

## “All Shook Up about World War III”



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Eric Weber: Hey, again, this is Dr. Eric Thomas Weber. Welcome to Philosophy Bakes Bread: Food for Thought About Life and Leadership. This is one of your co-hosts I mentioned, and I'm here live in the studio. I'll be joined shortly by Dr. Anthony Cashio of the University of Virginia's College at Wise. We'll be talking with Dr. John Shook today in episode three called All Shook Up About World War III.

What follows are pre-recorded interview segments. As the show airs though, we'll be watching Facebook, Twitter, and our email accounts for your messages. We hope you'll get in touch with us, and we'll tell you how to get ahold of us in just a moment. With no further ado, here is Philosophy Bakes Bread.

Hello, and welcome to Philosophy Bakes Bread: Food for Thought About Life and Leadership -- a production of the Society of Philosophers in America. I'm Dr. Eric Thomas Weber.

Anthony Cashio: And I'm Dr. Anthony Cashio. A famous phrase says that, "Philosophy bakes no bread," that, "it's not practical," but we, and SOPHIA, and on this show aim to correct that misperception.

Eric Weber: Philosophy Bakes Bread airs on WRFL - Lexington, 88.1, and is recorded and distributed as podcast next, so if you can't catch us live on the air subscribe, and be sure to reach out to us. You can find us online at [philosophersinamerica.com/philosophy-bakes-bread](http://philosophersinamerica.com/philosophy-bakes-bread). We'll soon be updating our original site for the pilot season of this podcast which is at [philosophybakesbread.com](http://philosophybakesbread.com). We hope you'll reach out to us on any of the topics we raise on the show, as well as any topics you want us to bring up. Plus, we have a segment called You Tell Me. Listen for it, and let us know what you think.

Anthony Cashio: You can reach us in a number of ways. We're on Twitter at [philosophybb](https://twitter.com/philosophybb), which stand for Philosophy Bakes Bread. We're also on Facebook [@philosophybakesbread](https://www.facebook.com/philosophybakesbread), and check out SOPHIA's Facebook page while your there [@philosophersinamerica](https://www.facebook.com/philosophersinamerica).

Eric Weber: You can, of course, email us at [philosophybakesbread@gmail.com](mailto:philosophybakesbread@gmail.com), and you can also call us and leave a short, recorded message with a question or a comment that we may be able to play on the show at 859-257-1849. That number is 859-

257-1849, and if you're interested in learning more about SOPHIA check us out online at [philosophersinamerica.com](http://philosophersinamerica.com).

Anthony Cashio: We're very fortunate to have an exciting guest on the show today: Dr. John Shook.

John Shook: Hello. Glad to be here.

Eric Weber: John has a PhD in philosophy and he teaches philosophy at Bowie State University in Maryland. He also teaches online courses for Science and the Public, a masters program at University at Buffalo in New York where he's a research associate in philosophy. Previously he was a professor at Oklahoma State University and then the director of Education for two national secular organizations; the center for inquiry and the American Humanist Association. In recent years he's been a visiting fellow at the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at George Mason University in Virginia and the center for Neuro technology studies of the Potomac Institute for public policy in Virginia.

Anthony Cashio: John's research areas include philosophy of science, neuro philosophy, social and neuro science, moral psychology, ethical and political theory and the science and religion dialogue. Among his recent books are *The God Debates: A 21st Century Guide for Atheists, Believers and Everyone in Between*, *The Essential William James*, *Neuro Science*, *Neuro Philosophy and Pragmatism* and *Dewey's Social Philosophy Democracy As Education*. His newest volume is the *Oxford Handbook of Secularism* which was just published this month, congratulations.

John Shook: Thank you very much.

Eric Weber: Before we dive into a discussion about John's work. We'll open with a segment inspired you all, the listeners.

Anthony Cashio: At the beginning of each show we plan to open up with a segment called you tell me! Before each episode ends we ask you to send us your questions, comments and praise as well as your thoughts about a specific question or set of questions we raised on earlier episodes.

Eric Weber: Since we're pre-recording these episodes and only one has aired so far we invite you to send us your thoughts and comments for us to bring up on future episodes. We can ask our subsequent guests what they think about your comments and questions too and we may even find inspiration for follow up episode as a whole. For today I want to open up with a topic that I raised on the air at one point even before the show aired in the first episode that's come out already and that generated quite a few responses. I had explained at the time that in moving to Lexington last summer which was 2016 I was astonished to see people riding motorcycles without helmets. The danger in the event of an accident is so much higher when you do that.

Several callers told me that they completely agreed about the danger and that it's crazy not to wear a helmet. A further caller though asked where we draw the line when it comes to government intervention in our lives. Last but not least Ronnie H from here in Lexington wrote us on Facebook to say, "hello I agree with you about the motorcycle helmet issue. Motorcyclists get away with a lot of things." What do you all think? You can write to us on our Facebook page as Ronnie did if you search for Philosophy Bakes Bread we've got our Facebook page there. Let's think about that together just for a few minutes and then we'll go into a little more depth introducing John for the show and our subsequent topics. What do you guys think about helmet rules Anthony and John and at the same time where do we draw the line as far as making people be safer?

John Shook: Where do I stand on this?

Eric Weber: Yeah.

John Shook: I'm in favor of helmets, I'm old enough to remember, I don't know if you guys are, of automobiles with no seatbelts in the back seats. For kids to just fly around during collision right? It was an enormous political battle to get mandatory seatbelts installed in cars. By the time I was in grade school I think it was in every car. We do these things to save lives and we save lives because we care and we care for all kinds of reasons. One reason is we just care and the other reason is we have to pay for your cracked skull when you end up in the county hospital.

Anthony Cashio: Is the concern mainly financial?

John Shook: It's not mainly financial, I'm an ethicist so I hope the main concern is care, that's why I said it first but if that doesn't work for you, care for your pocket book at least tax payers.

Eric Weber: There are selfish motivations why we might want someone else though to have to wear a helmet. One way of cashing that out is this no man is an island idea right? You would think who am I hurting when I ride around on my motorcycle? You're saying you have to pay for it but explain this to me?

John Shook: Explain what? Social responsibility? Yeah it's a forgotten concept.

Eric Weber: I think it's true but let's make sure our listeners have a sense at least of what you mean when we say that someone else has to pay for my skull. Why do you think you have to pay for my skull?

John Shook: Tons of people don't have enough insurance, tons of people end up in county city hospitals that are paid for by tax dollars and even if "insurance covers it" and it's "their" insurance, there's no such thing as "their" insurance, all insurance by definition is socialist. That is to say a community insures each other through an instrument known as an insurance company but the insurance

company only exists because everybody is in a pool paying into it so that if you crack your skull everybody else helps pay. Of course everybody pays hoping not to have to have it used but if you've got a lot of people doing very dangerous thing the insurance isn't private. Insurance is a public socialist institution and we end up all paying.

Eric Weber: Socialist! Oh my goodness. Of course these are, almost all of them for profit companies.

John Shook: No, no, you misunderstand me, socialist organizations can be for profit, they can be non profit, what makes it socialist is not whether it is profit or non profit but it whether or not the fundamental purpose is to aggregate many, many people's contributions for distribution back to that same population, insurance is a classic example. Having firemen around is another classic example. The fact that there is 10% skimmed off the top by the company for administration does not relieve it of it's fundamentally socialist character.

Eric Weber: It's interesting you bring that up actually because there was a very controversial story some time ago. I remember of a ... what do you call it, the firemen, a group of firemen, a company of firemen who were called out to put out a fire but a neighbor's house caught on fire too at the same time but that house didn't pay for the elective service of fire protection and actually the firemen who were there wanted to put out both fires but their bosses told them not to because that other house hadn't paid. There were dogs inside, there were animals, there were living things inside that would die from the fire. Controversial subject, we're having fun talking about this. Let me throw it to Anthony what do you think about the rule about helmets?

Anthony Cashio: I'm with John on this. I think it's a matter of care and it's a matter of well, if you want to appeal to the pocket book you can do that as well. Thinking if you took the insurance out of it I think the rules would also apply. We have helmet laws because we care for the people who ride the motorcycles. I had a neighbor back in Illinois who they did not have helmet laws, he rode his motorcycle one day and was in an accident and is no longer with us. I saw the devastation and grief it causes. You mentioned the no man is an island problem. I think this is exactly right. Our lives are not separate and unique from others. When our lives end it causes pain and suffering for others. Encouraging people to wear helmets even if it takes a law then so be it if it is better for society as a whole.

Eric Weber: All right. This is interesting because if we were all in agreement with how things are then it would be less interesting but actually what I'm hearing is a lot of agreement that things ought to be such that there is a rule but we don't have that rule in Kentucky I can tell you. I didn't realize that about Illinois. I appreciate you throwing in your thoughts folks. Anybody who's listening, tell us what you think because we're hearing a lot of agreements about why we should have these helmet laws.

I realize we didn't answer where do we draw the line but I guess we're going to have to bring that up in a subsequent episode because we've got to dive into the question about whether or not Dr. John Shook knows himself and so that we can learn about him for further discussion. Send us your thoughts on Facebook at Philosophy Bakes Bread if you can look us up that way. We're on Twitter as we mentioned and there's also that phone number, I'll give it to you one more time 859-257-1849. Leave a short recorded message and we may be able to play it on the air.

We're very fortunate to be able to talk with you John, thank you so much. In this short segment little bit of time we have left for the first part of our interview with you we'd love to hear about yourself. How you came to know philosophy but remember the famous old adage, know thyself. That's an important maxim because we want to understand where one's coming from and we want to understand ourselves. Let's hear from you so that we're ready to understand where you're coming from when we hear about the subject matter of our [crosstalk 00:13:01].

John Shook:

Sure, I came from a small place no where. I grew up in one of the poorest counties in all of upstate New York in the middle of farmland country and would have had an unremarkable childhood except both of my parents were intellectuals and loved books. I grew up in a house that had endless bookshelves of all kinds of things. My mother was into philosophy so I was able to read philosophical novels and philosophy books. My father was into history so I was able to read intellectual history and world history and learn all about religion and culture before I graduated from high school. When I went off to college I thought I wanted to be a math major. I was good at math.

Math got boring but fortunately there was another subject waiting in the wings. I had taken a logic class, that was awesome, then I took an intro to philosophy class and well that was it. I changed my major right away, I remember calling home to mom and dad. I remember hoping that my mother would answer not my father. My father did answer, he said what did you change your major to? I said philosophy. He shoots right back, you ever going to get a job? I said please put on mother. She comes on and says, so you changed your major dear? Yeah that's right mom. What did you change it to? I changed it to philosophy mom. Oh I knew you would. What? My mom knew me but later she explained she said, I saw you read all those books. I've never looked back. It's always been the biggest questions and the biggest problems of humanity that has just endlessly fascinated me.

Eric Weber:

Fantastic, give us one quick sense and succinctly what is it about philosophy that hooked you? What were these big questions? What hooked you?

John Shook:

It's the ultimate adventure. You get to poke your nose into absolutely everybody else's business. If you're into science you can do philosophy of science and figure out scientific method and try to help scientists understand

what they're doing what their theory paradigm shifts and so forth. If you're into the humanities philosophy fits right in there. If you're into religion most religion is extremely theological which is just another way of saying it's philosophical. There's no place philosophy doesn't find a home.

Eric Weber: Right on, you heard it here. Thanks so much Dr. Shook for joining us today. We're going to come back after a short break and talk about a pretty momentous set of subject matters including predicting World War III.

Speaker 1: Who listens to the radio anymore? WRFL Lexington.

Eric Weber: Hey everybody thanks for listening to WRFL Lexington, this is Dr. Eric Weber here live in the studio. You just listened to a pre recorded interview segment that we did over the internet and we're about to jump into the next segment. This is talking with Dr. John Shook and let me warn you this is some heavy stuff about World War III here it goes.

Anthony Cashio: Welcome back to Philosophy Bakes Bread this is Dr. Anthony Cashio here with Dr. Eric Weber and we're talking with Dr. John Shook. Our topic for today is the provocative notion of predicting World War III as well as predictions about generations like baby boomers, generation X and the millennials and so on. Should we be worried about World War III John? Tell us about that.

John Shook: Oh yes, absolutely. In order to worry about it rationally you have to understand the trends and cycles of history and that's probably what we should warm up with. Let's do a little bit of a history quiz. How many years, past, since the revolutionary war to Lincoln's Gettysburg address? Hint for the audience, the answer is in Lincoln's Gettysburg address.

Anthony Cashio: Four score and seven years ago.

John Shook: That's it, fourscore and seven years ago and if you remember what score is, 20 years that's 87 years. Next question, how many years passed between John Brown's crusade against Harper's ferry and a date which shall live in infamy, FDR's request for declaring war against Japan and Germany, how many years?

Eric Weber: I don't know, I studied philosophy.

Anthony Cashio: I'm going to jump on a limb, I'm going to say 82.

John Shook: You are exactly right, 82 years. That's right 1857 and 1941. [crosstalk 00:18:25] Now, this is a pattern which goes way back into history. Historians have known this, they just haven't known what to make of it. World War II was the deadliest war per capita that this country, the United States of America ever witnessed but it was not the deadliest war in America if you include the colonial era. During the colonial era between the King Phillips war and the King William's war

roughly 1675 was wrapping up by 1696 or so, more people died on American colonial soil per capita than all the other wars combined.

It was terrible. The French attacked, all of the American Indians attacked just towns devastated from Maine to Delaware. That happened 85 years before the deceleration of independence. This country has been on a heart beat approximately every 85 years or so and in fact it extends back into English history. Roughly about 85 to 90 years there is a terrible climactic upheaval, either civil war or external war. Now, add from the beginning of World War II for us, but really World War II started in 1938 with the annexation of Austria by Hitler and add 85 years to 1938 quick, what year do you get?

Anthony Cashio: 2020 somewhere around there?

John Shook: Yeah 2023 but yeah, the forecast by this generational pattern is that World War III will be upon us or underway plus or minus a few years around the early 2020's, it might start as early as 2020 itself of course you can't predict these things exactly. It seems inexorable. You can also tell from the social mood. People have been predicting World War III ever since World War II and every year they've been wrong so you might think they'll always be wrong.

The national mood has darkened, the trends have worsened, the gloom and doom. Serious academics are now predicting World War III by 2020. This is happening more and more frequently and these are people looking at hard data. Philosophers have to get interested in this sort of thing.

Eric Weber: John when you say World War III, there are big conflicts and then there are World Wars which are fairly particular kinds of wars. Does that mean necessarily we're talking about something like a United States focused kind of war? If so depending on who we're fighting we're talking about nuclear weapons.

John Shook: We are talking about nuclear weapons and it didn't have to be World War III. Sometimes in this American English cycle it's a civil war. In fact about every other one is a civil war. The revolutionary war was a civil war of course we had the grand-daddy of them all, the north versus south civil war. It could have been a civil war but I think people are looking at external events as more likely to cause the coming crisis than internal events. Ten years ago I would have bet you 50/50 abortion was looking very divisive, there were huge geographical tensions, I think America's focus is now on what's going on outside of its borders more than inside of its borders and I think that's for good reason.

Eric Weber: At the same time the interesting thing about nuclear weapons is that they tend to be sort of a threshold kind of event possibility in so far as there will be conflicts but between nations that have nuclear weapons you're going to try and settle those conflicts in some subtler way.

John Shook: Maybe, maybe not. I'd return back to the Civil War what if Robert E Lee had a hydrogen bomb? He would have used it.

Anthony Cashio: You think so?

John Shook: The first country that invented a workable H bomb used it.

Anthony Cashio: Fair point.

John Shook: That would be us, we used it twice.

Eric Weber: My point is this mutually assured destruction stuff when you both have it. When you both have weapons. Think about China, think about USSR and India and Pakistan. The notion that we're going to get into a very serious war with a nation that has nuclear weapons. I understand that North Korea it's more of an issue of launching far enough but Russia sure can reach us. The notion that we could get into a war with Russia. It's hard for me to envision what a war would look like without the deployment.

John Shook: That's the thing about these wars, they all seem absurd, illogical and unpredictable as early as three years before they're upon us. If you'd have taken a pole in 1773 among colonial Americans 80% would have said that war with the mother country is absolutely impossible but three years later it happened. The national mood before World War II was strongly against entering the war. Very few intellectuals thought that we would have to get into what was viewed as an old country not a new country problem, an old world problem not a new world problem. By 1941 we were dragged into it.

Now, am I saying it's going to be nuclear holocaust? No, you can predict the outcomes but you can predict when they start and it's not beyond the bounds of possibility that limited nuclear exchanges occur. Either between super powers or between lesser powers. Like perhaps Israel and Iran or North Korea versus anybody to get somebody's attention.

Anthony Cashio: What are the chances that this would end up, instead of being World War III maybe a giant financial crisis?

John Shook: It will definitely be a giant financial crisis that's already upon us. We're already entering into the global financial instability that is going to be part of the matrix that helps precipitate World War III that's a given. The academics aren't quarreling about that. Where they disagree is where the theaters of war is going to be. My guess is it will probably be all theaters of war. Not both geographical but also cyber and space.

Eric Weber: One development in the last decade plus that has been shaking is the effect of foreign nations doing various sorts of hacking life, the kinds of things that president elect Trump has been talking about China but others have been



critical about China too in their activities in the United States and hacking and stuff. Then of course Russia. We're seeing it and we're seeing people trying to attack our economic circumstances with hacking and such. North Korea has such activities as well. There's definitely a sense in which that is already exactly a threat that is going on that we need to be concerned about.

The notion that that would elevate however to the level of a conflict that's a war is not impossible obviously. I'm a little surprised John to hear you sound so deterministic about this. Tell me, is this something that you think is just a given that's going to happen, maybe we're off by maybe five or ten years but it's going to happen is that what you think?

John Shook: Yes, as an academic and a scholar on these things and more importantly looking at a community of scholars who have been looking at this for 20 years. The consensus is in. They disagree about how it will be begin but those things are very difficult to predict until the crisis is almost upon you and everybody is surprised. That it happens historians will look back and say the Civil War was inevitable, they'll look back and say the American Revolution was inevitable. There seems to be rhythms to history and history seems to, not quite repeat itself but it definitely rhymes.

Anthony Cashio: What do you say to someone who says that you're making predictions about the future that you're almost engaging in a [crosstalk 00:27:46].

John Shook: That's what science does, this is history becoming science.

Anthony Cashio: A new astrology.

John Shook: No, no, astrology means you don't understand the underlying causes. The underlying causes are being discovered. There's a new field called Cleodynamics, you can google, look it up, the goddess of history, Cleo from the Greek. Cleodynamics was invented by Peter Turchin, an ecologist, mathematician out in California. He has a community of scholars hard at work discovering underlying causes. The causes are real and if the causes are real they just don't arbitrarily stop when the calendar year is this year.

If they're real they continue on into the future. This is the scientific attitude. Science doesn't assume that just because apples have fallen to the ground in the past it's a complete mystery whether or not the next apple will fall from the tree and hit the ground, no, no, no if the causes are real the next apple when it drops will hit the ground. That is the scientific attitude. This isn't astrology this is science.

Eric Weber: All right, all right John. We need to hear a little bit about the gravitational theory at work here in what you're talking about. What is precipitating World War III? What's making sure this is definitely going to happen? What are those factors in the science of history that seem to darn certain on your and other's account?

John Shook: There are three levels of analysis that culminate in the grand-daddy theory which we'll call generation theory. One is looking at business cycles. Business cycles have been empirically studied for decades and decades and decades. The most empirically confirmed theories about business cycles view them as coming in roughly 50 year waves more or less. This cyclical approach to economics successfully predicted the 2008 down turn for example. It has ... This is familiar territory to economics. Nobody views it as voodoo.

The second level is political analysis and political scientists have been discovering what they call political cycles. I don't know if the name Arthur Schlesinger means much to the audience, father and son, junior and senior, famous academic historians with huge reputations. Studied political cycles, they agreed that this country, and the cycles can be found in other countries, the cycles have lurched, rotating between more liberal and more conservative patterns at about a sixteen year heartbeat and this cycle again, not only empirically confirmed by looking to the past but they made risky predictions into the future using this cycle it predicted a liberal turn in 1993.

That of course was when America installed Bill Clinton, democrat into the presidency and it predicted a conservative turn beginning around 2008. You might think well that's been dis confirmed Obama got to be president! Yeah Obama was president but he didn't accomplish hardly anything of his agenda because America had lurched into a conservative political turn and now we witness conservatives controlling all three branches of government at the height of this political cycle. Between business and political cycles they are looking both at pretty serious events coming up.

Eric Weber: With the Obama example of course basically maybe that turn was to be understood two years later in 2010 when Republicans took congress right?

John Shook: Sure, these are big waves, big waves. Next you have just social trends, around the world. Just worsening trends and they seem to be interlocked with each other. Instabilities everywhere across the globe in a way that hasn't been seen since the 1930's. Not just financial panics happening around the world with more and more frequency, populations moving, migrations because of scarce resources, failed states that at a rate that we haven't seen again since the 1930's something's a foot.

Eric Weber: Well we are hearing about the predictive power of the social scientists and history and about doom and gloom coming. We're going to come back with some tough questions for Dr. John Shook thanks so much for talking with us and you all thanks for listening.

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just go to WRFL.fm/schedule and see what programs appeal most to you. Thanks again for listening to this podcast from WRFL Lexington.

Eric Weber: Now I mentioned this is Dr. Eric Weber live here in the studio and my colleague and I here on the show Dr. Anthony Cashio have been interviewing Dr. John Shook. I'm very pleased to say while we're here in the studio we got some feedback already and got a really great message from Shane Rolston who's listening in via live stream. He says, great to hear John Shook doing philosophy, nine years since I visited Center for Inquiry, smart guy, smart guy indeed. Now I'm sure there's some people out there who haven't agreed or may not agree with some of the things we're hearing from Dr. Shook. We've told you about ways you can get in touch with us at PhilosophyBB is our Twitter handle. @Philosophy BB and we're on Facebook, if you search for Philosophy Bakes Bread and you can email us at philosophybakesbread@gmail.com. Without further ado here is our next segment with Dr. Shook.

You're listening to Philosophy Bakes Bread, this is Dr. Eric Weber and Dr. Anthony Cashio speaking with our guest Dr. John Shook. We are coming back in to talk about predicting World War III. Some interesting theories about generations and what we can predict in terms of the big picture of human history. I'm going to invite Dr. John Shook to tell us about how we're to understand this set of cycles which could potentially be culminating soon in a major world conflict. Tell us more about the theory underlying the prediction of World War III John.

John Shook: There's no single theory but I'm going to turn to talk about the culminating theory that incorporates all the previous business, civic, global political cycles. That's what we'll call generation theory. It was first published by Neal Howe and William Strauss in a book called Generations, appropriately. All the way back in 1991. I remember reading it that year and being immediately struck and persuaded by it. It's an inexpensive paper back today. It's been a best seller every year since it's publication almost 30 years ago. They predicted World War III, guess what year they picked? Yeah 2020.

Eric Weber: Oh really?

John Shook: Yeah, when you take the underlying causes seriously you have to be scientific about them meaning they're going to continue into the future. The future is not mysterious, not to science at any rate. What they did was that they tried to figure out the real deep underlying causes. Not just mechanical causes as if society was a machine. These economic decisions, these political decisions, they're made by people, individual people in the aggregate, large populations. They began to look at the populations that were alive and are alive today. Here comes the good news. It is excellent news for America that this crisis of 2020 is happening when it is.

The generational line up is ideal. Every time American has successfully come through one of these great crisis the generational line up has been the same. We're witnessing that same generational line up today. We're talking about generations, let's go through the line-up. You remember the GI generation right? The greatest generation? Sure, the greatest generation fought and won World War II. They were enlisting young, they're now agreed upon their birth years roughly 1901 to 1924 what they all have in common is that they went through World War II at an age where they were either serving or they were in the factories fighting.

They were the young adults that had to provide the muscle over seas and at home to win the war. Ever since they've been recognized as America's greatest generation for doing so. They did so as young adults. They weren't the political leaders. The political leaders were FDR's generation, a very different generation. They were known as the missionary generation because they grew up earlier in the last quarter of the 19th century when a huge percentage of them were on religious revivals, they were sent overseas as missionaries.

They went through a spiritual awakening then. As elders they made sure that America came through World War II as winners. What about the generation in between? We don't really remember them? Historians call them the lost generation, wedged in between the missionary generation and the GI generation. They went through World War I as young adults. They entered World War II in mid life. Most of the members of those generations now are all gone. The GI generation is very elderly, late 90's 100-year -olds we still see of the greatest generation.

After the greatest generation came a generation that fought the Korean War. What does the Korean War memorial look like? Now what we remember, we remember the generation after them, the generation after was of course the Baby Boom generation, fought the Vietnam war. They got a memorial, what a striking memorial, you seen it?

Anthony Cashio: Of course.

John Shook: It's etched like a black scar into a low hill and every individual name is recorded there. It makes quite a moral statement as befits a highly moralistic generation. You can't of course visit the national mall without seeing the immense World War II GI generation monument. It stretches from side to side of the monument. It occupies the central portion of the national mall, hard to miss. Huge, imposing, impressive, making a physical statement which befits the GI generation. The generation that fought the Korean war is known as the silent generation, you didn't hear much from them born roughly 1925 to 1942 and they finally, finally got a memorial. It's about 18 nondescript unnamed soldiers kind of walking bedraggled kind of going nowhere. Not a terribly inspirational memorial. By the way I mentioned the lost generation before them. Where is the memorial to World War I? Oh that's right, it still hasn't been built.

Anthony Cashio: That makes me feel better I was trying to figure out where it was.

John Shook: It still hasn't been built. These different generations encounter these great events and deal with them differently and they get very different amounts of respect afterwards. The lost generation has gotten virtually no respect for anything except for their novelists like Hemingway and F Scott Fitzgerald. They're truly a lost generation. GI generation still gets all the press, Baby Boomers take all the press. After the Baby Boomers the generation that fought the first gulf war was my generation, your generation probably Eric, the generation X. Born after the Boomers, the birth here begins here about 1961, Obama is an Xer, he's not a Baby Boomer and Obama knows it by the way.

You can tell how you're a member of a generation you share that cohorts mood, you share that cohorts character. That doesn't mean we're all alike but you can really feel the difference if you compare yourself with a member of a very different generation. There's a genuine generation gap between your elders and then the generation that's following after you. I really don't get Baby Boomers sometimes and I have very little common with these millennials on their phones constantly.

Eric Weber: You seem pretty convinced that we should be understood in terms of generations. Isn't it equally plausible to say that you haven't met the people who are in your generation, our generation who you just can't understand those people?

John Shook: Oh I can understand them better than you think. If you were to meet somebody raised in America plus or minus a couple years of yourself you would have shared similar life experiences. Take for example what's the latest thing now with millennials, hazing and bullying. These are terribly bad things. For the Xer generation we called it the regular day at school. No one gave the slightest attention to hazing and bullying when we were children. We were the least protected generation since the lost.

Those little baby on board stickers, they were invented, not for Xers they were invented right in time for the millennials in 1982, we were already in high school, too late for us. The hysteria over finding lost children, not in the 70's, not when we were kids. We were the latch key kids, we had to take care of ourselves [crosstalk 00:42:55]. We were the kids riding in the back seats of cars without seatbelts and the backs of motorcycles without helmets and we knew it. We knew it. This was in the 60's and 70's you couldn't take children to many restaurants. Nowadays a restaurant would go out of business if it forbid children. We get it, we can tell that these precious millennials are just getting a level of attention that we just never saw collectively as a generation us Xers.

Eric Weber: This is interesting John I'm thinking of a trend totally unrelated to World War III I think, although some people may think differently. Just in the ways in which homosexuals are treated today. When I was growing up I remember a long time

ago seeing Eddy Murphy's Raw and that stand up show included just endless berating and jokes at the expense of people who are gay.

Anthony Cashio: I watched it recently and it's quite shocking.

Eric Weber: It's hard to watch isn't it?

Anthony Cashio: I was just, how did this pass?

Eric Weber: It's unbelievable right? I can't believe that I used to laugh at that stuff or that everybody used to laugh at that stuff. It's incredibly harsh and so forth. I say that and at the same time can we really be so deterministic and determine by our generation that a war is going to come or something like that? Don't we have a whole lot of freedom individually.

John Shook: Yeah funny how the law of large numbers catches up with you. Individually a single molecule might look extremely erratic. You get a trillion molecules and they will precisely obey the laws of temperature volume and pressure. There's a fallacy lurking, we want to feel free as individuals and to an certain extent we are but you put a million of us together or ten million or a hundred million the law of averages sneaks in and larger patterns emerge. I mentioned earlier we're fortunate in our generational line up. Every time that America has successfully come through one of these crisis our elders have been like baby boomers, our midlife leaders and commanders have been like Xers and the young adults who have to do the dirty work are just like the millennials, complete with characters to match.

Think for example of FDR's generation, the missionary generation, a prophet like generation, stern elders with morals to match. They weren't the generals, that came from the next generation the lost generation, the Bradly's and the Patents. Think of General Patton and his reputation. It wasn't for being morally squeaky clean. It was for getting the job done with blood and guts. The GI's fell right in line behind him because that's what a millennial like generation does a civic minded generation is used to leadership and authority. They'll walk through walls for it.

I think we're in very good shape. If World War III had happened oh let's say precipitated by 9/11 the generational line up would have been completely off. The Silent generation would have still held too much elderly leadership the baby boomers would have still been in mid life, terrible leadership for a crisis and the nomadic generation of the Xers would have still been expected to fight the frontline battles and we'd do it but it's not our teamwork skill set. I think we're fortunate if World War III happens right on schedule. History suggests we'll come through it.

Eric Weber: You say we're fortunate but that's all because you feel sure it's going to happen and so at least it's going to happen in the way in which we'll come out of it best, is that a fair assessment?

John Shook: If it happens on schedule we will come out of it best. If it had happened ten years too early we would have had a civil war scenario. The civil war was off cycle. It can happen too soon. The civil war ideally should have happened in the 1870's not the early 1860's. It was just a tragic unraveling for the country. It never really settled fundamental issues of economics or race. Jim Crow and segregation continued on in the south for decades and decades later. The transcendentalist generation just couldn't help itself.

Eric Weber: We never had a truth and reconciliation commission in the United States.

John Shook: No we didn't.

Eric Weber: We should have.

John Shook: Lincoln was a Transcendentalist and too many of his moralistic and Bible thumping members of his generation took this country into a schism and it couldn't recover.

Eric Weber: We've been listening to Dr. John Shook tell us about generations and how we might be lucky perhaps in a sense if World War III were to happen as has been predicted that it would happen with the generations in the configuration that we have them. An interesting thought that may not be very uplifting for some folks. We're going to come back after a short break and ask John some pressing questions about how to think about these big worries that perhaps we should be having and what this means for our lives and everyday as well as for our leadership and what we should be demanding of those at the front of the train.

Speaker 1: And the radio man says it's a beautiful night out there. The Radio man says rock and roll, the Radio man says it's a beautiful night there. The Radio man says [inaudible 00:49:25]. 88.1 WRFL Radio Lexington.

Eric Weber: Hey folks you've been listening to Philosophy Bakes Bread here on WRFL Lexington 88.1 this is Dr. Eric Weber, I'm one of your cohosts. I'm here live in the studio. You've been listening to pre recordings that we make with scholars around the country and we use Skype as our mechanism for that at present. We are looking forward to more and more such interviews. I want to mention that you may have noticed that I mentioned president elect Trump in one of the segments and of course that's because these are pre-recorded and so we have them ready in advance. Even sometimes a few weeks ahead of when they air on the show. I have one more segment for you here to conclude the show. I hope you're enjoying, although you may not be smiling about the news we're getting we have a little bit of the lighter side of philosophy here in this last segment as

well as some of the big tough messages that we've been getting from Dr. John Shook.

Welcome back to Philosophy Bakes Bread, we've been talking with Dr. John Shook about some big picture worries about World War III and about interpreting generations and predicting the future. At the same time we're going to offer you now some concluding remarks. Ask the final thoughts we have at least for this episode today from Dr. Shook and my cohost Dr. Anthony Cashio is going to give him a prompt to start us off. Let me just say that after that we're going to have a bit more lighthearted segment for a moment. These are serious things but we also want to make sure people see the lighter side of philosophy. Then we'll end by asking Dr. Shook for a question for you guys for our you tell me segment next time. Okay Dr. Cashio why don't you throw your question at Dr. Shook for some concluding thoughts.

Anthony Cashio: All right John, I think you've given a pretty convincing account that the predictive model shows some sort of calamity is coming, that World War III is coming. I'm wondering what we can do, should we be fighting against this World War III coming and doing what we can diplomatically or otherwise to avoid it or should we just accept the inevitability of it coming and then plan for what happens afterwards. Is there anything that we can do? How should we proceed?

John Shook: There's plenty we can do but avoiding it is not an option.

Anthony Cashio: That's cheery.

John Shook: There are better and worse ways of surviving it [crosstalk 00:52:22] and there are intelligent or unintelligent ways of managing it. America is going to be a major player in it obviously and if it blunders unwisely for the wrong causes and with the wrong principles we could either prolong the war excessively or we could tip it into a nuclear war. On the other hand if we play our generational cards right, we could come through it as quickly as maybe just three or four years as the missionary GI generational line up managed world war II.

There are great responsibilities ahead but each generation has to play to its strengths, has to exhibit its characteristic virtues for which it has been preparing its entire life. For example, if you're a member of the boomer generation it's a time to look inward and boomers are always good at that. What I mean is figure out what is essential and what is inessential. As we lurch into the beginning stages of the coming conflicts figure out what principles really ought to be at stake and then persuade America that that's what we ought to fight for. If the boomer generation can not get its act together, if they're more interested in arguing amongst each other over principles instead of making the world a better place America will not be able to effectively manage World War III and we'll probably blunder into many global strategic errors.



For its part however, a boomer generation usually does congeal around some important principles. My guess would be human rights, advancing democracy, defeating communism, trying to figure out how the world as a whole can become more prosperous these have always been baby boomer principles, I don't see why that should change. Let's hope that ... This is fundamentally a conservative agenda I'm not afraid of conservatives. I'm only afraid of conservatives when they apply the wrong principles to the wrong people. As for Xers, well we know what's coming, we feel it, we've always gotten the rotten end of the deal and things are only going to get worse.

History suggests that the Xer generations like the nomad generations before them hunkered down, conserve resources, try to minimize debt, protect local communities and lead through the domestic struggles in support of the war. Then that will be the material support that this country needs at this crucial time. The greatest sacrifice will in fact come from the Xer generation. That's what we've expected.

As for the millennials they've been treated like the good smart kids ever since they crawled out of their cradles and history suggests that this will continue, they're the best and the brightest. They're the next civic GI generation and they already know it, they just need to be treated that way. They need to know that the leadership is in command and control, they need to know the principles for which they fight. They need the right Xer leadership in order to take them into battle. I think the millennials will fall perfectly in line as they always have done since their first day of grade school all wearing identical backpacks and uniforms.

Eric Weber: All right John, I want to ask you one last more light hearted question about this subject. If we can so clearly predict cycles of major world events and so on in relation to generations. What should I be investing in so I can make a good bit of money?

John Shook: This is not a time to invest first of all, 2017, 2018 is probably a high unfortunately for the stock market. We're going to lurch into another economic depression in the next five years and it will be global. It just won't be America, sorry for the bad news.

Eric Weber: I was hoping to get a bit of uplift for everybody who's listening, sorry folks you're not going to get that from Dr. Shook. In fairness if he's right it's because the world isn't going to go that way. Here's hoping he's wrong about that.

John Shook: This is a time for people in mid-life to hunker down, try to reduce debt, try to increase savings, make sure that you can get your hands on liquidity through many different channels. This is going to be a cyber war, it may be worse than that. Which means if the ATM machines don't work for a month what are you planning on doing? What are you planning on doing? I would recommend having a plan. This is a time to really gather resources not squander them in

materialistic. We've been materialist enough Xers it's time to get our house in order.

Eric Weber: The thing to invest in it sounds like is that year of food you can buy in Costco and put in your bomb shelter. [crosstalk 00:57:54].

John Shook: I'm not a bomb shelter guy or buy gold guy. There are going to be severe financial strains especially at the local level and smarter heads will get through it just fine.

Eric Weber: As you know John, we want people to know both about the serious side of philosophy and the lighter side which I was hoping to prompt a little bit but we didn't get it. A short segment we've got is called philoso-funnies. We're going to force you to smile for a second and we want to ask you if you've got a favorite joke or funniest fact about philosophy that you can share with our listeners. Did you find one?

John Shook: I have a terrible head for jokes, I enjoy them enormously and then I can never remember them to repeat them.

Eric Weber: I've got some about the end of the world which I figured is what we were going to be talking about so ...

John Shook: I want to hear yours then, that sounds great.

Eric Weber: All right, Anthony are you with me?

Anthony Cashio: People are making Apocalypse jokes like there's no tomorrow.

John Shook: That's awful.

Eric Weber: I didn't say they were good. Now two Mayans are talking to each other. The first Mayan says to the other hey the tequila is ready do you want some? The second Mayan says well I'm working on this calendar but I guess if I don't finish it it won't be the end of the world.

John Shook: Oh dear, the end of the world nice one.

Eric Weber: All right, these aren't apocalyptic but it's about everything going wrong, which I had a sense is where we were going when we were talking with John Shook. There's a couple lines from Steven Right, he said, when everything is coming your way you're in the wrong lane.

Anthony Cashio: If at first you don't succeed sky diving is not for you.

Eric Weber: I intend to live forever, so far so good.

John Shook: Oh dear.

Anthony Cashio: Oh dear is right.

Eric Weber: We need a rim shot.

Anthony Cashio: Last but not least we want to take advantage of the fact that today we have powerful social media that allow two way communication even for programs like radio shows. We want to invite our listeners to send us their thoughts about big questions that we raise on the show. Given that we would love to hear your thoughts John about what question we should ask everyone for our segment called you tell me. Have you got a question you propose we ask our listeners?

John Shook: I sure do, we've just been talking about this country and the values that it stands for and how it's going to have to protect them. I'd be interested in knowing what the audience thinks are our countries most important values when it really comes down to it what do we have to stand up for, what do we have to protect? Readers who might want to buy the book Generations or they can go visit a website to learn more about America's values and the turnings of history, that website is called forthturning.com. It's named after another book by Howe & Strauss called the Fourth Turning.

Eric Weber: Thanks John, listen folks this is the big question. If we've got a major conflict like World War III coming as we heard and these generational forces at work what should we be concerned about, what are our values as Americans? Was Dr. Shook's question. You're about to hear about the various ways in which you can get in touch with us to let us know what you think.

Anthony Cashio: Thanks for listening to Philosophy Bakes Bread food for thought about life and leadership. Your host Dr. Anthony Cashio and Dr. Eric Weber are so grateful to have been joined by Dr. John Shook. We hope you listeners will join us again. Consider sending us your thought about anything you've heard today that you'd like to hear about in the future or about the specific questions we've raised for you.

Eric Weber: Once again you can reach us in a number of ways, we're on twitter @philosophybb which stands for Philosophy Bakes Bread. We're also on Facebook at Philosophy Bakes Bread and check out SOPHIA's Facebook page, that's for the Society of Philosophers in America and the Facebook page if you search for it is Philosophers in America.

Anthony Cashio: You can of course email us at Philosophybakesbread@gmail.com. You can also call us and leave us a short recorded message with a question or a comment that we may be able to play on the show at 859-257-1849 that's 859-257-1849. Join us again next time on Philosophy Bakes Bread food for thought about life and leadership.