. So you say that you want absolutely everything to function like a library. But what about food? Can we share food on a usufructian basis? Do I have to return my food when I'm done with it? Do you guys want me to return my poop? Ha-ha-ha-ha. Gotcha."

Wrong Shawn

Great question. Colorful question. It's questions like that, that really brighten up a dull show.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. And I could tell you had fun writing it, too, because you wrote, "Ha-ha-ha" in the question.

Wrong Shawn

Yeah. You have to be laughing pretty hard.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah.

Wrong Shawn

The answer to your question is: what are you gonna do with your poo if not give it to us?

Wrong Aaron

Yeah.

Wrong Shawn

You have some sort of special room in your house where you keep poo? Or are you already engaged in a process of returning your poo to the government?

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. This question definitely seemed a bit bizarre to me, because I was, like, "We already return our poop." I mean, unless you don't. I saw that episode of hoarders...

Wrong Shawn

Are you some sort of poo-keeping guy...?

Wrong Aaron

There was buckets all over the place. It was a nightmare.

Wrong Shawn

Daily reminder: don't keep your poo!

Wrong Aaron

Unreturned poo can be a health hazard, so we really want people to return their poo through plumbing tubes already installed in every building that gets kind of returned to the system more broadly, is treated, maybe we can find uses for it in nature. Return it to the ecosystem in a way where it's a useful input into another process. We want that waste to equal food. Waste equals food is a fundamental building block of library socialism, so it makes sense. You take food out of the library, and you return waste to the library through your toilet.

Wrong Shawn

Yeah. If you want more information on that you can check out, we did a three-part series on Ecotopia and Ecopocalypse. We cover this topic. Any ecotopia that's worth anything, you know that you have to use the force of littering for good by turning all garbage into something that can contribute to the environment. The same would work for poo and pee in a well-functioning system, is there's useful stuff in there. You can't deny it. Like, it's a little bit gross, for sure, but you know, there's a lot of protein in poo. And I'm not saying that you should eat protein poo. Like, protein from poo. I'm saying there might be a day when it's an affordable alternative. I'm just saying, a well-functioning system would at least feed that protein to, like, I don't know, dogs or something.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. Turn it into compost. There's lots of useful things to do with poo.

Wrong Shawn

Maybe no one has to eat it. I don't care. That's not my thing. I've just heard about that.

Wrong Aaron

So, I mean, but your question, though, using a poor example, does actually get at something interesting, what Shawn was gesturing to, which is that some things you aren't gonna use and return, some things are consumable, like tissue papers, packaging, drugs you consume. There's many things that a system based on the principles of a lending library doesn't actually really work for. You're generally not gonna return your weed after you smoke it.

So part of a library society, obviously with a complementarity, would be not just lending libraries, but dispensaries that could give out things that don't need to be returned. But still, of course, always keeping in mind the principle that waste must equal food. If the packaging on your chip bag isn't meant to be returned, it should be so that wherever you put it, it will be a useful input into the ecosystem. If you live on a sea city, it should be able to throw it in the water, fine. Or if it does have to go in a recycling bin of some kind, that's basically returning it.

Everything gets returned to nature, in a sense, over time. You know? It's, like, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, and all that. We live in a relatively closed system here on the planet. The library system would recognize that, and not just operate as if production is an end-to-end process, but realize that production and society is always a loop, and that all outputs should be useful inputs.

Wrong Shawn

Dispensaries have a type of complementarity to them, too, in the sense that people get what they need. You don't go to, like, a restaurant food dispensary thing— you know, free restaurants, obviously, part of the future— and get more than you need. Or at least, not much more than you need. So much food waste happens in people's fridges, because planning out exactly how much they're gonna eat, at what time, and stuff like that, and then they go camping and stuff— "Oh, my lettuce is spoiled." I can give you numerous examples of food spoilage in the house because people are trying to be principled, responsible adults who aren't going to restaurants.

But if you have, like, some sort of big shared kitchen, maybe similar to a restaurant on the consumer end, where food is being distributed according to need, and used based on what materials were in, you

could effectively avoid food waste by pooling resources. It also makes it cheaper to produce overall, because of, like, the economy of scale. It takes up less time in people's lives than cooking does— which, again, you're getting more from less. And going to these public feeding areas, these people's cafeterias, you're better prioritizing the use of people's times in their day. You're using less resources to produce the goods. The cost is cheaper overall. That is still a great example of complementarity. And complementarity is, in a really real sense, to each according to their need. And also, from each according to their ability.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. And just to bring this back around to your question— all of the food that you eat at the free restaurants, the free dispensaries, please, please, please return your poop after. A library society will not have a bunch of open sewage anywhere. Hopefully. That's the plan. Really, I was concerned by your question, because it was just so bizarre to me...

Wrong Shawn

Don't keep it.

Wrong Aaron

Like, you'll make more. I mean, if you need it for something— I don't know what you would. We love you, but you do have to return your poop.

Wrong Shawn

"Dear Wrong Boys, may I keep my poo under your system?" May you? I don't know. Like, we're not gonna send you to jail, but no.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah, it's weird, it's like—

Wrong Shawn

We're gonna come for it, for sure. Like, eventually it's a health hazard.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah. Like, this isn't just an individual's—

Wrong Shawn

You can keep a certain amount...

Wrong Aaron

—freedom thing. Yeah, like, in your fridge, or— I don't know.

Wrong Shawn

...just by— But there is a certain point where you have enough poo in your house, the government intervenes. The system already works that way. Like, we didn't innovate this. There's already a threshold, and—

Wrong Aaron

And, like, we're not gonna keep granting you more and more homes to continue filling with poo because you don't want to get rid of any of it. That wouldn't be considered—

Wrong Shawn

That's a freedom that infringes on other people's freedom.

Wrong Aaron

Yeah, exactly. We live in a society, as they say. Please return your poop.

Wrong Shawn

That's what we mean by complementarity under library socialism. Thanks for your hard-hitting questions. You're welcome, for the hard-hitting answers. And now that all doubts are to rest, welcome to the cult.

Wrong Aaron

Ah. I love being in this cult.

☒ *Music Chimes*

(01:42:27)

(Law & Order bump)

Judge

Wrongtopia Divorce Court, I'm the judge. Plaintiff looking to divorce, why have you decided to waste my time today with this?

Plaintiff

There was an infidelity.

Judge

When do you suggest this infidelity occurred?

Plaintiff

Multiple times, your honor. But for sure, there was an instance on the night of October 3rd.

Judge

Bailiff, can you push out the big screen TV, please.

Plaintiff

All my friends and family are in the seats behind me.

Judge

You're the one who wants a divorce—

Plaintiff

Yeah, can someone just—

Judge

—because of this "provable instance" of infidelity.

Plaintiff

Couldn't you just watch it in private? Or you and the jury, or...?

Judge

This is what we do now.

Plaintiff

Okay, family, if any of you want to leave— no? Nobody's... Okay.

Judge

There's nothing wrong with wanting to watch, everyone. We found this seemingly righteous reason to do this unthinkable invasion of privacy. Get into it. You don't become a divorce court judge without a voyeuristic streak.

Plaintiff

Well, at least it's not me up on the screen.

Judge

That's right, it's not. I mean, that was the problem for you. We'll bring in a special erotic stenographer, because it's important that we capture not just the words in the video, but also the spirit and tone of human sexuality, which we celebrate in library socialism, as part of the legal record.

Plaintiff

Which angle are we gonna be watching the act from?

Judge

You know what? That's up to you. Dealers choice.

Plaintiff

Oh. Oh, my.

Judge

We could see what she sees? I'm just spit-balling. I don't know. Anything works. "Every moment, every angle."

Plaintiff

Could we do an angle from miles up in the sky?

Judge

We have that angle in that moment, but that's not gonna get the evidence the court needs. If you're uncomfortable with it, I propose something like a CCTV-style corner room.

Plaintiff

Okay, sure.

Judge

Attention all judges in the break room, there will be a video showing in courtroom seven.

Plaintiff

No, you know what? Sorry, I'm changing my mind, sorry to interrupt. Do an angle right behind the guy's ass. I want the screen to be full of ass.

Judge

Attention all judges in the break room, never mind.

(Law & Order bump)

Judge

Accuser, do you mind standing up next to the big screen, saying your full legal name?

(Memory fading chimes)

Plaintiff

And so, I said no. I'm not gonna do it. I'm not gonna stand up there and say my name. This whole procedure is humiliating, you know, Doctor?

Therapist

When something traumatic happens in our lives, often we begin to question things. But you're not saying that you've got an issue with library socialism and our perfected society, are you?

Plaintiff

Well, I mean, do we have to archive everything?

Therapist

I'm sorry, I was just— what'd you say? I was archiving.

Plaintiff

Do we have to archive everything?

Therapist

Well, yeah. I mean, what if we— what if we need it?

Plaintiff

Yeah, I mean, that's what everyone says. "What if we need it?"

Therapist

Every moment from every angle is recorded. We've got the biggest archive ever. That's nothing to shake a stick at.

Plaintiff

We're destroying forests that we need to keep the air clean to hold all these data storage units to store everything.

Therapist

But you know this. The record can't be incomplete. What if we need it later? We should at least go through it first.

Plaintiff

We can't go through all of it, because while you're going through it you have to make records of that fact that you're going through it, and then go through those, and make records that you're going through the— it doesn't work.

Therapist

Well, there's one way to do things. And there's one way to think about it. And that's why you're here. So this outburst— not very good.

Plaintiff

Kinda like your therapist abilities, honestly.

Therapist

Well, no, I was assigned to be a therapist. It wasn't my dream. But it's something that I have come to understand. It's for service of library socialism. I do my assigned role. And—

Plaintiff

Sure, but I wanted to be a therapist.

Therapist

—my assigned role makes—

Plaintiff

That was my dream, as a child. And then they assigned me to be a race car driver.

Therapist

Well, that sounds all right.

Plaintiff

I guess. Well, I mean, I drive the car well, but I'm always last in the race, 'cause I'm trying to be safe out there.

Therapist

That's cool, yeah. And I'm doing therapy. My goal is always first and foremost, leave them the same. I don't want to be responsible for sending someone off the deep end. And I often will spend, I mean, a lot of time talking about myself.

Plaintiff

You seem interested in race car driving. Why don't we switch? I know. Because that's not what we were assigned.

Therapist

I don't know what to say. You've got criminal thought. And my job as a therapist, first and foremost, is to call the police if this happens. So do you want to stay here while the police come to arrest you and put you under solitary surveillance?

Plaintiff

No, I'm gonna— I think I'm gonna escape, actually, go on the run.

Therapist

No, don't do that.

Plaintiff

Yeah, you know, it's—

Therapist

Just stick around. Cops on their way. I'll just—

Plaintiff

Oh, did you already press a silent alarm or something?

Therapist

No, I still need to call them. But I'm going to.

Plaintiff

You know what? I will stay. But I really have to take a long bathroom break. So if you could—

Therapist

Okay. I'll just call the cops while you're in there.

Plaintiff

No, call them when I get back. Just— I don't want them, like, knocking on the door while I'm in the bathroom, rushing me, it'll just make me take longer.

Therapist

Oh, so you're saying you'll get to the police station faster overall?

Plaintiff

Yeah, if you wait 'til I'm back from the bathroom to call them.

Therapist

So you're just gonna go to the bathroom, and I won't call the cops?

Plaintiff

Yeah. Well, you will, but once I get back.

Therapist

Yeah.

Plaintiff

Yeah.

Both

Cool.

(Police sirens)

Police Officer 1

You know, I never planned on being a police officer.

Police Officer 2

No. It wasn't my dream as a kid, but— eh. Worse jobs.

Police Officer 1

But the system works. You gotta give it credit.

Police Officer 2

Can't argue with that.

Police Officer 1

"A book to every reader."

Police Officer 2

So what about this madman that's on the loose?

Police Officer 1

A politically radicalized madman who's shouting political obscenity at the parliament?

Police Officer 2

Oh my god. That's gonna distract them from voting yes.

Police Officer 1

Yeah. I feel like we really perfected parliaments when we had one monolithic party that all representatives are members of, and they all wear the same color shirt and all vote yes on every motion.

Police Officer 2

Yeah, well, when you're in a perfect society forever, obviously everyone has the perfect ideas. If everyone has perfect ideas, every motion put forward will be perfect, every shirt will be the perfect color, and every vote will be a perfect yes. It's just how perfect societies work.

Police Officer 1

I mean, if there was two parties, three parties, four parties, that sort of thing, it would have to mean there's four or five wrong parties.

Police Officer 2

You have the truth party. So, what else are you gonna add?

Police Officer 1

Just lies parties.

Police Officer 2

Either it's redundant, and you just have a bunch of truth parties that all believe the same thing, no point. Or, yeah, the lies parties.

Police Officer 1

So one is enough for us, thanks.

Police Officer 2

Oh, man, it's looking here like this madman said, "Forests are more important than data storage units."

Police Officer 1

That seems like an unnecessary hierarchy between things. Oh, it's too bad with these guys. You know, they're such lunatics. People who have big public breakdowns over their political views on—

Police Officer 2

Yeah. And more and more of 'em happening, too.

Police Officer 1

—a ticking clock of a society, yeah.

Police Officer 2

Yeah. Weird how perfection seems to stimulate outbursts.

Police Officer 1

Mm-hmm. I think it's just the outbursts were already there. Not even perfection could keep—

Police Officer 2

Could stop them.

Police Officer 1

Could stop them, yeah.

Police Officer 2

Right, of course.

Police Officer 1

That's how fallen and...

Police Officer 2

Makes sense, yeah.

Police Officer 1

But we'll still keep criminals. Just under solitary surveillance.

Police Officer 2

Because what else are you gonna do? Solitary to stop the spread. Recorded everything to make sure the record's full.

Police Officer 1

Absolutely, yeah. Criminals are basically like eggs in a carton, just producing hours and hours of video and audio for us. I learned this all at police school. My first love is soup. Mirepoix? Have you tried it? It's incredible. It's, like, better than the sum of its parts. Oh, there he is, look. (Siren)

Police Officer 2

Oh my god, okay. Sir— freeze!

(Law & Order bump)

Judge

Uh, so yeah, it's me the judge, and I just want to hit my big hammer, as is custom. (Gavel sounds)
The defendant is clearly guilty, and will be sentenced to death.

(Law & Order outro stinger)

☒ *Organ Music*

Narrator

And so, our hero, who saw through the madness and lies of the library society was found guilty of four acts of data destruction and 540 acts of preemptive data destruction by not recording. In the judge's written declaration he said, "The act of leaving the record unfinished is so heinous and so brutal that it deserves death." And so, our hero is marched through crowds of screaming citizens, screaming for blood, screaming for vengeance, as was custom. He was marched up to the platform and his head was gingerly placed underneath the guillotine. The executioner fastens his neck in the device and pulls the enormous blade, still glistening with the blood of the last thought criminal up to the tippy-top of the guillotine. Our hero is trapped by a malevolent and unjust society, which has the means to imminently destroy him for his political thought and action. Nothing can save him. To be continued.

☒ *Music fades*

(01:50:36)

Aaron

So we started this library socialism series talking a lot about kind of our own ideological development, and how we came to the ideas we currently have, and then we came to calling these ideas "library socialism." And when I was looking back over kind of our body of work, and thinking about complementarity and ways that it's shown up, one other thing that really popped out at me is, for a while, kind of around, like, the hundreds-era episodes of our show, we were doing things a lot like knowledge versus imagination, centralization versus decentralization.

A bunch of episodes, not all of them titled X-versus-Y, but playing on this idea of things that people tend to think of as, like, inherently opposed forces that, you know, you have to, like, pick one side of. Or, like, one thing's right, and one thing's wrong. And we kind of, like, had this internal meme of being, like, #balance. You know, you need some of both. But even, like, I think the balance framework is inferior to a complementary framework, because the idea of, like, "Oh, it's not knowledge versus imagination. You need a balance of knowledge and imagination," isn't quite the same thing as saying, "Knowledge and imagination are both important things that actually work together."

And maybe sometimes some of these things are in tension. Obviously, centralization, decentralization could be in tension. But tension doesn't preclude reciprocity, and it doesn't preclude two things actually working together, or— or potentially complementing one another, even if they could potentially not complement one another. And, yeah. I just— I think we have a long history of, like, wanting to resolve perceived binaries. Which is kind of, I guess, like dialectic.

I don't know that much about dialectics, but it makes me think of dialectics. Complementarity is not just talking about two opposing forces. It can be applied in situations like that, but it is so much broader, and it can talk about things where there's more than two opposing forces, or there's things that aren't necessarily opposing. It's just talking about, again, non-hierarchical difference working together to produce synergistic, emergent outcomes that are more than the sum of their parts.

Shawn

Another ancient thing I remember from our show that seems relevant to this subject matter is, in some early episode— I can't remember when it was— it was, like, something we figured out while recording, was a way of thinking about centrism, and it's always somewhere in between, and the golden mean. Saying, like, it's usually true that the truth is somewhere in between, but it usually, like, hugs one side. The truth is somewhere in between, but it's way, way closer to antifa than fascists.

Aaron

Right.

Shawn

Which is sort of, like, the product of a recursive centrism. Like, the center of the center and the side. The center of the center of the center of the center of the—

Aaron

Yeah, yeah. I like the recursive thing, 'cause it kind of helps get around these overly simplistic complementary ideas. Or, like, you know, just take, like, #Centrism. Like, "Oh, the left and the right both have a point." And it's, like, well, they might both have a point. Like, someone might say, "Oh, you know, like, sure, complementarity. That's why we should have heteronormativity. Men and women are complementary to each other. There's a non-hierarchical difference there. And so, in sexual relationships, it should be men and women. It's complementary."

But then if you kinda zoom out from that and say, "Okay, heterosexual relationships exist. Complementary to that, there's also the potential for all kinds of pairings and genders and relationships that contain more than two people." Like, there's not just a very simplistic complementarity, that everyone must adhere to this one thing. It's— it's an expanding, recursive application to continually be looking for the ways in which different instances, different parts of society, different concepts, different inventions, different abilities, different anything can work together well.

Shawn

I can think of a lot of contexts where there's positive, emergent outcomes in complex systems through the interaction between non-hierarchical differences. I can think of ones that exist, and I can think of ones that should exist, or ones that I would hope to make exist. Looking for other contexts where we can create effective teams, where specializations have a complementary outcome towards the end. There's also the angle of the celebration of difference. Let's say, like, ideological difference, and mutual criticism, and dispute over ideas. That context can be generative of better outcomes. That tensions between differing positions, when put together, can create better outcomes. That's another piece of this that I think's important.

There's also just the general complementary of, how do you be a human being who's complementary to society, the world, and others? And I think part of that is, like, generally speaking, being nice. Like, starting with being kind to each other is a building block of, like, interpersonal complementarity. But also, figuring out ways of how, like, say, organizing works. How do we build relationships where we can encourage each other to do the right things, and do the right things together?

Aaron

Makin' all the right moves for all the right reasons.

Shawn

And that's what complementarity means, all these things.

Aaron

Yeah, absolutely. And, like, if we don't exist in a complementary relationship with nature and the world around us, if we burn through all the resources, we're all going to die in fires. Or tsunamis. Or, you know, something.

Shawn

Maybe it'll be a human action.

Aaron

Oh, yeah, fighting for the scraps of resources that are left, you're murdered by a former best friend. Who knows.

Shawn

Yeah. The stakes are certainly high out there, friends, but we're glad that you're with us on this journey to create an ever-more-perfect society. It's an important task. A commune of communes that pays according to need.

Aaron

Full library society that curates and cultivates the best of human knowledge, a giant storehouse that wards against the degradation of time, and making the entire history of human knowledge and technological development available to the public, not just as information, but actually applying it, utilizing that human legacy to bring about a fully automated society that meets people's needs, all of their needs, brings about an irreducible minimum using usufructian property relations to create more with less, and build a vibrant and fecund society using our collective legacy, stored in libraries around the world, ending all hierarchy, including racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and others that I'm not remembering right now.

Shawn

It's gonna be glorious. It's gonna be a perfect society, a perfect utopia forever. It's actually gonna be really hard and it's gonna take steps, and take iterations and change over time. It's never gonna be perfected. But we move towards more and more decency to one another, using the instruments that we have available over time. And big steps should be made soon. So I'm optimistic we can all do that together. This has been the Srsly Wrong Podcast. We are Shawn and Aaron. And speaking of the past, the record—

Aaron

Oh, yeah. And the— and the show's archive.

Music

Shawn

We have a very special offer, that if you become a Patron on Patreon for us, you get access to the entire backlog of episodes going all the way back to 2014, when we were more, you know, naïve and brash, and—

Shawn

Yeah.

Shawn

—who knows if it holds up?

Shawn

There's a lot of those old episodes are behind the paywall. Like, most of 'em from those early years. And what are we hiding?

Shawn

Six dollars a month, and you get a chance to try to cancel the Wrong Boys. Find the content, make the sizzle reel.

Shawn

Find all the worst things we ever said into microphones. They're definitely in there.

Shawn

It's probably not that bad. I think it's more, like, cringey for social reasons.

Shawn

Yeah. It's never anything truly awful. But I think you could create a pretty compelling sizzle reel, if you wanted to.

Shawn

Mm-hmm. I mean, comedy sometimes involved taking risks. Who knows how it all aged. But six dollars a month, you get to cancel us. Worth a shot. But if you like the show and don't want to cancel us, we also have some other great benefits, (laughs) for— for Patrons, including a bunch of bonus episodes, including our revolution series. And at just two dollars a month you can get access to our Discord servers and private Facebook group. Give us reviews, give us shoutouts. Rate us on platforms positively. Send us messages. Spread the word.

Shawn

So that's it.

Shawn

Yeah. It's been a slice, everyone. I hope you have a great week.

Shawn

Thanks so much for listening, everyone, to 200 episodes, and to this trilogy. This is a major culmination. We were happy to share it with you.

Shawn

Thanks for giving us your time and attention. Life is such a busy and crazy thing, and there's, like, so many other things to do instead. And then you chose to listen to our show. I feel really humbled by that.

Shawn

It means a lot.

Shawn

And— and I honor your time. "I honor your time?" (Laughter) I just can't talk straight.

Shawn

Srsly Wrong Podcast honors your time. (Laughter) We try to honor your time.

☒ *Outro theme by Phillip Osmon*

Narrator

Next time on Srsly Wrong: Mr. What-Is-Was-And-Ever-Will-Be meets his nemesis.

☒ *Suspenseful Music*

Mr. What-Is-Was-And-Ever-Will-Be

Mr. What-Wasn't-Is-Not-And-Never-Will-Be! What are you doing here?

Mr. What-Wasn't-Is-Not-And-Never-Will-Be

I'm here to destroy you.

Mr. What-Is-Was-And-Ever-Will-Be

I thought you didn't exist. I thought you weren't. But you are!

Mr. What-Wasn't-Is-Not-And-Never-Will-Be

And I always will be.

Mr. What-Is-Was-And-Ever-Will-Be

I must defeat you. Otherwise, what isn't and wouldn't be becomes what might be.

Mr. What-Wasn't-Is-Not-And-Never-Will-Be

Mr. What-Is-Was-And-Ever-Will-Be, you fancy yourself a hero. But I think you're actually a villain. Your tedious mathematical logic, making a projection of one specific way that it will be, completely detached from the reality?

Mr. What-Is-Was-And-Ever-Will-Be

It's never been wrong.

Mr. What-Wasn't-Is-Not-And-Never-Will-Be

The world is a fundamentally chaotic place, and the world of potential is larger and more varied than you could ever imagine.

Mr. What-Is-Was-And-Ever-Will-Be

Not if I defeat you first!

(Swords clashing, grunting, whooshing)

Mr. What-Wasn't-Is-Not-And-Never-Will-Be

Mr. What-Is-Was-And-Ever-Will-Be, the impossible happens every day, and you can't hold it back!

Mr. What-Is-Was-And-Ever-Will-Be

We'll see about that! Take that! (Epic fight sounds) You don't bring your chaotic wildness to this universe!

Mr. What-Wasn't-Is-Not-And-Never-Will-Be

Back flip! Hup-hup! Your rigid insistence on upholding a calcified fate is going to fundamentally limit our potential. We need to overthrow what will be.

Mr. What-Is-Was-And-Ever-Will-Be

Looks like I've got you right where I- (Grunts, choking:) I didn't foresee that. It shouldn't be. (Chokes)

Mr. What-Wasn't-Is-Not-And-Never-Will-Be

I'm tellin' you, old man. Impossible things happen every day. Hop on my hog... (Engine fades)

Narrator

And so, Mr. What-Wasn't-Is-Not-And-Never-Will-Be defeated Mr. What-Is-Was-And-Ever-Will-Be, decalcifying the fate of humankind, shattering the world of potential into millions of millions of cascading potentialities. Unpredictable. Duplicating, splitting, merging, and being lost at a faster rate than anyone can imagine. The future is not written. Impossible things happen every day. Gonna get on my hog, and... (Engine fades)

(02:02:20)

Narrator

We now go back to the Planet of Wrongtopia, where the library socialist heretic convicted of destroying records and failing to create records has his head in the guillotine, which is sharp, sparkling, and ready to drop, separating his head from his body with no possible way out.

(Crowd sounds)

Executioner

Any last words?

Heretic

Yes, I-

Onlooker 1

Oh my god, wild horses!

Onlooker 2

Stampeding!

(Sounds of stampeding)

Onlooker 1

Oh my god, the stampede of wild horses knocked over the guillotine, turning it sideways and beheading the entire audience, but not beheading the person who was set to be executed. That's incredible.

(Mayhem sounds)

Onlooker 2

I don't know how to take a record of this event. My paper is turning to raspberry jam!

Onlooker 1

Oh my god, raspberry jam is coming out of my fingernails and eyes! I can't see!

Onlooker 2

Here, let me lick it out of the way.

Onlooker 1

Ow, your tongue's made of spiders!

(Screams)

Narrator

And so, after a series of incoherent and extreme circumstances, the library socialist heretic got away, and he hid in the mountains. Running and hiding has served him well. And he built up strength there, building his faction of Library Socialism-Aaron Moritz Thought, which looked to criticize the deviations that had swept the world. That thought criminal built a bona fide people's army with extreme intelligent services. When Wrongtopia broke out in a civil war, they were well-positioned to do the diplomacy and fighting that it took to reconquer the world and liberate all. Library Socialism-Aaron Moritz Thought was a better, kinder socialism, that took care of all, did more with less, and made waste equal food. And it, too, soon became corrupted. Extremely corrupt.

The End.

(Laughter)

The Library of Unconventional Lives

Library Socialism & Complementarity – Srsly Wrong Ep. 200

[youtube.com/watch?v=AgQ6GZpvDGY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgQ6GZpvDGY)

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