

AS: Hello everyone. And welcome to the 26th episode of the Exploring Antinatalism podcast. A podcast, all about the subject of antinatalism created by antinatalists. My name is Amanda “Old Fan” Sukenick, also known as Favorable Films on YouTube.

MM: And I’m Mark J. Maharaj also known as Question Mark on YouTube. And today we’re speaking with renowned recording artist and founder of the Church of Euthanasia, the Reverend Chris Korda.

[*Overshoot* lyric: It’s my future on the line / While you bitches shop and dine / I didn’t ask to be born / Into a disaster porn.]

AS: So welcome Chris Korda. Thank you so much for being our guest today on the Exploring Antinatalism podcast. You are a legend. We are really thrilled we could speak with you today.

CK: Well, that’s very kind. Thank you for having me.

AS: Absolutely. So before we begin you mentioned to me yesterday that this was your first podcast, which I just wanted to say, I find absolutely shocking. So we really are very honored to be your first.

CK: Oh. I’m actually rather shy and a kind of retiring character, which is an unlikely combination of attributes for a Reverend of a major religion, but that’s the way it’s worked out. It’s been a limiting factor on the church’s growth. I don’t really have exactly the right personality type for this kind of work.

AS: Okay. That’s interesting. Well, so let me just start out by asking you just some basic questions about yourself. In your words, who is Chris Korda?

CK: Oh gosh. I guess I’d have to quote Walt Whitman and say “do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself, I am large, I contain multitudes.” So there’s really no simple answer to your question. I’ve done so much stuff by now with my life, and so much of it is contradictory that it would be impossible to form any real generalizations, other than perhaps a lifelong commitment to antinatalism of course, and a deep abiding passion for what—for lack of a better word—we’ll call *phase art*. Phase art is art based on phase shift, and probably the best example of it that anybody would ever heard of would be an engineer artist named Thomas Wilfred, who was active in the 1920s and thirties. He was arguably the first phase artist. And so he was making what we would today, perhaps call visual phase art or something like early VJing when electricity was still new. He was really very, very far ahead of his time and his work survive. I encountered his works as a child in the Museum of Modern Art and he had an enormous impact on me.

Particularly because towards the end of his life became interested... so you might’ve heard the term “color organ.” He hated that term, but he built things that look like the color organs that were popular in pop culture in the 1970s, basically boxes that made pretty lights. That’s kind of a crass way of describing it. They were much more aesthetic and beautiful than that, and they were handmade objects, but he became interested towards the end of his life in *long-form* phase art, meaning patterns, abstract patterns that unfold,

not just over a few minutes, and then you've seen the whole pattern, but over days or years. Towards the end of his life, he built at least one machine that he said would run forever. Whether that's true, is hard to know, but I'm sympathetic with the idea. Some of my musical compositions won't repeat for millions of years. And so in that sense, I'm continuing Thomas' Wilfred's work, but in a different domain, in the domain of music. Though I have also made visual polymeter-based art, or phase art if we want to call it that. So anyway that's a bit of a side subject, but *Apologize to the Future* is also phase art, aside from its antinatal political content, in other words aside from its ideological impact, structurally, as music, it's consistent with my other musical releases in that it is definitely in complex polymeter. Complex polymeter is when a song is not just in odd time, but when it's in many times simultaneously. So an example would be, let's say that you had a high-hat part, and the high hat part was in five, but you had a bass part and the bass part was in seven, and you also had a piano part and the piano part is in 11 and maybe something else like the bass drum is in four and so on, but it's all going at once.

And so when you have that, which is very, very different from how almost all other music is structured, you get something called enlargement in phase space. Most music is very small in phase space. Phase space basically describes—it's a term from fractals—it describes how big a thing is in the repetition dimension. And so most music repeats very quickly. In fact, it's not for no reason that almost all music changes, for example, every 32 bars or every 64, or something like this, almost everything is done in powers of two or multiples of four. But in polymeter and phase music that doesn't work. So my music will be juxtaposing at the very least all these different prime numbers. And so that means very soon you have very long repeat counts, because when you're working with primes, the repeat count is going to be the product of the primes.

So if you have the first 10 prime numbers and you're using them all simultaneously, you're already into millions and millions before it repeats. So that's how I make all my music and partially explains why it's structurally unorthodox. Many people listen to it and enjoy it and don't notice that about it because the dance stuff that I do, typically has a big fat bass drum and as long as that's more or less steady, and so long as the instrumentation somewhat resembles what people expect in electronic dance music, people will accept it more or less as dance music. I mean, they'll recognize that it doesn't sound like your typical four on the floor banging house music, but they'll accept it as dance music and without challenging it too much. But if you look under the hood or if you know anything about music theory and you actually listen to it carefully and analyze it, you'll find that it is quite radical in its structure.

And that's true just as much of *Apologize to the Future*. It is musically unorthodox, but that's probably not mostly what we're here to talk about. Today we're mostly here to talk about its ideological content and that of course too is unusual. I mean there are many thousands of words on *Apologize to the Future* and they're all in rhyme. So this was actually my first rap album. I had previously sort of been neglecting rap, and had even perhaps had bad opinions or not enough opinions about rap music, and my partner at the time, really challenged that and felt that I was doing myself a disservice and that I needed to educate myself more about rap, that I was showing my ignorance. And so she made a playlist for me, which totally influenced me.

It was probably about 30 tracks on it. A kind of capsule history of rap music, right on up to the present, starting with the basics way back in the old days and all the way up to today.

And somewhere in there I also encountered Kate Tempest's "Europe Is Lost." She had a huge impact on me because when I heard Kate Tempest, I thought to myself, okay, well, if she can do that, then actually I can rap. In other words, if that's okay, then everything is okay because she takes a really different approach, and she doesn't sound like any rap music you've ever heard before. And yet clearly at some deep fundamental level, she is in fact rapping. So I thought, well, if she can do that, then I can actually have my robots rap. And so that's what I did. I set about programming my robots to rap. And so there's an interesting aesthetic contrast between this very disturbing, powerful, aggressive message and this kind of smooth suave delivery, this almost sonorous delivery coming from my singing robots. And I think that that contrast is important, and part of what makes the album work.

MM: Like Les U. Knight of VHEMT, you were speaking about the subject of antinatalism long before there was a word for it. So when was the first time you heard the actual word of antinatalism and why are you an antinatalist?

CK: Good question. I probably encountered the word antinatalism either from Les U. Knight or possibly from Nina Paley who was a fan of Les U. Knight and an active member of VHEMT. She went on to become an important figure in the Church of Euthanasia as well. She went on the Jerry Springer show and so on. But I knew Nina Paley first and she introduced me to Les U. Knight. Les U. Knight and I never met, but certainly I read his publications and there was a kind of—shall we say, I'm not sure if fraternal is the right word—but perhaps a fraternal relationship between the two organizations, friendly, an entente. In fact it was so friendly that Les U. Knight loaned us one of his most important slogans. He loaned us "Thank you for not breeding." He gave us permission to use it, which was very good because we got a lot of mileage out of it. It really helped. So I think we helped each other, even though we're very different, even though the two organizations have many distinctions. And so I guess that means that I became an antinatalist around the time that I discovered all of that. I must've been an antinatalist by 1992, certainly when the Church of Euthanasia started. But I can't tell you an exact deciding moment. It didn't really start that way. It was more of a kind of sideways motion, more ambiguous.

AS: Yeah. That makes sense.

CK: It started as an art movement, and it still is an art movement. The Church of Euthanasia should properly be understood as art, and I think many people didn't get that. "Save the Planet, Kill Yourself" was often widely misunderstood.

It is in fact, neo-Dadaism as so much of the church's actions in the public sphere were, the point about it is it's like a Zen koan. It doesn't actually make any sense because it's not actually the planet that's in danger. And I point this out to people and they give me a funny look, but there's no danger of humans permanently harming earth. We don't have the power to do that. We could set off all of our hydrogen weapons at once and still bacteria certainly, and probably many insects and other organisms would survive that and ultimately repopulate earth, and something else would happen on earth. And so it's just simply not within human power to destroy the planet or even severely damage it, though we could of course, make ourselves extinct—and we seem hell bent on doing that—and in the process damage life pretty badly, but even that has to be seen in the paleontological perspective.

I mean, if you want to compare humanity's actions thus far to the Permian Triassic extinction boundary event, thus far we're barely on the scale. We're only at the beginning of a mass extinction, but even without human beings actively interfering with the planet's hydrological and atmospheric systems, earth has been more than capable of eliminating most life periodically and has done that, just through its own natural processes. The Permian-Triassic extinction wasn't even caused by an asteroid, as we now know, it was simply caused by the same mechanisms that we're getting started on now. We're essentially accelerating a bunch of climate feedbacks, which if they proceed unchecked for a sufficient length of time, will result in something like the Permian-Triassic extinction, due to very drastic heating of the equatorial region of the planet. Well, so that's happened before in the same way that snowball earth has happened before, just by natural processes.

And so I think that the whole point of "Save the Planet, Kill Yourself" was to draw people's attention to the absurdity of our situation. It's actually us who are threatened. I like to say that we are the most endangered species on the planet. And more specifically civilization is the most endangered species on the planet. Civilization is of course, very fragile and depends enormously on goodwill and collective action and on us all agreeing about certain long-term goals, which at the moment we seem to be largely incapable of doing. And so there's every reason to believe that civilization won't survive. And it's that tragedy that I'm primarily interested in, particularly on *Apologize to the Future*. I think the difference between me and Les U. Knight ultimately boils down to a question of emphasis. We're both antinatalists certainly, but I never advocated for human extinction.

That was not the Church of Euthanasia's position at all. We advocated for voluntary population reduction and we still do. And we still take the view that there is no problem that humanity is facing that adding more people will help us solve. But that's not at all the same thing as saying that the best thing that we can possibly do is eliminate humanity from the face of the earth, or in an even more extreme form, what the Efilists are saying, that not only should humans disappear, but that we should sterilize the earth of life, as if that were in our power, which I don't think that it is. So I think there's a bunch of important semantic and ideological differences between all these things, but what they all share in common is a desire to reduce the human population. And so in that sense, I like to be as welcoming as possible. From my point of view, antinatalism is such an underdog position, it's so hard a sell, that I think we need to be as open-minded as possible about fellow travelers and try and take it where we can get it.

AS: Yeah, that's always been very much my philosophy too, of trying to combine and work together with the rest of the antinatalist movement. And I've always really had a big respect for the rapport that you've had with VHEMT. But let me ask again as somebody, again, that has been speaking an antinatal message before the advent of what is typically thought to be modern antinatalism, what are your thoughts on what antinatalism has become, what it sort of crystallized into. Meaning, now there's a big antinatalist community, there are Facebook groups all over the world, some of which have hundreds of thousands of members to them in places like Egypt and Lebanon. So it's definitely changed. There's been sort of a shift I think over the last 10 years. So what are your thoughts on that?

CK: Hmm, well, basically my thought is that there's a lot, as I said, there's a lot of different possible motivations for antinatalism. But I can't speak to other people's motivations. I can only speak to mine. And mine is pretty simple to explain. Mine is that it's easier to persuade

people to not procreate than it is to persuade them to reduce their standard of living. And so it's this essential observation that really is the foundation of the Church of Euthanasia. Non-procreation demonstrably improves people's standard of living, because the considerable resources that child rearing necessitates can be redirected towards enhanced material wellbeing and self-improvement. And so the more political amongst you will recognize this as the logic of the demographic transition. The Church of Euthanasia has been advocating for the demographic transition, and we can make a case that in European countries at least, we've had some success.

The demographic transition has largely occurred. And in some European countries, we already have negative population growth. And from my point of view, this is a victory, because the European countries are doing—or were doing until recently—the lion's share of the consuming, along with the United States and Australia and a few other big offenders. And so it's much more important for us to get the population growth curve under control in the heavily developed countries than it is, for example, to wrestle with it in places where consumption is basically approaching zero. So I used to say to people that for me to persuade an American family, just to stop at two, is like persuading a family in Kenya or somewhere else in the rural undeveloped world to stop at 40 in terms of impact. And I think it was actually Nina Paley and VHEMT who helped me grasp that.

So through their work early on, I encountered the IPAT equation, which basically says that Impact equals Population times Affluence times Technology. So there's a lot of multiplicative power in that equation. It means essentially that if we're going to make any progress at this and have any hope of stopping our commitment to unlimited growth while there's still any wild nature left, we're going to have to go after the affluent countries first, because that's where the damage is really coming from. So anyway, voluntary population reduction implies the demographic transition, as well as education, particularly sex education and access to contraception and abortion. This seems basically unarguable to me. And so from my point of view, the human crisis that we're facing is primarily a failure of education. And that's why the Church of Euthanasia can be described as an educational foundation more than as a religious one.

So even from the tax office's point of view—from the federal government's point of view—when they offered us 501(c)(3), they said, listen, if you really want to push it and file as a church, we might accept it, but you'll have an easier time with us if you come to us as an educational foundation, because otherwise we might pay you a visit and ask to see the pews, and ask when your last service was, and where's the choir, where's the organist. If you go as an educational foundation, you can basically keep doing exactly what you're doing. You can keep printing bumper stickers and t-shirts that have your message on them, you can keep proselytizing through magazines and so on, and you can continue your outreach to the whole wide world, and we'll consider that a nonprofit activity.

So I think they were right. I mean, when the IRS calls you up personally on the telephone and tells you that you'd be crazy to disagree with them. I think they really had a point. And so I see us that way too. I think that we adopt the form of a religion primarily for artistic reasons, but also for the reason that religions historically are tied to ethics. And so there's a deep philosophical problem there that we're addressing, which is that there's nothing in the laws of physics that says that humanity shouldn't throw a really awesome party, burn all of its resources at once and go extinct. That's not in Pythagoras' theorem, it's not covered by chemistry or physics or the weak force or the strong force or electromagnetism, that's just

completely outside the domain of predictive explanations of phenomena.

That's ethics. It's an ethical judgment to say that it would be good—whatever good means—for humanity to be around longer. Lots of people might not even agree with it. In fact, I would venture to say that as much as half the population of the world, if you ask them this question might say, well, none of that matters because we're going to heaven. And that's a big problem. Then we're back to the failure of education. So we're asking people to make an ethical judgment, and the ethical judgment we're asking them to make is to prioritize the survival of the biosphere, at least until such a time as humanity has some kind of alternate survival strategy, even if that ever were to become practical, because otherwise we don't survive. In other words, it's just patently obvious by now that humanity is absolutely dependent on the biosphere.

We couldn't survive without the atmosphere and the oceans and all the other systems, including the rainforest and so on. We need all that stuff. And so just from a strictly selfish egoistic point of view, in other words, from a humanist point of view, we need all that stuff. And so we somehow have to persuade people that they need to preserve all that stuff, but we can only do that if they actually care about the future. And that's really what my album is about. It's about how future generations, should they be lucky—or should I say unlucky—enough to survive, how will they view our disregard? And so I mean, I don't know how else you can say it, but people in the future very likely will take a dim view of the actions we're taking now.

And that's really the essence of the album, is exploring that and trying to feel that, not just trying to talk about it intellectually, but trying to feel it. How will people feel when they look back at the present? And so a big influence on me in that regard was a series of novels by an author whose name is very hard to spell, I'm going to pronounce it. His name is Paolo Bacigalupi. And he wrote a wonderful series of young adult fiction books called the "Ship Breakers" trilogy, in which he very explicitly and graphically shows what a post-climate apocalypse world would look like, in which basically all of today's coastlines are submerged. And in which the age we're living in now, when we burn fossil carbon, is referred to derisively as the accelerated age, because in the future, it's simply inconceivable. It's not possible. And so it's fascinating actually, to think about that, and so Paolo really went to a lot of trouble to visualize that, and that was a big influence on my record. I'm trying to imagine how that will feel, and I can tell you that it won't feel very good, that people are taking actions now that are going to be bitterly resented. And I think that's important to communicate.

MM: Okay. Just out of curiosity, have you read any of the more recent works of antinatalism such as Benatar's *Better Never to Have Been—The Harm of Coming into Existence* or Patricia McCormack's *The Ahuman Manifesto* and do you perhaps have any thoughts on them?

CK: Yeah, I read it. I have to say it, it didn't do a thing for me. I'm sorry. I'm sorry to be a killjoy, but I'm not really a good antinatalist, because I actually don't hate humanity and I don't hate existence. I actually think that humanity is the most interesting thing that's ever happened on earth, and essentially without humanity, there's no story worth telling here on this planet. And so what I really am is a kind of transhumanist in disguise. I know that that's terrible. I'm the wolf in sheep's clothing. But if there were a magic button I could push and all of humanity could download itself into machines and transmit itself into the universe,

like something out of *Dr. Who*, I would basically be for it. I'd be okay with that.

If there were a way that I could download my consciousness into a machine and achieve immortality, it sounds interesting. I'm pretty old. I can't see that I have a lot to lose. What I am is a pragmatist, as I said, a scientific pragmatist, and an existentialist. I take the view that to the extent that there's any meaning for us here in our existence, it has to come from us. We will find no meaning out there. So John Gielgud said in this movie I love, by Alain Resnais, called *Providence*, there's a line in there where he says "out there in the icy universe, there's nothing." That's how I feel. There's nothing in the universe. Mostly what there is, is frozen gas and a little bits of dust, and once in a while, searing hot plasma, so unimaginably hot that if you were anywhere near it, you would just be vaporized.

And so basically the universe is a vast inaccessible and inhospitable place, and we have pretty much only one option, which is to either survive somewhat longer on earth—though even that will be time limited—or not. Those are the options. And I'm basically an optimistic, cheerful person. I think that humanity is fascinating and interesting and wonderful. And I think that it's a shame that we're not making a better job of our little window of opportunity to thrive, here in this remote corner of the universe. I can't say I'm shocked by it either, and we can talk about that too.

I think that actually, for me, more relevant than Benatar's work is the book *Earth in Human Hands*, which was written a couple of years ago by an ex-NASA, or I guess not ex actually, he might still be doing it. Let me just look up his name, but he was writing about exoplanet biology, which sounds kind of wacky. David Grinspoon. David Grinspoon basically studied life on other planets, even though we can't actually go there to see them. And you can still form a lot of knowledge, based on studying astronomy and so on, and what he came to is that the solution to Fermi's paradox is pretty clear. The solution is that most of the time when intelligence manifests itself in one way or another, somewhere out there in the universe, trouble is about to happen. In other words, Edward O. Wilson had it right when he said [in *Consilience*] that intelligence tends to snuff itself out. By the time a life form becomes powerful enough to transmit signals over vast distances, over interstellar distances, it's already on the threshold of self-annihilation.

It might not, it might make it through the bottleneck, but most of the time not. And so this is of course the solution to Fermi's paradox. It's not that there haven't been other civilizations throughout the history of the universe. It's that their little blaze of glory would have to line up exactly at the right moment for them to get a signal to our little blaze of glory. And the odds are very much against that. And so I think that the odds are against us making it through the bottleneck, and I think that that's tragic, and that's what distinguishes me from the mainstream antinatalists. They don't seem to shed a lot of tears for the human experiment, but I do. I'm a big believer in the human experiment. I want it to succeed, and I haven't completely given up on the possibility that it can still succeed. So I'm fighting for a more livable future for humanity, where humanity finally makes peace, not only with the natural world, but with itself and starts thinking collectively in some kind of constructive way towards a future that can actually be wonderful and interesting and have many unimaginable delights in it that could lie ahead for us. And so that's really what separates me from Benatar. I'm not a pessimist, I'm an optimist.

AS: Okay. Yeah, that makes sense. I mean, we certainly do have a fundamental difference

there, and I think that does get into the next question as you I'm sure know, a great deal of modern antinatalism is not at all influenced by environmentalist concerns at all, it's to do with suffering. So as soon as there is a sentient creature, as you're saying, that's where sort of the problem comes in and the existence of the suffering is what's unacceptable. And it's not really guided by a hatred of sentience or hatred for humanity as you said earlier. I don't really, I don't think hatred is what guides David Benatar's thesis. It's more to do with the fact that there's all this waste. The suffering is the waste and the goodies, the fun stuff, the interestingness, the meaning is coming at far too high a cost. It's coming at the cost of all of this suffering. So kind of curious what you think about that. Modern antinatalism re-diagnosing the problem to this focus on suffering. And often not just about the humans, it's recognizing the suffering in nature, of all of sentience. And so what, what were your thoughts on that?

CK: Well. Look, I totally get it. For animals it's Auschwitz every day, no question about that. I'm a vegan. I agree with all of that. I wear rubber shoes, the whole bit. You won't have to persuade me that humanity's caused a lot of suffering, though again, I will point out that however much suffering we've caused for non-humans, we've caused vastly worse suffering for ourselves. So the point about that is that humans—by my way of looking at it—are arguably the most sensitive device that evolution has thus far created on earth for sensing pain. Pain is complex for us in ways that it is for no other organism. We are just amazingly sensitive, not only to pain, but to pleasure and many other things. And so however bad it is for other organisms, it's worse for us.

We've done a very good job of creating hellish conditions for about half the planet. And that's of course a travesty, but the point is that it's a little bit like observing a tragedy and saying, well, it's actually a good thing that everybody dies. No, it's not a good thing that everybody dies. It would be a good thing to try and rescue them and stop the tragedy. And so my deep ideological problem with a lot of antinatalism—and by extension with Buddhism and other similar ideologies—is that they're just too negative. Within those views, there's just no possibility of solving the problem. And so it just doesn't work for my basic engineering and scientific instinct that problems are challenges and challenges are what makes life meaningful.

We make our lives meaningful by facing our obstacles and overcoming them. And so this is in fact what we're here to do. To the extent that there's any meaning in life, it's going to come from us solving our problems, and from us forming a more perfect union, as Lincoln put it so timelessly at the end of the Civil War in the Gettysburg address. I'd like to see us find the better angels of our nature, and I don't think that it's inconceivable. And as evidence for that, I would cite the enormous progress that has been made just during my lifetime, never mind since the French revolution. Once you get back before that, you're in the age of kings and the wars between petty states and so on, and life for the average person would perhaps best be characterized by that scene at the beginning of Monty Python and the Holy Grail, when the King Arthur and his buddies go riding past, and the two people are in the shit, and one says to the other, "Oh, it must've been a king."

And the first one says, "How do you know," and the other says, "Well, he hasn't got shit all over him." So I'm exaggerating to make a point, but that was basically life in the middle ages, and for most of history almost everywhere before the modern era. And so it's only as far back as the late 18th century, that the idea that people have intrinsic value could even gain any currency at all. And of course the implementation took a lot longer, of course for a

long time that only included white men. I'm granting all of that. But my point is that even just the idea that anyone except possibly kings had the right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness is very new. So this experiment is radical. It's unfolding on an extremely rapid schedule compared to the geological timescale.

In fact, from that point of view, it's basically been an eye blink in time that we've tried all this stuff, and yes, as we've been trying it, we've also been achieving the singularity. And so Ray Kurzweil is right about that. It's true. If you look at it from that timescale, it looks vertical. It looks straight up. Everything went exponential at once, but not only bad things, a lot of good things went exponential at once too. And so during my lifetime I saw the end of Jim Crow. I saw LGBTQI rights become not just accepted, but the law of the United States of America. People underestimate what an enormous victory Lawrence versus Texas was. Lawrence versus Texas was the first time that the Supreme Court of the United States basically said that the state has no compelling interest in regulating private sexual conduct. That was a huge win for all of us.

Because before that, you better believe they did have a compelling interest in regulating it, and what that meant in practice was just the most terrible barbarism. So many people were driven to suicide or even other horrible outcomes because of the intolerance of queerness. Well, that's changed now in a lot of the civilized or developed world, that's really changed and it's changed for good. And so I don't want to sound like Obama here, but I really believe that the change is happening, that the changes are all around us, that humanity is in the process of trying to find the better angels of our nature. And it's not clear whether we're going to prevail. Certainly the climate impacts that are occurring now all around us, are very serious. So we're in a race against the consequences of our previous misdeeds.

There's no guarantees that we're going to pull this off, but I don't think that this is the right moment to throw in the towel and just say, we should give up and stop and just eliminate the game, even if that were an option, which it clearly isn't. I mean, I think the real fundamental problem that I have with Benatar and with mainstream antinatalism is that the proposals are simply impractical. And again, this is my pragmatist point of view. So with what power would we eliminate humanity? Who is in favor of that? How is that going to become the law of the land? I just don't see it. I can imagine how we could have more rights for animals. I can imagine how we could grant rights to wild nature, and increasingly we're actually doing so in many cases. You get on top of climate change and build out solar, or build nuclear power plants, or whatever it takes so that we don't have to burn fossil carbon. Those are all pragmatic possibilities that we could actually achieve, but eliminating humanity from earth? I don't see that ever happening. And so other than purely as a philosophical exercise, it doesn't seem like something that's worthy of a lot of energy or attention. And I get that that's totally anathema here, but I feel in the spirit of honesty that I have to say it.

AS: Of course, we'll talk more about that soon.

MM: I'm not trying to debate you or anything. I just want to definitely understand your views. The goal—at least my goal with Exploring Antinatalism—is exploring all views of antinatalism. So for example, we had Les U. Knight and this is something that, you know, I'm not a hundred percent in agreement with, but I definitely want to hear from all spheres of the antinatalist world. And actually I'm curious about your views on other groups such as

the child-free by choice movements that if you want to talk more about the VHEMT movement, and I think there's a Gaia liberation movement as well, and Efilism as well. What are your thoughts on all those groups?

CK: Well, like I said, it's a big tent and it's an underdog position. And so we should all try to band together as much as we can and overlook our differences, sort of like the Democrats are doing now. But honestly, I was never convinced that the Gaia Liberation Front actually existed. I had the feeling that that was more of a prank, but it was a very clever one. The other ones you mentioned, this other Gaia one, I don't actually know. The child-free by choice people I do know. I don't think they're really fans of the Church of Euthanasia. I think it's too outré for them. I got the impression that the child-free by choice people are more mainstream. The Church of Euthanasia's dogmatic presentation is a little much for them. For sure they're not going to be fans of *I Like to Watch* and stuff. The Church of Euthanasia is very polarizing.

Even if you accept it as art, which I think is the right way to view it and understand it, it's very polarizing art. And so I don't expect it to play well in suburbia necessarily, and it doesn't. I think that that's okay. We need multiple voices here. I think that in order to change human consciousness about—what I'm going to for lack of a better word call *growth-ism*—we need everyone to talk about it from every point of view, so that growth-ism becomes a thing. I like to say—though it's not easily proved—I like to say that I helped put anti-human autism on the map. That when the Church of Euthanasia started in 1992, antihumanism was really a pretty fringe idea.

You had to look pretty hard to find anything about it, and most people had no idea what you were talking about if you brought it up. So that's not true anymore. Today antihumanism is discussed in *The New Yorker*, and in mainstream media antihumanism is pretty close to being a mainstream topic and ordinary people have heard of it. I'm not claiming sole responsibility, of course, but I feel that I had something to do with that, and that that's a positive thing. I feel good about that. And I feel that the continuation of that work is now to confront growth-ism, because I think that growth-ism is a big part of our problem, and that overpopulation can correctly be viewed as a symptom of growth-ism. Basically, it's the idea that humanity can have everything its way, and that there are no limits.

It's the being against limits that I'm really struggling with and don't like. It's a symptom of childishness. The human crisis can ultimately be boiled down to a failure of education. And one of the ways in which education is failing most people is [by not] imparting them with a sufficient grasp of the importance of limits, not just in their own lives, but in everything. In biology, in the fundamental structures that gave rise to us, we exist in tension always with other things and with limiting forces, and that in fact, our very evolutionary progress, the progress that's resulted in us, is the result of an elaborate dance with death. So basically, you and me and all of us listening to this, we are all the product of billions of years of death trimming away the stuff that's not working.

That's how evolution works. You don't need to read Richard Dawkins' *The Blind Watchmaker* to understand this. It's pretty simple really, basically the stuff that's not working as well, doesn't compete well enough to procreate successfully. And so the stuff that's working better has more progeny, and that's all it is. And it sounds pretty lame today

to say that, and you're like, "yah," but believe it, in the 19th century, this was a big shock to people. This is just the truth is that you, you personally, come from a long line of survivors, and I don't just mean your parents or their parents. I don't mean just human survivors. I mean that the DNA that's in you is shared with many other organisms, and some of it is actually shared with all organisms. There are parts of your DNA that you have in common with all bacteria, with all insects, with everything. There's stuff that's so fundamental to the process of self-replication and survival that everything has it, that it's basically the keystone of the whole process of evolutionary success.

And so that process gave rise to you. You are a winner, and that's why on the album, I talk about the sperm and egg lottery. It is a lottery. You don't get to pick your parents. You don't get to determine what your station will be in life. And so if you were born in New York City, as I was, to two very cultured and intellectual parents who loved you, and sent you to a good school, and talked to you at the critical age, during Noam Chomsky's critical period, and ensured that your life was filled with language and critical thinking, then you won the sperm lottery. Good for you! Use that. Use your success wisely. Use the great gift that society bestowed on you to do some good, to do something positive with your life, because you'd better believe that a lot of people weren't so lucky. They lost the sperm and egg lottery, in the sense that they, through no fault of their own, were born in tragic circumstances from which they will never fully recover, even under the best of circumstances.

And they won't, most of them, face the best of circumstances, so they will be damaged and their society has failed them. And this is what I'm talking about, is failure. The problem with civilization is that it depends critically on all of us being capable of being good citizens, and that can't happen unless we're all properly educated. It's not enough just to get good nutrition and to avoid childhood diseases and so on. We all have to be indoctrinated—if you want to use that negative word—in the values of civilization, otherwise it can't work. And that we have not, thus far, managed to achieve, except for a very small percentage of people, and we need to change that. But that too is something that can be changed and something that has improved during my lifetime. As a child, I clearly saw that nonwhite people were largely excluded from that category.

Well, today that's less true than it was. I know it's not perfect. I'm not saying that Black Lives Matter doesn't have a very valid cause. I'm just saying that I remember what Jim Crow looked like, and it was worse before, it really was. And so all I'm trying to say here is that it is a struggle, it's ongoing, the stakes are very high, and the rights and intrinsic value of non-humans are very much on the list now. You have been heard on this point. It's no longer some kind of obscure position that we should consider the impact of our actions on the non-human world. Well, that's real progress during my lifetime. And I think that more people should take heart and be reinforced by that and think, okay, well, if we've made that much progress, maybe we can make even more. Which is good, because we need to.

MM: Have you read Pinker?

CK: You mean Steven Pinker?

MM: Yeah. Steven Pinker. Like, are you familiar?

CK: I have read him, yeah.

MM: I was curious like, so you, you agree with his thesis on the better angels of your nature? Is that correct?

CK: I found Pinker moderately persuasive, but from my point of view, I found Edward O. Wilson more useful. I tend to prefer hard science, really hard science. So like the most useful book for me was probably *The Blind Watchmaker* or possibly *The God Delusion* was really helpful to me. Of course *The Selfish Gene* was also very helpful. I think it's incredibly helpful to me to have someone explain the mechanics of sexual selection in language that I can actually understand, because I'm not going to be a geneticist. As you know, science is very specialized, we say in science, it's all you can do to keep up with your own specialty, never mind other people's specialties. Most people don't even manage their own. I'll never be a geneticist, but Richard Dawkins did us all a big solid by explaining it in a language that the average person can grasp. And so it's super helpful for me to understand it, even in layman's terms, because it helps to understand how special all of this really is, how extraordinary it is.

It's really an extraordinary chain of circumstances that have unfolded here on earth to get from bacteria and the primordial soup to the stage we're in now, in a few billion years, this is an astonishing journey. There's just no other word for it. And so I think that if people looked at it in a more positive way, we should feel blessed. We should feel honored to be playing such an important role in the unfolding story of evolution on earth. I know that sounds kind of maniacal or something, but it shouldn't. It's not that I'm saying that humans are gods or anything like that. I'm saying that humanity really is special and extraordinary. We're capable of the most terrible evils, but we're also capable of the most wonderful, delightful achievements that are impossible to even grasp in words.

I mean, it would be too big a topic, but I think if you look within yourself and think honestly about it, you can see that there's nothing else like us. And it's not just because we build airports. There's just so much more to it than that. Maybe it's because I grew up in New York and at a very early age was exposed to high modernism. So I grew up at the peak of optimism about the future of civilization and democracy and capitalism in the 1960s and early seventies. That was just before the rollback. So basically it's been all downhill since Ronald Reagan took office in 1980. So what I've lived through, I like to call it the age of rollback. That's what it was. Neo-liberalism is rollback.

It's basically the idea that the rich should just gut government and take everything of any value. It's sort of like looting a giant hotel. Like we should rip off the chandeliers, take out all the drapes and the beds, just loot the place and then set fire to it. That's more or less what the Republicans have been doing since 1980, and that's a terrible thing. It's way off-topic for this show I'm sure, but that's been breaking my heart, honestly. Donald Trump is not all that anomalous from my point of view. I wasn't that shocked when he finally got elected and became president, because from my point of view, he was just sort of what we've been swimming to all along. Why not have a casino owner?

Why not have a mobster be president? We've been headed that way all along. I think that that's something that we really need to challenge, and that's something that I am challenging. So for example, a lot of *Apologize to the Future*, when it's not ranting about

antinatalism, is ranting about economic inequality, and intergenerational injustice because of course they're related. So, you know, to the extent that we loot the earth today, we leave less for future generations, and that's a crime. That's a crime against the future. That's what I'm really on about, is today's generations committing crimes against the future. And there's enough blame to go around. I'm not going to say there isn't and that we don't all contribute to it in various ways, some of us more than others, but I like to single out the super-rich because I think they deserve it.

And so I think that that's another point of view that really needs to be heard. I don't think that it's unreasonable to single out the ultra-rich and to ridicule them and to subject them to withering critique. I think in fact, they richly deserve it because they're just so incredibly selfish and inconsiderate and short-sighted, to the point where they're literally condemning their own descendants to hell. This is something that I say explicitly on the record, and I just think that that's so shocking. It's not enough for them to consign all the rest of us to hell, they're even going to consign their own descendants to hell. I think that's just truly psychotic and bizarre. And I think it's worthy to criticize it, and to criticize it loudly, because that's the opposite basically of what most of us are doing.

Our whole society is set up right now to kind of adulate and worship the super-rich. We're all supposed to say, Oh, Elon Musk, isn't he amazing? Oh, Jeff Bezos, he's so wonderful, look, he's colonizing Mars. And look at all this fabulous stuff they're doing, and maybe they'll shower some dollars on me. Well I don't agree with any of that. I think that there's basically two worlds at the moment. There's the world of the super-rich, and then there's all the rest of us. I want to see the private islands exposed. I want to see them get their comeuppance.

AS: Some of this is quite obvious at this point, but I'm going to ask it anyway. As I ask this pretty much of every guest that we have, is: how does your antinatalism intersect for you with other ethical positions, such as atheism, veganism, and the right to die?

CK: Well. As the founder of the Church of Euthanasia, needless to say, I unambiguously support the right of every human being to choose the time and place of their death. And beyond that I would point out that the word euthanasia in Ancient Greek literally means good death, and that technically the Hippocratic Oath binds doctors or health practitioners to provide it, just as much as they're bound to provide good life. Of course most doctors studiously ignore or skip over that part of their oath, but it's there. And so I think that's a travesty too. I think that my mother had it right. She always said that she should be able to get on a plane and fly to Amsterdam and get herself put down if that's what she wanted. In the end, it didn't happen that way, but she could have, and I think that's a good thing. You don't have to be a fan of the movie *Soylent Green* to appreciate the sentiment. It's not unreasonable that we could have suicide centers. I don't think that's so crazy, compared to a lot of the stuff that humanity does. I think that that's a good idea actually. People can criticize me for it if they want to, but I don't care. You know, there was a period when the Church of Euthanasia was really taking it too far. And by taking it too far, I mean, we were daring people to kill themselves and leave their web browsers pointed to the Church of Euthanasia's website and so on. And some people actually did that and there was a lot of trouble over it.

And okay, that was a bit jejune of us. That was during the peak of our pranking phase. We were as you probably have gathered, we were, what's the word I'm looking for? When you

hijack media, there's a name for this, *culture jamming*. We were black-belt culture jammers. And we studied situationism. We studied Dadaist tactics. That was just our part of how we operated and part of how we got to be so notorious. I mean, the classical example that I always use is, we could have had a fetus barbecue any day on the Boston common and the state police might not have even paid us a visit. And if they had, they might've said meh, a bunch of guys barbecuing. One of them is wearing a dress. So what. And they would've left. But to do it at the largest New England pro-life rally? Different story. On that particular day, it's going to have a lot of impact because the archbishop of the New England diocese is standing right there, right next to the director of the parks, and he's going to tell the director of the parks, either he makes us disappear or he's going to lose his job. And so you better believe he's going to get super upset. And he got upset enough to strangle one of our photographers with his own camera strap, and that made the papers. And so that's how we roll. That's how we achieve notoriety. The Church of Euthanasia, basically our strategy from the beginning was to ride the coattails of others. That's the fastest way to get there and it's dirty pool, but it works.

And so it was just all about surfing, surfing big waves. When you're surfing, you don't make the waves, you have no control over them, but you do get to pick your waves, and so that was what we mostly did: we picked our waves very carefully. And so we were able to get, get from basically zero to a position of having an enormous reach, an international reach, in a fairly short amount of time. And I don't have any regret about that strategy, but there were some cases where we took it too far and that's okay. You know, how far do you want to take it? I mean, Jack Kevorkian took it a lot further than us, right? He was leaving bodies and cars and stuff. And he went to the slammer over that. So we always tried to keep on the fair side of the law. I never got arrested over the Church of Euthanasia. That was against our strategy. I felt that once you're in jail, they can restrict your freedoms in ways that you won't like. Ultimately, I never agreed with getting arrested as a strategy. I consider it counterproductive. But in general, I absolutely support the right to die, I support the right to abortion, I support veganism and animal rights. I think that humanity is making a terrible mistake by causing a mass extinction and that this is going to haunt us and very possibly be our undoing. So I'm with you, I'm with you on all of that. I think that all of that is our surface of agreement. There, we have no differences. It's really all about the motivations, that's where the differences show up. It's about the end game. That's where we have differences.

MM: Speaking of strategy, what do you feel like antinatalists are doing right so far? And what do you feel like antinatalists are doing wrong?

CK: Well, I think that there's an important problem, which is that people have to be persuaded that antinatalism will improve their own quality of life, and I think that that's achievable. I don't think it's enough to try and persuade people that they should be antinatalists for ethical reasons, because it will be good for the future, because it'll be the right thing to do or something like this. I think that that's important, but I don't think that's the strongest argument. I would put it this way: Overpopulation is the essence of intergenerational injustice. Present generations harm future generations. They deplete and despoil the environment and behave as if the welfare of their own descendants were of little or no consequence. Obviously none of that's going to work. You can try and persuade people that if they limit their demands on the environment, particularly by not procreating, that we'll have more likely some kind of future on earth.

And that's a pretty strong ethical and logical argument. But by itself, it's not enough. You

have to combine that—in my view—with a more practical, egotistical capitalist argument. And it's for this reason that the Church of Euthanasia was always fundamentally a kind of slacker movement. So, you know, we came into existence around the same time as the Church of the Subgenius. We basically started as a 'zine. "High weirdness by mail" as *Factsheet Five* put it. And at that time we had competition, and the competition was basically for slack, like who is providing the most slack? Slack is kind of a nebulous term. What does it even really mean? But essentially it means being free to do what you want, being free to goof off. You know what I mean? It's kind of Bohemian. Being free to do bong hits and watch crazy stuff on the internet and play games and whatever it is you want to do with your life.

Well, so integral to our whole argument is we were telling people that if you just do—or actually not do—this one thing, you get a pass on everything else. This was the essence of the Church of Euthanasia's whole program, and still is today. We're saying, look, you just give up this one thing and we don't care what else you do. You don't have to be a vegan. You can eat meat. If you want, you can wear leather shoes, you could buy lots of cars and burn lots of fossil carbon. You can even take intercontinental flights and blah, blah, blah. We don't want to hear about it. I mean, we'd rather you didn't do any of that stuff, but we're not going to get on our moral high horse about it so long as you uphold the one commandment, which is *Thou Shalt Not Procreate*.

You do that, and you're good. It's a get out of jail free card for everything else. And so the point about it is, it's kind of a slacker position. It's like a slacker religion. We're saying, look, we're not even asking you to do something. We're asking you to *not* do something. And it's something you probably don't even really want to do, because if you do it, it's gonna hurt your slack. You're gonna have less freedom, right? As soon as you have an offspring, now suddenly the baby needs new shoes, and you're going to have to send it to school or maybe to college even. It's still going to be living at home, eating all your groceries at the age of 30, sorry, but that's not a joke actually, right? I mean, half the people that are listening to this are probably in that position.

So in other words, it's a huge financial commitment that you're making, and life being what it is, by the time you get halfway through it, you're going to be divorced and one or the other of you is going to get the house, and you don't, and there's going to be all kinds of chaos that's going to ensue from this choice that you're going to make. It's going to interfere with your ability to realize your own egotistical goals, to do what you want, whatever it is we don't care. You could spend your days base-jumping or skydiving for all we care, but whatever it is, you should be doing that. We're pro self-realization. We want people to enjoy their lives. We're not anti-sex the way the Catholic religion is, we're pro-sex! We want people to have sex so long as it's not resulting in procreation. We're pro-fetish, we're pro-sex, we're pro-enjoyment, we're pro-bohemianism. We want people to enjoy their lives. We just don't [want them to procreate]. And so I think that that is underrepresented in the antinatalist movement. I think that the antinatalist movement in general comes across as too dour, too doctrinaire too—what's this word I'm looking for, where you're really strict?—too ascetic, this is the word, too ascetic. We're not ascetic. We're anti-ascetic. We want people to enjoy being alive. We just want them to do it within limits. Does that help to answer your question at all?

AS: Yeah, I think so. Mark?

MM: Yeah. Yeah, it does. Yeah. So before you talked about scientific pragmatism and antihumanism, could you give your thoughts on what those are and your thoughts on that?

CK: So to answer the question, what scientific pragmatism is, that's actually pretty hard because it's a pretty abstract idea. So I'm going to read something, which I think will answer that question. It's just a short paragraph. I spent a lot of time trying to answer that question, and I felt that this was the closest I got.

There's stuff, in patterns. Patterns emerge from the stuff. Stuff emerges from the patterns. One or the other description may be more useful, depending on the goal. We differ from most stuff/patterns in an important respect: given sufficient time and effort, we can explain how stuff works with increasing accuracy. Our explanations are valuable because they allow us to correctly predict what stuff will do. Worrying about whether stuff is real wastes time that would be better spent understanding stuff. Stuff is real enough, and there's lots of it, and it's complicated and potentially lethal and moving fast, so there's no time to waste. This is the essence of pragmatism.

So it's really about the idea that we're not in a neutral, armchair situation. We're in a hostile environment. Existentialism after all has this right in its dictionary definition. It's sort of man is marooned. Like, was it Dead Can Dance that said, "Like Prometheus, we are bound, chained to this rock of a brave new world, our godforsaken lot." Like that. So in other words the universe is completely indifferent to our fate, and we're left to our own devices. It's up to us to make a stand here or not, for whatever reasons we can come up with that may or may not justify that. And so if we're going to make a stand here, we'd better shape up. This was the real underlying message of *Apologize to the Future*. It can come [down] to something like "So wise up fast / It's not too late / Respect the future / Don't procreate."

Like that. We've got to shape up, we've got to learn to live within limits, and above all, we've got to learn to start thinking collectively and rationally and imagining a future that can actually work for ourselves. And if we can't manage to do that, then we just aren't around, as Dan Miller said.

Oh, and I forgot that reminds me, I forgot to mention something so important. There were two sources I swore to myself I would have to mention today, and Paolo and his *Ship Breakers* trilogy was one, but the other one is so underappreciated. It's a guy I guarantee you've never heard of. I guarantee you've never heard of Dan Miller. So Dan Miller worked for Al Gore for a while, on the *An Inconvenient Truth* roadshow, which basically meant that they took *An Inconvenient Truth* all over the world. They showed the film to people. Presumably there was some money for that, and they paid people to just go to classes and wherever you could and show the film and talk about it.

So Dan was doing that, but he got kind of fed up with it, because Al had this thing called the hope budget, it basically meant you couldn't talk about too much gloomy stuff. That was his idea because if you did, people would get turned off and just say, Oh, I don't want to hear about this. And there might've been some logic to that. But Dan had the idea that people actually want to hear the truth, even if it's not very pretty. So he made his own presentation. His presentation is called *A Really Inconvenient Truth*. It was quite a few years back now. And in that presentation, he laid out the cold, hard truth about climate change and what it's going to mean for all of us, mostly based on the work of Mark Lynas, who

wrote *Six Degrees*, where he goes through each possible increase in average global temperature in Celsius, explaining what a two degree world will look like, a three degree world, a four degree world, five degrees is basically, we're not around. Six degrees, it's off the scale. We're just not around.

And so he went through all of that in great detail, but in the process of doing that, he inadvertently and unknown to him laid the egg that became *Apologize to the Future*. And what that was is that he had a slide in his slide show, towards the end called, "What can you do?" You know, in the context of what can countries do, what can you personally do? And the first item on his list was, "Ask your children for forgiveness." How about that? You could ask your children for forgiveness. Well, I just can't even tell you what an impact this had on me. Nobody had ever said that to me before. I don't have any children, but I can imagine what it means. I can imagine the significance and I certainly have friends who've had children. And now that I know this, every chance I get, I tell my friends who have children, you better get cracking on your apology. You're going to have a lot of apologizing to do. And they give me a kind of dirty look. So this is so important to say this, that this is a thing we can do. We can start preparing our apology.

AS: Yeah, definitely. I agree.

CK: Sorry if I slipped the question a little bit. So where were we again?

MM: There was one part of the question that I wanted to hear more of your thoughts on with the antihumanism stuff.

CK: So what is anti-humanism, well, this is a really deep question. We can all go and read the Wikipedia article and it's not very enlightening actually, because it's kind of complicated and there's a lot of weird confusion. Apparently antihumanism is easily confused with this older philosophical tradition of humanism. The older meaning of the word has something to do with being against humanism, where humanism is a specific philosophical construct and there's a whole philosophical debate over it, which is very complicated. We probably shouldn't get into right now. Because I'm certainly not an expert on it or anything like that. But we could broadly say though that humanism could possibly be characterized as the view that man is the measure of all things. And I don't mean to be sexist in this.

We could say people are the measure of all things. That would be more 21st century. The idea that without people, there is no measuring. Nothing is being measured because we're the only force on earth capable of measuring. If we're not around, then there's no history. So that is essential to humanism. And I think that one way of constructing antihumanism is to be against that principle. One movement against that would be for example, well, I don't know, you'd have to tell me, but I'm sure there are philosophical movements against that, but that's not how I read antihumanism at all. To me antihumanism is being against the idea that humanity can have everything its own way, being against the idea that humanity is sufficiently distinct from all other living things that they can ignore the non-human world.

So I associate antihumanism primarily with bitterness and anger against humans for having so severely damaged, not only the non-human world, but also themselves. Being against the destructiveness of growth-ism, is how I would characterize it. So I admit that my position has shifted over the years. I'll be the first to admit it. When I first started in 1992, I was

much more dogmatically antihuman. I was much closer to misanthropy. Today I'm not misanthropic, but back then, arguably I really was. I really had a lot of hate in my heart for humanity. And so I would frequently use Holocaust imagery and I would say stuff like, the Holocaust is just the worst atrocity the humans have actually copped to and admitted to and, and felt bad about, but that's the only because we discount non-humans. And if we were going to include non-humans in that, well then you're into Isaac [Bashevis] Singer ... who said that for animals, it's Treblinka every day and so on. Right. So then you're into that view and I was totally down with all of that. And I was down with the Native American critiques of modern humans. I was reading Russell Means, where he's describing basically all of us today here as contemptible science addicts or something like that. It's a very glum way of looking at all of us, like all of our progress that we're so proud of is just total horseshit from their point of view.

I had really drunk that Kool-Aid and I had a lot of anger because of it, but I don't feel that way now. I feel that I've got that out of my system. Maybe it was just all those years of engineering. At this point I actually often prefer the company of machines to the company of people. I spend a lot of time with my computer programs. I write software. All of the composing that I do, I do with my own custom composing software. And so I like to say that my software and my compositions, they're like my children. I lavish love and attention on them, and sometimes they're bad and I need to spank them, but I love them all the same.

I have a more positive relationship with myself and with my own creativity. And so I think that some of the motivation for my bitter misanthropy and aggressiveness towards humanity and its future stemmed from personal disappointments in my own life. I know that sounds terrible, but that's just the truth. I just think that I'm a better-balanced person. I'm older, I'm a lot older and hopefully somewhat wiser. And so I just see a big picture now that I didn't see at that time. I was looking at things through a very narrow crack. And so at that time it seemed very persuasive to me. VHEMT seemed a lot more persuasive to me at that time than it does now.

MM: Okay. Thanks Chris. I appreciate it.

AS: Yeah. Thank you.

CK: So now we'd love to speak to you in more detail specifically about the Church of Euthanasia. Unlike Antinatalism International, as I was to find out later, the Church of Euthanasia is actually the first true antinatalist organization, I think it's fair to say. In your words, what is the Church of Euthanasia, and how did this iconic and infamous project first come about?

CK: Oh, great question. Thank you for asking me that one. That's a good one. So the Church of Euthanasia is an educational foundation devoted to restoring balance between humans and the non-human world through voluntary population reduction. And that's a mouthful. We achieve that by trying to persuade people to take a lifetime vow of non-procreation. So that's our one commandment, *Thou Shalt Not Procreate*. That's the only thing you have to do. It used to be you had to send us \$10, but that requirement has since been waived, since you no longer get a free bumper sticker and a magazine either. What can you do? We all had to tighten our belts. So you don't need to pay anything. You just have to take the vow, and there is an actual formal procedure.

It's not casual. There is an actual vow. If you're of the female persuasion, you have to agree to get an abortion if you ever get pregnant. You have to agree to not have your eggs harvested or donate sperm or otherwise contribute to reproduction in some technological way. You even have to agree not to clone yourself, should that ever become possible. So we like to cover all the bases. You basically have to really, really agree not to make more of yourself. Though of course adoption is absolutely allowed and encouraged. We encourage people to take care of the children who are already here. We also encourage people to devote their nurturing energy towards the non-human world. And that's something that you see more of today on the internet.

There are groups for that as well. There's groups that are explicitly organized around the idea of being parents for the earth. That's a meme now, on Facebook and so on. And we were ahead of our time with that. Our idea was basically, we're just asking you to do this one thing. You agree to not procreate, you take a lifetime vow. If you change your mind, we kick you out. You're excommunicated. We've only got one commandment, it's not hard to remember, so we take it reasonably seriously, and we've occasionally had to kick people out over that. People have occasionally reneged on their commitments and we kicked them out. But so the rest of it's all optional. The four pillars of the Church of Euthanasia, memorably are suicide, abortion, cannibalism, and sodomy. They bear a little bit of explaining. Suicide's pretty straightforward. We're basically just saying we're pro-death, we're pro people being able to choose the time and place of their death. Abortion, again, pretty self-explanatory. Cannibalism. Okay. This is a little bit of neo-dadaism again. What we're really saying is that if you insist on eating flesh, it should be human flesh. It's a bit arch, but it made for a good copy. And we had some people who would write us letters and say that they were cannibals and we were like, yeah, okay. We didn't reply to those letters, it was hard to tell whether they were kidding or not. Sometimes they'd send us scary pictures, it's like yeah I think we'd better delete this one. So maybe we have some real cannibal members, but in any case that's cannibalism. And then sodomy is the one that bears the most explanation. So sodomy is often misunderstood to mean anal sex, but it actually has a really important definition with respect to antinatalism.

So sodomy, if you look back at its history, is defined in religious terms. It's a biblical-era word and what it effectively means is sex not intended for procreation. Until fairly recently, even within my lifetime, in many states of the United States, you could be charged with oral sodomy. Oral sodomy is basically, if he's putting it in the mouth, then she can't get pregnant that way, so that's sodomy. So underneath this concept is the idea that it should be biblically wrong for a man to spill his seed, or for a woman to lie with another woman, no procreation is going to come from that. So that too, of course is sodomy. Basically any sex for pleasure is sodomy. And this is why the Catholic Church was vehemently opposed to sodomy, and all that makes perfect sense when you look at it this way.

And so that's why we're pro-sodomy. We are pro-pleasure. And that's an important point, again, back to this idea of not being too doctrinaire or ascetic or austere. The church is not an austere church, except when it comes to procreation. Everything else, we try to be in favor of, within reason. And so we want people to frolic. We want people to enjoy their bodies and their sexuality and enjoy the process of being alive, and so we want them to be sodomites. There are very few religions you can say that about. So that's pretty much the whole caboodle. Although the only other thing I would mention about the church is that if it comes to suicide, we do have some pretty strict rules about that. And for a while, we had

instructions on the internet.

The whole idea of the instructions was that most people choose methods for suicide that we actually consider quite unacceptable, for a variety of reasons. We have a litmus test that we use to judge whether a suicide method is actually acceptable. It has a cute little acronym. We love acronyms. The acronym is QPCDSAT. And what that stands for is Quick, Painless, Certain, Discreet, Safe, Accessible, and Tidy. Don't forget tidy. It should be tidy. So Kurt Cobain—even though he was nominally a saint of the Church of Euthanasia—flunked the tidy parameter, definitely. I don't need to tell you, a shotgun [is] not tidy, really not, and not very nice to the people who are going to have to clean up after you. And so we're against that.

So actually relative few, very few suicide methods can pass that gauntlet, can actually pass all of those tests. One of the only ones that passes is the one that we actually recommended, which is helium. And I should say, parenthetically, I'm not encouraging anyone to kill themselves or anything like that. This is all strictly hypothetical. We are merely discussing something, not recommending anything. But it turns out that any noble gas would probably work, or actually amazingly nitrogen would work just fine. If you know your chemistry, you know that something like 75 or 80% of the atmosphere is nitrogen. It's completely everywhere. It's an inert gas and it would work fine. In fact, every year, some number of people die of nitrogen poisoning, because if you work in a place where nitrogen is used, in industry, you can walk into a room that contains a hundred percent nitrogen and you will breathe completely normally. You won't know that a thing is wrong. And then 30 seconds later, you'll start to feel a little bit sleepy. And shortly after that, you're dead. So it's actually a wonderful suicide method. It's much safer and more chill than just about anything else you can do.

The only problem is, if you actually go and try and buy a tank of nitrogen, you'll have some problems. People ask a lot of pointed questions, because it's not a chemical that a person outside of industry would normally ever want. So that's why we recommended helium. Helium you can buy almost anywhere. You can buy it in a party store. And oddly it's actually really cheap. It shouldn't be because it comes from uranium mines and there's relatively little helium on earth.

And the reason for that being it's the second lightest atom, after hydrogen, and so it tends to drift away from earth. If we mine it and get it out and then we use it, or otherwise it succumbs to entropy and then it just floats away out of the atmosphere. It's so light that Earth's gravitation can't hold it. And so we're gradually losing all of our helium. Someday there'll be no helium left to humanity. It's really shocking that we allow people to buy helium and use it to blow up balloons, that we then let them just throw away, is totally stupid. That's one of the dumbest things humanity is doing. It's really low on our list of problems, but if you had to come up with an example of super stupid stuff that people are doing, that they just do because they never think about it, [because] they don't think about limits, that's an example. If we had a sane society, we would be conserving the shit out of our helium, because we're never going to get more, never. It's not like copper where we might find some more. If we use up all our helium, it's gone. Anyway, so that's a little parenthetical statement there, but so that's what we do. We recommended helium. And so people took us up on it, and it caused a big stink. Well, I hope that answers the question of what the Church of Euthanasia stands for.

AS: Yes, absolutely. I think it covers the pillars as well. So thank you for going into those details. Let me ask, the Church of Euthanasia has produced a lot of really fascinating media over the years, including the 'zine *Snuff It*. I'm sure there's things that I'm not even aware of, the e-sermons. Are you the sole author of all of these works?

CK: Oh no! Not at all. I mean I'm contributing the lion's share definitely, but we've had many contributors, particularly to *Snuff It*.

AS: I didn't think so. And is the Church of Euthanasia is still producing this material?

CK: Yeah. *Snuff It* number five was only 2019. So that's just last year. I mean, mind you, there was a long hiatus. Look, I'm not going to claim that there hasn't been a hiatus. There was. I was off the road for 15 years. I probably achieved my peak notoriety in 2003 with [the album] *The Man of the Future* on Gigolo Records. That's an interesting record. You can get it. I encourage everybody to go listen to it. It's really an interesting record. The song *The Man of the Future* in particular is good stuff. How can you go wrong with a song the first line of which is "I belong to the master race?"

Oh, my. "I belong to the master race of genetically superior beings who engineer themselves for technical perfection." Tough way to start a song. So yeah, you know, it was really good stuff. I mean, I was really in peak form in 2003, but then what happened was I kind of got overextended. My father was a noted self-help guru in the 1970s, and he wrote some pretty famous books. One of them was called *Power*, and it was all about how to become more powerful and get ahead in the office and that kind of thing. But it had some really useful advice in it. One of the pieces of advice that he gave that I clearly flouted is, somewhere in there, he explained that real success is delegation. Real success is when you build a team, so that when people come to you and offer you an opportunity, you don't say no, I wish I could, but I can't, I'm too busy. You say yes, of course we can do that. And that gets around. And then that brings more success and the whole thing kind of snowballs. But unfortunately, as I said earlier in this program, I'm not really the right personality type for this kind of work. And so I'm terrible at team building. I'm not very social or outgoing, even though I can be charismatic in the right circumstances. I'm not really a marketing person, and I wouldn't make a good boss. I hate telling people what to do, or being told what to do for that matter. I'm kind of a loner. And so I wasn't really able to put an effective team on the ground. And so what happened was the Church of Euthanasia suddenly achieved worldwide notoriety, after Jerry Springer, we were suddenly really in the public eye and the newspapers and the whole bit, and suddenly civilization did that thing that it can do, where it stuck a straw in me and started sucking, and believe it, civilization can suck way more than any one person can deliver, as many stars of the music and film business have discovered so many times before. They can suck everything out of you and just leave you a wrinkled shell.

You don't want that to happen, but that's what happened, and I was just devastated. It broke my health, I couldn't keep up with it. And so I had to go off the road for a while and also I ran out of money. So the Church of Euthanasia has made a lot of money during its existence. But it also spent a lot of money. We probably made I don't know, a hundred thousand dollars, and we spent it all! And we spent it on art, so that's really a win actually. It's very rare that any artist is able to really sustain their own art that way. It was very validating and I felt very good about that. But on the other side, it was also cutting it pretty fine. I was dirt poor and sleeping on a mat on the floor and working 24 hours a day, and I

just couldn't keep it up. It broke my health. And so I had to stop for a while and basically go back to work. And that's really where the 15 years off came from. So that hurt, that definitely took the church out of the public eye, but on the good side, it gave me a lot of time to think and regroup and regroup, and sort of secrete new ideas and new ways of looking at things. I just feel very lucky and honored to have been given a second chance, which I have been. I think that it's not only hard work, there's a lot of luck involved here. That I got the chance to make *Apologize to the Future* and have those two videos made, and get the new post anti-human Church of Euthanasia in the public eye after such a long hiatus is really good fortune, and I'm very blessed in this regard.

AS: Perhaps my favorite element of what you do besides the music are all of the iconic and extremely controversial, you know, performance arts that you've done, the demonstrations, that I think for a lot of people are one of the first things that people think of when they think of the Church of Euthanasia. Can you tell me a little bit about how these performances began, the history of them, the ideas behind them, and what the Church of Euthanasia hoped to achieve with them?

CK: Oh, well, we talked about it a little bit before about the coattail riding and so on. I think that we perceived from the beginning that we were complete underdogs. We started from zero. When I say we started from zero, you can go on Internet Archive, and if you type in my name, or if you type in Church of Euthanasia, you can find almost the whole history of the Church of Euthanasia, already archived. I really am a big believer that artists should archive themselves in the 21st century. So we've done that. It's all there. And what you'll find amongst other things is that somewhere in there there's even photos of the very first church action, which is basically just myself and the co-founder of the Church of Euthanasia, Pastor Kim, and some friends of ours hanging out in Harvard Square, handing out "Save the Planet, Kill Yourself" stickers.

That was the first dada action. And we almost got beaten up by the punks in Harvard square and the police came and stuff. And so in many ways it was a kind of a paradigmatic Church of Euthanasia action, but in microcosm. All of the elements that would later become much bigger and more intricate and more developed in the Church of Euthanasia major actions were somehow already present in the very first one. So that's how it got started. The second action perhaps even more clearly demonstrates the pattern. We were associating a lot with a guy back then named Pastor Scott, also known as Scott Stanley, who was a friend of Joey Skaggs, who was a notorious prankster in New York City. And so he was sort of the prankster element of the Church of Euthanasia. He was always pushing us to do more and more crazy stunts.

So a lot of that energy came from him. It was his idea that we should join an anti-vivisection rally, which we did. And so this was where we first evolved the idea that we would have a cover. So we joined the anti-vivisection rally with fake signs that looked like anti-vivisection signs, but the signs were actually just a veneer over our real signs. And so once we were sort of in the march and the march was ongoing, we could rip off the covers and expose our real signs. And so the main sign I was carrying said "kill your fetus, not your pet." And you can imagine how this went over. This was just unbelievable. I mean, it just caused a riot. These poor anti-vivisection marchers just had no clue what had hit them.

They'd never been hijacked before. So this was a totally typical church strategy. And we

developed that strategy in many different ways. I think shortly after that was the suicide assistance hotline. This was again Scott's idea, where he had us rent a billboard for a suicide assistance hotline. The astonishing thing was that suicide was so far off people's radar, and people were so clueless around this time, that we actually got it up. I mean, we had a billboard, there's pictures of it on archive.org, the suicide assistance hotline billboard. We almost got the hotline up too, but apparently the people at AT&T were a little bit more hip, their lawyers got wind of somehow, and they're like, yeah, we're on to you, this isn't going to happen. Nice try though! Something like this.

So it was all these super provocative pranks and stunts. It basically all came down to, well, we don't have any money, and we don't really have a lot of followers, though the followers we have are super zealous and devoted. So what can we do with just a few really devoted people and a lot of sweat? We were making up for our lack of assets with sweat equity. We were willing to work super, super hard. And so those banners were really top notch. We really put a lot of love into them. The idea was that we didn't want to be confused with these kind of laid-back Bread and Puppet hippie protester kind of people. We wanted to stand out from them. We were not them.

And in many cases we were counter-demonstrating against them. And the best example of that was when we did the Bio2000 march. It was against genetic engineering. It was this huge event that took over all of downtown Boston, especially around Copley square. They were against genetically modified foods and all of that. And it's like the whole Bread and Puppet thing with the drummers and the long-haired dudes, and they're burning patchouli and you know what I'm talking about? I mean, I don't mean to be rude, but you know what I mean? It's the Vermont thing. And so they're taking over the city. And then we show up with a giant banner. I mean this thing was the size of a van, just absolutely enormous. Black, completely black with white letters. Classic church style. It says "human extinction while we still can." Ow! What does that even mean? You just couldn't believe it. I mean they were on us flies on shit. And by the end of it, one of the one of the reporters came over and asked me on camera, so is it true what the organizers say? Is it true that you're being paid by Monsanto?

Oh my God, this has gotta be a sign of success. And they would say stuff to us like... at one point, the organizer of a Bio2000, she came up to me crying. I mean, sometimes I felt really bad for these people cause they were so... they weren't bad people. They were really genuine, and they really believed in their cause, and they were so earnest and stuff, and they just couldn't understand how we could be so completely hoodwinking them. They'd never seen anything like us before. And so she comes up to us and she was like, you don't understand, we don't have the money to make those beautiful professional banners. We don't have the money for all of that! We had to do everything on the cheap because we're not being funded by Monsanto!

How does this even get started? Where did they even get this idea? It's unbelievable. But this is how the church operated, and it's a dirty pool. I'm not exactly saying I'm proud of it. I mean, I'm showing a little bit of glee, so some part of me clearly is proud of it. But look, you hold a big event in public space, you have to be prepared for the possibility of counter-demonstrators, right? And if your counter-demonstrators show up and have a cogent argument that actually is more interesting than your argument, that's not my fault. What we were basically saying is, we're pro genetic engineering. We're pro genetically modified foods because the odds are much better that that's going to destroy the human food

supply, than do any lasting damage to Earth's biosphere or bio-systems. And we'd say that, and people would just give us a blank look, like you can't say that. And I'm like, what do you mean, I can't say that? I just said it. Do you want me to say it again? No, don't say it again. So this is classic COE. This is just how we roll. We say unconscionable stuff.

When you get out there in public with a giant banner that says "Eat a queer fetus for Jesus," you better believe it stops traffic. People have never seen anything like that before. And that was all calculated. So we took our lessons from the dadaists. The dadaists very early on were the architects of the idea that if people are confused, that's a good thing, because the worst thing that can happen is where people see something and they think, Oh yeah, I know what that is, I've seen it before. From that point on, no communication is taking place. They're dismissing. You can talk, but they're dismissing you, because they've already filed you in some kind of mental file cabinet. Well, believe it, nobody had anything like "Eat a queer fetus for Jesus" in their file cabinet just yet. And so when they saw it, it just stopped them. They're like, okay, I'm thunderstruck. And they just come up to us and say stuff like, what are you doing? What is that? Why are you doing that? And we would give them answers. And actually we had a guy in charge of that, the guy who was mostly in charge of the "Eat a queer fetus for Jesus" project, it was his specialty. He was a really big guy, very strong.

And it was actually a hard banner to hold because it generates a lot of torque. So you have to be in good shape [to keep it standing] in the wind. And then guys would come up and talk to him and say, why are you doing that? And he was super calm and kind of logical—he's my chemist friend—and he would give this very evenhanded—speaking softly—this evenhanded description of why "Eat a queer fetus for Jesus" made perfect sense. And by the time he was done, you could see this kind of light in people's eyes. You could see that somewhere in their brain, the seed of original thought was actually beginning to take root. So this was what we live for. We live to create that feeling in people. We did it in Illinois for the Jerry Springer show. We did it again and again.

AS: I love so much of that. And I want to see—a very large contingent of antinatalists that exist online, it's very—they would never do a public demonstration, although there's more of that kind of beginning. And so things like things sort of in the same vein, or billboards or that kind of that kind of activism, I think, is slowly starting to happen. You know, in what antinatalism has become, of course there's Danny Shine was also a guest on our podcast, who's very well-known.

CK: Oh I'll look him up, him I don't know.

AS: Danny Shine. Yeah. Also known as The Social Experimentalist on YouTube, you can check out the interview that we did with him on this podcast. He is UK-based and is very, very famous actually for you doing like a lot of megaphoning with speaker's corner.

CK: Like Vermin Supreme! Vermin Supreme was super important for us. We couldn't have done it without him. He was basically the church clown. So he would be the bad cop. We'd be the good cop and he'd be the bad cop. He would show up and play Satan. You need something like that. I think it was Oscar Wilde who said, "If you're going to tell people the truth, you'd better make them laugh, because otherwise they'll kill you." That was one of our credos. You have got to make people laugh. And it didn't always work. I've been pelted

with bottles. I've been chased down the street. I've had boxes full of death threats. This is all part of the reason I stopped doing the church actions.

It became personally very dangerous. Increasingly we were coming alarmingly close to getting our teeth knocked out, and it can happen. And after 9-11 especially, things got very tense in the United States. And so I actually feel really good that we seized the moment, that we seized the day so to speak, because I think that a lot of what we did in the nineties, especially the mid-nineties would essentially be infeasible now. Especially what with the pandemic and so on, and all the new antiterrorism and security laws and so forth, I think that a lot of what we did would just be shut down by the police immediately. And that's a shame and I'm very sorry about that. But on the other side, better to have done it when it was possible than to have not done it at all.

But I also think that even if it were allowed—and I'm sure some things are allowed, because Extinction Rebellion is still pulling stuff, and some people are more willing to get arrested than me, I think that it is still possible to do things—but I think too though, that you can't keep doing the *same* thing. That what situationism teaches us is not just that a small force can be amplified and become a powerful force if the time and place are chosen sufficiently wisely, it teaches that, but it also teaches us that the waves are ever-changing. This is an essential observation of situationism. You never face the same wave twice. There are no two waves alike. And so you can't keep expecting to use the same tactics. You have to continually come up with new tactics to suit the new situation.

And so this is real hard work. We spent most of our time on that actually. We would literally troll the news every day, looking for opportunities and trying to think, okay, how could we, could we somehow make use of this? Like trying to fix a jigsaw puzzle? Can we somehow figure out a way to insert our piece into this puzzle? And a lot of times the answer was "nope." Or Kim would say, let's do this, and I'd say no, if we do that, we're all going to jail immediately, that's going too far. And then there would be some kind of gray area where it's like, yeah, okay. We might get away with that for a while, before the police get hip to it. It was sort of like that. And so somebody has to be willing to do that today.

Somebody has to be willing to look at the situation and judge what they can get away with and how they can actually get in and make a difference and catch the public eye and then get out before something terrible happens. Which could mean getting your arms and legs torn off, because that's a real danger, particularly in America. And believe it, we only did this in Massachusetts. We didn't do Church of Euthanasia actions in the red states.

AS: No, no, no, no, no, no.

CK: San Francisco, Massachusetts, maybe New York, other parts of New England conceivably, maybe Chicago, we did some things in Chicago, but most of America is right now, not a place where I would recommend that people try pulling any of this shit. It's just too dangerous.

AS: But I do agree with you. I think, is a little bit of a constant, that it's still a good tool. It is still a way in, to make people confront things that they would've never been able to sort of sit at the table at, at all. I think that still remains, it's a big piece of my antinatalist activism, is sort of combining it with humor. And I think, I think to some extent you would agree that

the Church of Euthanasia...

CK: Oh, absolutely. I totally agree with that. And I think we got an early lesson in that from our collaboration with Nina Paley. After all when we met when we met her, she was a cartoonist and arguably still is, now she's technically an animator, but her early cartoons were very humorous and some of them were about antinatalism. I met her early on in the history of the Church of Euthanasia. She invited me out to San Francisco when she lived there, to hang out a little bit. And it was very enlightening. I felt that she was a really good influence on me. She showed me that it's not only fire and brimstone. There's a lot of fire and brimstone in the Church of Euthanasia, especially the early church Church of Euthanasia.

Some of it is very dark. You can't sit down and look at *Six Billion Humans Can't Be Wrong*, the album, or god forbid, its American cover, the photograph of me inside of the oven at Dachau, that's a very dark statement. That's real fire and brimstone.

AS: I was going to ask you about that.

CK: That's pretty dark thing to do. And a lot of that stuff was hard for people to take. You go back and look at the e-sermons page. If you read *The Bunny Bowl*, that's a really polarizing statement. Paradoxically actually my friend back then, Pagan Kennedy, encouraged me to read that publicly. She actually sometimes invited me to her own readings because she liked it so much. And so we would read *The Bunny Bowl* and it's absolutely scandalous. If you read that today, I don't even know what would happen. I think that that bitches would get triggered is what would happen, for sure they would. Back then, there was just more freedom of speech, you know? So in the 1990s, we were still in the post-punk era, and there was a lot more latitude and tolerance for extreme speech, speech that the average person might find very offensive, because the 1970s were still in the living memory of many people. And so today I think it's a lot harder. I think people are a lot more sensitive, and so you have to be very careful. It's very easy to get yourself deplatformed. We keep talking about Nina, but Nina managed to get herself deplatformed for reasons we won't go into. And I think that that's a real danger today, and the people are going to have to struggle with that.

That's not my struggle. In truth, I'm happy that we did what we did, but frankly I can't promise to do it more. I feel that at my somewhat advanced age, and after all the water that's under the bridge, it's not likely in my future that we're going to pull more heroic dadaist actions in the street. I just don't think that the conditions are right for it. And I think that probably my energy and time is better spent on other things, probably on writing and so on.

AS: Sure, sure, sure, sure. Well, that does get into sort of my next question. I think so as a fellow antinatalist artist, I love that the Church of Euthanasia has combined antinatalism with art. That's one of the biggest things that I love about what you have done. And I think you really are the unsung, maybe first pioneer of that, of combining art with antinatalism, combining dadaism with antinatalism.

CK: Aw! You think? That's so sweet. I've never thought of it. I never heard it said that way. You might be right.

AS: I think I am right. I really do. Yes, I think you really are. Antinatalism is this idea that is extremely under-consumed, is it an extremely under-consumed idea within art making. In this world where the complaint is always, that it's all been done before, our art has gobbled up everything. Antinatalism kind of stands as this relatively under-consumed subject.

CK: And why is that exactly?

AS: I don't know why it is except well, the word antinatalism has only really been around since 2006. It's really not been crystallized as this sort of movement—such as it is—until very, very recently.

CK: Why 2006?

AS: Well, 2006 was the date of the publication of David Benatar's *Better To Never Have Been*. It was also the public health...

CK: Okay. But by then it had been around in the 'zine world longer. I definitely encountered it quite a bit before from VHEMT, and from Nina and from LA, but those were all part of the underground world at that point. Like most people publishing a 'zine...

AS: It had never been used as a philosophical term before.

CK: I see. So like in mainstream philosophy. But it had been used in other contexts.

AS: Very obscurely.

CK: Les U. Knight definitely used it. I'm sure.

AS: No he hadn't.

CK: Wait, he never used it? I thought he used it in the late nineties.

AS: Nope. Nope.

CK: Really. I got to go back and read his stuff. Okay.

AS: And if you can find instances of that, please let me know. I mean, the earliest that I can think of before that, that is also sort of unsung is, Mark Fisher. Mark Fisher didn't quite coin the term antinatalism, but he said antinatal.

CK: So do you think, would the Church of Euthanasia count? Like if I find a reference to it in our stuff earlier than 2006, does that count?

AS: Oh, I would love it. Please let me know.

CK: You piqued my interest. I'm going to definitely search. I'm going to search my own writing, because I wouldn't have come up with a word like that, and if that's true and I find it, then the question is where did I get it from?

AS: Well, that's sort of what everybody asked themselves. Like where did we get this from? So there are instances of it being used in the fifties, in the sixties, but very obscurely so, very, very obscurely. So in fact, there's even an article from the 1970s in some obscure magazine where somebody is writing to this magazine and, and talking about sex-ed, and they just happened to sort of coin the term antinatalism, they're not actually referencing a movement or a book or anything. It's just like they coined it. It just happens to sort of be what happened. So, but, but leading on to that it's very bit sort of been my belief that antinatalism does have this possibility of being its own art movement, of continuing to inspire artists to create work around it. So what do you think about that? What do you think about antinatalism's chances of becoming not only perhaps his own art movement, but just the future of antinatalist art?

CK: Oh, I think it's heroic. I think there's a lot yet to be done. So I was supposed to have a big show with Bjarne Melgaard, right about now actually, at the Stavanger museum in Norway. Basically it was going to be just me and him in this enormous museum. So I was going to have half a museum full of antinatalist art. You know, that was a huge opportunity. And unfortunately, because of COVID that all got canceled, but it may still happen. It might happen next year or could happen the year after. We don't know, but I don't think that it's permanently barred. I just think that it's procrastinated by a lot. And so that will be a milestone forward. I'm still preparing for that. Even now I have a lot to prepare for that. And of course, just in 2019, there was the Church of Euthanasia retrospective in Paris. And that was also pretty influential. That definitely got some notice. So I think that it is possible to have more antinatalist art.

And as you say, it's underrepresented because antinatalism is underrepresented in our culture. It's understandable why it would be. It's against the prevailing ethic of growth-ism and bullishness about the prospects of humanity, consuming everything and having that being a good thing. I mean, capitalism and especially neo-liberalism are fundamentally opposed to antinatalism, because they want more consumers, or something. I don't know. I mean, it just seems pretty clear to me that it's against the spirit of how things are organized at the moment everywhere around us. People are encouraging us to say more, more, more, and here we are saying less, less, less. That's an underdog position, you can't get around that. But I think less is about to have its moment.

It's an interesting coincidence. But Metadelusion, that blog I mentioned earlier, which by the way, I want to say to anyone who's listening to this today, you should definitely go have a look at Metadelusion, that makes for some pretty interesting reading, because it will help you understand how the post anti-human Church of Euthanasia, as an ideology, evolved. In other words how the church went from pretty much vehement misanthropy and hatred for humanity, to the much more nuanced and complex position that *Apologize to the Future* represents. It's all spelled out there in a long series of posts. And the very first post of Metadelusion was a poem called *Less*. And it's about the idea that we're going to learn to like less. Or we're going to learn to accept less, whether we like it or not. And there's a connection between that and the Kübler-Ross model, the stages of grief. And that's also becoming fashionable now. It's becoming fashionable to talk about how humans are in

denial about limits, and how we need to get past that, and ultimately arrive at the stage of acceptance, after passing through anger and bargaining and grief and all the rest. And that's a theme of *Apologize to the Future* as well. That's also part of the mix, is this idea that we just can't keep having everything our way. Somehow or other, we have to begin to wrestle with reality.

A Thin Layer of Oily Rock was the kind of paradigmatic version of that. It started as an essay, which became a slideshow that I actually presented in Berlin. It starts out with Pythagoras. It's like that. It's pure scientific pragmatism, that little quote I read is from it. It's about the idea that Einstein got it right when he said "the moon is really out there." That's a statement of *realism*. The moon is out there, whether you believe in it or not. It's irrelevant. It's still out there. And so that's something that I think really is important to talk about now, perhaps even more important than antinatalism. Antinatalism is important, but it's almost a subgroup of a larger conversation that we need to be having as a species right now. The conversation we need to be having is about getting saved. We need to save ourselves. And I don't mean that in the evangelist Christian sense. I mean it in the sense that there is the possibility still, even in this dire moment, for humanity to have some kind of reasonable outcome on earth, but that possibility can only arise if we actually all agree that that's what we want. And right now we don't have that agreement.

AS: Not even all antinatalists agree with that.

CK: A huge chunk of the population is basically, as we might say, off the reservation. I don't know what they're thinking. They're the guys who showed up and said that Biden stole the election. The alternative facts world. In the alternative facts world, we've got a big problem. Those people are going to be really hard to persuade. And it's not that they're deplorable. It's that it's a tragedy. The point is that we're in a moment of tragedy where society has failed us so badly that a huge chunk of earth's population is now living on less than \$10 a day. Arguably half of earth's population. And probably a solid third, if the recent statistics hold, a third of earth's population is pretty much going to bed hungry every night.

Well, you better believe that for those guys not having a proper education and not being surrounded by love and literature and learning during the critical period years is low on the list of problems. They are suffering from malnutrition. As in inhibiting brain development. So that's where we're at, is we're failing humanity that badly. And I don't know what to say about that, except that it's tragic. Except there is a thing that we can say about that, which is, and you'll agree, adding more of us won't help that. For sure not.

AS: We do agree there.

CK: And so I think that's the argument we should be making, because I think that's an argument that everyone can understand. You just can't not see that while half of earth is impoverished, and a third of earth is basically starving, adding more people won't help us solve that. And until we can solve that, we can't have any lasting solution to long-term human survival, because long-term human survival implies *justice*, and justice is not done when society favors some of us—by showering gifts on us and having us live soft, cushy lives [with] podcasts and MIDI keyboards—and some of us are starving and picking through the rubble. That can't work. So I think that's the way we ought to pitch it. I think we should pitch antinatalism as part of a subset, an important subset of the larger problem of

persuading humanity to shape up if it wants to actually have a future on earth and learn to live within limits and moderate its demands on earth's ecosystems. Does that seem fair?

AS: Well, there are certainly agreements and disagreements wholly within, but let me just, Chris, let me just say real quick, we have been recording for almost two hours.

CK: Oh my! You're right, we have been.

AS: There's so many, there's so many more things that we could...

CK: Oh my god, it's almost seven o'clock.

AS: I know it's really, it's crazy.

CK: Well no one ever accused me of not having something to say, so you're in luck. I guess you must have some guests who just sit there and go, um I don't know.

AS: Well it does happen. It does happen. We never, we never know what to expect. No, no, no.

CK: We should probably stop.

AS: And we appreciate it so much. We really do, very much. You know, we no, no, no, we love it. We love it, Chris. We love it. I just want to say, you know, we, there is so much more, we'd love to ask you maybe, maybe another time we'd have you back on, but I don't want to take up too much.

CK: Please do. I would be delighted, Amanda. I would be delighted to be back on your show anytime. I hope that at least I've indicated that I can be an amusing contributor.

CK: Yeah, absolutely. Can I just say real? Absolutely. You've been wonderful. You've been wonderful, Chris. Thank you. It's a pleasure to meet you finally. Can I just ask Mark, is there anything like you'd like to say? I didn't mean to usurp the question time.

MM: No worries. The only thing that I wanted to, I don't know if you addressed this was the future of the church. That's all I was curious about. Yeah.

CK: Oh, nifty. Good question. Gosh, well, the church suddenly has a lot more future than I thought it did. For a while there, the church was pretty underground. But the church is coming back big time, and I think we're getting, it looks to me, I could be mistaken, but it looks to me like we're getting another 15 minutes, maybe even 17 minutes with inflation. And so I think that's amazing. That's a wonderful opportunity and I'm trying to make the most of it. I hope to make more interesting antinatal art. And I'd like to say not, to toot my own horn too much, but I actually made some pretty cool antinatal art just in the last few months. So if you get the chance, I encourage you first of all, to go see the two new Church of Euthanasia videos. If you haven't seen them, you really need to see them. They're important, new Church of Euthanasia art. There's two of them, there's a video called

Overshoot on YouTube, and that'll easily take you to the second one, which is unsurprisingly called *Apologize to the Future*. Those videos, a lot of time and energy and money and labor and love was lavished on those two videos. So it's worth seeing them. That's new church art. So that's part of our future, but there's a third thing also worth making a visit to, and that's the *Overshoot* slide show. That you can find. It's a slide show that I made that graphically illustrates the lyrics to the song *Overshoot*, which, as you can imagine, it's about overshoot. "Overshoot / My future's on the line / While you shop and die."

So anyway the slideshow is really strong. It's one of the better pieces of Church of Euthanasia art. And it really is more like the old Church of Euthanasia. It has a lot of *Snuff It* in it. It's that whole idea of using stock imagery and juxtaposing it in really unpredictable ways that kind of make your head hurt a little bit. It's all about juxtaposition and collage. And so I think that's really worth a look and you can find that pretty easily if you just go to chriskorda.com. That's become my generic... I'm now bigger than the Church of Euthanasia, not in in some kind of puffed-up grandiose way, but just meaning I'm doing things that aren't Church of Euthanasia as well. Like I have a side career as a classical musician, that's getting bigger. And so I think chriskorda.com is sort of like the umbrella, and if you're looking for something, go there first, if you go to chriskorda.com and click on the [Art] tab down a little bit, you'll see the *Overshoot* ... slideshow and go have a look at that. And I think that that will give you an idea, hopefully what the future of the Church of Euthanasia is going to look like. More stuff like that.

AS: I actually watched it last night. I love it. It's great. Yeah.

CK: Isn't it like, do you see what I'm getting at? It's kind of like the old church, but it's also the new church too. It's not the same, but it has some of the look and feel of the old church in it.

AS: Absolutely. Returns to form.

CK: Yeah, exactly. It's return to form, but the content is different. And I think that that's good. I think that the worst thing that can happen to you as an artist is to get stuck. Who wants to wind up being one of those people, you see them 30 years later and they're still doing the same old tired thing and trying to make a few bucks doing it. And there's just sort of this feeling of exhaustion. And everybody's like, Oh my God, I can't believe they're still doing that. And you kind of feel bad for them. Well, that's clearly not going to happen, and I feel so good about that. I'm just so blessed and so relieved that I actually found more inspiration. Because if you're an artist, you can relate to this, the worst hell you can possibly imagine, is to not have any new ideas. And so that happened for a while, and I'm just really, really glad that, you know, I'm drinking from the fountain of inspiration again. And I hope it continues.

AS: Absolutely, absolutely. Well, I'm a huge fan of overshoot. Can you tell our audience real quick? Where could they, everybody can find the new album?

CK: Oh yeah. The new album is on Bandcamp. You just go straight there, Bandcamp, Chris Korda, you can't miss it, it's the first thing you hit. And you don't even have to buy it. You can just stream it from there if you want to, or if you want to help support the cause, I'll be greatly appreciative of that, but go listen to it, and go look at the words. The words are

really something. I mean, that's thousands of words and it's not every day. Groove Magazine back in 2019 called me "The Bob Dylan of climate change." It was kind of a joke, they were kind of taking the piss a little bit, but somehow there's some truth to it.

It's about time that somebody wrote lyrics that really are about climate change and have that same level of poetic impact. And that's really, if I had to reduce it to a sentence, that's really what *Apologize to the Future* is about and why it differs from the earlier church. I feel that there's no more time left for arch criticism and—how do I even say this?—there's no time left for ironic detachment. It's time to tell it like it is. And that's what *Apologize to the Future* does. I try and just lay it out and tell it like it is, from the heart, straight up, this is the story. This is the deal, deal with this. And I feel that that's very much needed right now, and I feel that other people would get a lot of benefit from seeing that done.

AS: I agree. A hundred percent. I agree. A hundred percent. Thank you for that. Well let me just say, it's been so great to finally meet you and speak with you today. Thank you so much. Along with Les Knight, I think you really deserve to be recognized for your rather stunning achievement in carving out within the media popular culture, the mainstream even, a way to have a conversation with people about anti-procreation, about antinatalism, at a time when no one else was really doing so, and there was no other way of doing so in a lot of respects. And so I want to thank you for all of that. It's just been so much fun speaking with you. Thank you for your work. It's been very instructive to myself and I'm sure to antinatalists and antinatalist artists of the future. So thank you so much. Mark, do you have anything?

CK: It's really my pleasure. Thank you for not breeding!