

# Daniel Schmachtenberger: “Bend not Break #2: Maximum Power and Hyper Agents”

0:00 

1:51:49

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## Episode 20 May 24, 2022

(Conversation Recorded on May 11, 2022)

On this episode we meet with founding member of The Consilience Project, Daniel Schmachtenberger.

In the second of a four-part series, Nate and Daniel explore the relationship between energy, information, technology, the Superorganism, and the maximum power principle.

How can we maximize returns on agency? Nate and Daniel explain the importance of hyper agents: those humans who have an outsized influence on what's happening in the world.



## About Daniel Schmachtenberger

Daniel Schmachtenberger is a founding member of [The Consilience Project](#), aimed at improving public sensemaking and dialogue.

The throughline of his interests has to do with ways of improving the health and development of individuals and society, with a virtuous relationship between the two as a goal.

Towards these ends, he's had particular interest in the topics of catastrophic and existential risk, civilization and institutional decay and collapse as well as progress, collective action problems, social organization theories, and the relevant domains in philosophy and science.

## Video

## Show Notes

00:45: Daniel's website and other works

<https://civilizationemerging.com/about/>

<https://consilienceproject.org/>

<https://www.thegreatsimplification.com/episode/05-daniel-schmachtenberger>

2:30: Nate's work on Macro-issues

<https://read.realityblind.world/view/975731937/i/>

<https://www.thegreatsimplification.com/animations>

[Economics for the Future - Beyond the Superorganism](#)

2:45: Daniel's work on micro-issues

<https://civilizationemerging.com/>

09:36: Surplus and financial representations of it

<https://read.realityblind.world/view/975731937/165/>

011:31: Exponential growth obligation

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/11/economic-growth/506423/>

11:55: Jevons paradox

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jevons\\_paradox#:~:text=In%20economics%20the%20Jevons%20paradox%20rises%20due%20to%20increasing%20demand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jevons_paradox#:~:text=In%20economics%20the%20Jevons%20paradox%20rises%20due%20to%20increasing%20demand)

# The Great Simplification

11:16: Global GDP and energy coupling

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0164733>

13:09: 18% of electricity goes towards the cloud and servers

<https://www.governing.com/next/the-battle-over-technology-and-energy-consumption.html>

<https://scmresearch.org/2018/09/28/the-supply-chain-of-a-computer/>

16:31: What is money

<https://read.realityblind.world/view/975731937/212/>

20:07: 2-3% GDP growth expectation

<https://ourworldindata.org/energy-production-consumption>

22:06: The digital economy still requires materials

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-020-16941-y>

22:51: Average american consumes 57 barrel oil equivalents of fossil fuels/yr + 17 barrels of oil equivalents in stuff bought from overseas countries.

<http://www.ejolt.org/2012/12/human-energy-use-endosomatic-exosomatic/>

23:59: GINI Coefficient

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gini\\_coefficient](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gini_coefficient)

24:27: India coal consumption up 29%

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/indias-coal-output-up-29-to-6658-mt-in-april-1108069.html>

25:26: Inequalities in climate effects

[https://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2017/wp152\\_2017.pdf](https://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2017/wp152_2017.pdf)

27:56: 93% of heat absorbed by oceans

<https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/ocean-warming#:~:text=The%20Fifth%20Assessment%20Report%20published,causing%20ocean%20temperatures%20to%20rise.>

29:25: Aza Raskin - Earth Species Project

<https://www.earthspecies.org/about>

31:40: Marvin Harris

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Marvin-Harris>

34:20: Tech is value affect

<https://slate.com/technology/2015/03/how-technology-is-changing-our-choices-and-values.html>

37:06: Agriculture provided a huge surplus of energy - primarily due to the plow

<http://www.dandebate.dk/eng-klima7.htm>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10818-013-9156-6>

37:54: The plow pushed for the end of Animism - which was once universal

<https://www.cmu.ca/faculty/gmatties/lynnwhiterootsofcrisis.pdf>

40:50: David Graeber

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Graeber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Graeber)

41:45: Dunbar number

<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsbl.2021.0158#:~:text='Dunbar's%20number'%20is%20the%20notion,other%20individuals%20in%20the%20group.>

42:25: The printing press and the protestant revolution

<https://historyatnormandale.wordpress.com/2016/12/15/the-printing-press-and-the-protestant-reformation/>

47:22: Maximum power principle

<https://read.realityblind.world/view/388478403/170/>

47:45: Kleiber's law

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kleiber%27s\\_law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kleiber%27s_law)

<https://read.realityblind.world/view/975731937/198/>

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

59:43: Alfred Lotka *The Law of Evolution as a Maximal Principle*

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41447607>

55:46: Multipolar trap

<https://slatestarcodex.com/2014/07/30/meditations-on-moloch/>

EPISODES ANIMATED SERIES FRANKLY

ABOUT

SUPPORT

1:05:45: Losing 1-2% of insect biomass/year

<https://www.pnas.org/content/118/2/e2023989118>

# The Great Simplification

1:09:34: Large percentage of men have Ghengis Khan's Y chromosome

ABOUT

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/the-sciences/1-in-200-men-direct-descendants-of-ghengis-khan>

1:13:26: Ooda Loop

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OODA\\_loop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OODA_loop)

1:16:51: Systems

<https://read.realityblind.world/view/975731937/9/>

1:32:56: Dopamine and delayed gratification

<https://read.realityblind.world/view/975731937/59/>

<https://read.realityblind.world/view/975731937/96/>

1:37:37 Peter Thiel

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_Thiel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Thiel)

1:38:16: Metcalfe's law

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metcalfe%27s\\_law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metcalfe%27s_law)

1:39:52: Saudi aramco.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1068803/saudi-arabia-total-assets-of-saudi-aramco>

[/#:~:text=The%20total%20value%20of%20assets,according%20to%20its%20credit%20rating.](#)

1:40:22: There is a finite amount of atoms (copper)

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0921344913002127>

1:45:15: As energy gets more expensive, everything gets more expensive

<https://read.realityblind.world/view/975731937/218/>

1:49:54: 19 terawatt society

[https://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/current\\_world\\_energy\\_consumption](https://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/current_world_energy_consumption)

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**Vicki Robin "Money and Life's Energy"**

**Simon Michaux: "Minerals Blindness"**

## Contact

To learn more about The Great Simplification:

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