Douglas Murray \_ Bret Weinstein's DarkHorse Podcast #5 (192k...

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**SPEAKERS**

Douglas Murray, Bret

**Bret** 00:00

Hey folks, welcome to another episode of The Dark Horse podcast. I'm your host, Brett Weinstein and with me today via remote link is my good friend Douglas Murray. Welcome, Douglas,

**Douglas Murray** 00:11

great to be with you, Brett.

**Bret** 00:12

Well, I'm really glad you agreed to join me for this. And I'm really looking forward to the conversation. I should confess upfront that I have not read your book. But let me tell you something, I did something better. I had you read your book to me. Now in this case, the audio book is read by you. And while that's a lovely option, in many cases, your voice is so resonant and your choice of wording and diction is so precise and careful that having you read it is even more delightful than reading it on the page. So for those of you who enjoy that sort of thing, I would highly recommend the audio version of this book, which Douglas reads, and I would suggest at least go through a few chapters at regular speed. So you can hear just how carefully put together this lovely book is. I also want to say a couple things about this book and maybe set the discussion in a particular direction. In some ways I didn't need this book because my life its trajectory has put me in a circumstance. I'm obviously thoroughly steeped in the various contradictions of intersectionality. And the result of what happens when they're deployed into the world. However, I do think that your book is potentially revolutionary from the point of view of steering our way out of the mess that we find ourselves in, it was really so brilliantly argued, and so thorough, and so careful. I mean, you really bend over backwards to look into these matters and let them indict themselves rather than caricaturing the arguments on the other side, for example. So thank you for writing it for one thing, and it has my strongest recommendation for people to pick it up. Whatever sides of these issues they find themselves on. It is it is well worth us engaging.

**Douglas Murray** 02:21

Well thank you very much for that. I'm delighted you say that and delighted that the audio book comes across Well, I did it myself, but you won't won't be surprised to learn I haven't actually listened to it myself.

**Bret** 02:33

Now, that does not surprise me at all, as you as you've guessed. But yes, it does come across wonderfully. I don't know if other people have this experience. But I find that if I know somebody's voice, well, then, if I'm reading I actually hear their voice. So in some sense, this was a little bit like the experience of reading it. But it was just easier. You know, I could turn it on and relax.

**Douglas Murray** 02:59

But you Yeah, yep, it's been four days in a studio in South London locked up to do it. But he had a, I had a whale of a time doing it, funnily enough, and I'm just delighted that readers have been enjoying it, or listeners have been enjoying it. But and I have to say a number of times in the recording process, I did what we call corpse, there's an Americanism. When you corpse on stage, it's when you just can't stop laughing. And the performance has to stop. And I corpse several times whilst doing the audio version of this book. And I had to explain to the sound engineer. I'm not laughing at my own jokes. I'm laughing at the unbelievable ridiculousness of some of the things I'm having to read out here.

**Bret** 03:41

Yes, that's one of the one of the delights in the book is that you read other people's words as they present their own argument and the glaring contradictions and the total lack of self awareness for some of these people is just utterly evident.

**Douglas Murray** 04:05

Yes, yes. You just have to sort of show it you know, you don't have to tell particularly with it do.

**Bret** 04:11

Yes. And I and I love the approach it it's very easy, because the argument against the intersectional portrayal of the world and the plan is so absurd, there's a temptation to really, you know, really bring the point home and you can oversell it very easily but you've gone the other direction by very carefully stating the case, letting them present it in their own words, and then interpreting what the meaning must be. It's very effective at Well, I know a number of jobs. So I said something about trying to set the the interview in motion. You've done a lot of podcasts and other interviews of late and I don't want to duplicate them. I don't think there's any need to But I think there's something else that we can do here. So interesting in the book, you use a particular analogy in multiple places. And it's one that I was surprised and delighted to find you using because I use the exact analogy. And in fact, the I referenced the same weapon system with respect to the position I've been in, and the the analogy has to do with mind clearing mine as in military minds. And there's this weapon system, which effectively a tank launches a missile that drags a cable behind it over a minefield, the cable hits the ground explodes and detonates all the mines adjacent to it, creating a path through the minefield, right. So some of us for whatever reason, have the ability to endure certain challenges that come back when we engage certain topics. Talking about trans rights, for example, a race has been fatal to careers, and it has caused people to retreat into private life and things like that. But some of us are able to explode these mines and the hope you know, the the reason to use mines as an analogy is that once exploded, it creates the opportunity for others to to come through so I sort of see us as strangely in the same business. And that business is exploding minds that have been placed there to manipulate and corral so that others can more boldly explore the landscape. So anyway, what I'm hoping is that in this discussion, we can utilize that instinct towards mind clearing to explore some of this space in a way that might be productive.

**Douglas Murray** 06:59

I like the sound of it already. Right?

**Bret** 07:01

Awesome. All right. So by the way, awesome is an American expression meaning quite good. Right? Right. Sorry, I will I will attempt to resist making

**Douglas Murray** 07:15

Americanism for could be worse.

**Bret** 07:18

Could be. Right, exactly. All right. So let's see where to begin. There is something curious about the portrayal of you in the media. And then the actual experience of you as a person in informal context, and the experience of reading your writing? Do you consider yourself a conservative?

**Douglas Murray** 07:51

Yes, in lots of ways, I'm not that wild about political labels. And the older I get, the less wild I am about them. My experience is that when you're young or younger, you need labels, because you need to orient yourself in the world and you want to try to orient the world towards yourself and how you should view it and it should view you and the older you get, generally, I think that becomes less important. Yes, I mean, there's lots of things about me that I would regard as being conservative, probably, broadly speaking, I prefer things that are good to remain the same than to change. I don't like change for changes sake. But I suppose that and also these things change across borders, don't they? I mean, lots of things about my type of politics, such as they are wouldn't be conservative, especially in an American context, for instance. So So all of these, all these terms become slightly difficult to use at some level. But yes, I mean, I certainly sound more conservative than I am a leftist. Yeah.

**Bret** 08:56

Interesting. So the description that you give of a conservative somebody who doesn't like change, for changes sake, and you want things that work to stay the same. That sounds to me a little bit like being an adult, not being a conservative.

**Douglas Murray** 09:10

Well, the two maybe the same thing. Well,

**Bret** 09:13

here's the question, though, and this is this is why I raised the topic is I would describe myself as a radical. And I would also if I go further, would say I am a reluctant radical, because I'm terrified of change. The only reason I'm a radical is because I believe radical change is required by our circumstance. But I am frightened by the tendency on the left to see only the upside of proposals and to get caught off guard by the unintended consequences. Yeah. So I've also said that I am a radical who hopes to live in a world so good that I get to be a conservative now My guess is you can translate all these things. They're all effectively rephrasing of the same point. And just as I can say, Well, I want I want to be a conservative, but the world has to be in a position, that change would be a bad idea before that makes sense, in the same way that that hints at the the adult portrayal of conservatism that you paint, when I read your book, or when I have you read your book to me, what I detect, is the heart of a liberal.

**Douglas Murray** 10:38

Ah, yes,

**Bret** 10:40

I think it's very clearly there.

**Douglas Murray** 10:42

The main conservative newspaper here, the Telegraph, in reviewing the madness of crowds, said, you know, actually, it's perfectly blame for this book that Douglas Murray is an old fashioned liberal at heart.

**Bret** 10:54

Well, but I don't even want to say old fashion because, you know, the classical liberal label has become a bit of a shield for I hear a bold, liberal vision, right? Not just a desire for tolerance, but you embrace in this book, and in fact, you make a very powerful argument for you know, for love, you mentioned it several times explicitly in terms of how we should be dealing with each other. And not only do I resonate with the portrayal, but I do find it very much outside of what most people would view, as conservative. So I see you trying to conserve structures, that work. But I see you embracing a vision. And in fact, much of your defense is predicated on the fact that it's not that things are great, but that we are getting better. We have been getting better at them. And that that projectory you'd be foolish to up end it willy nilly.

**Douglas Murray** 12:10

Yes, i think i think that's that's a fair summary of what I think is it on all of the rights issues I'm describing in the book. It's unarguable that they've got better. And it's arguable as well that, that at some stage, each of them, for most of them along the way, quite quite a while, have been opposed by people who didn't want anything much to change. So there's obviously an inherent question there, which is always a question about the the battle that goes on between, you know, progressivism and conservatism, which is, broadly speaking, conservatives fight the next battle, they're about to lose, and, and then then move on and change the ground accordingly. And indeed, progressives change the ground according it. And actually, one of the only ways I think I can understand why our societies tend to be almost 5050 torn between these two things is because it is exactly the difficult question to work out. When is when is it a good time to fundamentally alter an institution? And when, when is staying with what you have a better choice? Or when can a very soft form of that change, be allowed to occur? Yes, I mean, I don't believe in in progress as a teleological force or anything like that. But obviously, it's demonstrable that things get better for certain groups at certain times certain people at certain time. But of course, the corollary of that is that they also can get worse, which is the best I think, in the progressive vision, which, which is always missing is that the assumption is that if, if you get through certain barriers, it's inevitably going to get better. Whereas, whereas many things that I think regressives, and others see as being forces that are holding people back, are doing that, and they're doing it for good reason.

**Bret** 14:00

So I find this so interesting, I agree with what you said about the decreasing utility of labels as you grow up effectively. And I think the reason for it is fairly obvious, which is that as a young person, you may very well sign up for a slate of ideas. And so that label correctly points to a bunch of positions you will likely hold. As you grow more nuanced, your tendency to depart from parts of a slate, even if you embrace other parts goes up. And so the label is less is more noisy with respect to what you actually believe. Yeah. But when I mean, the nice thing about a book like the one you've written here, and your last one, is that it sort of allows a person to Trump around in your mind, right to get to see how your your mental process works. You you sort of provide A window into various quadrants of your thinking. And it's a, it's a pretty interesting tour. What I find so fascinating is that you and I are supposed to be miles apart. I'm a radical and you're more conservative than you are progressive. Yeah, I find we disagree on very little in this exploration. Now why would

**Douglas Murray** 15:24

that be something to do with us or something to do with everyone else? So we should get to the root of that?

**Bret** 15:29

Let's get to the root of that. And let's blow up some minds along the way, if we can. I think one of the reasons is because what we actually differ on has almost nothing to do with values, I would say in terms of what a desirable world would accomplish. Right? I think you and I agree to a great degree, where we differ is on questions of how to get to a better place with respect to those values. We might differ on where we are currently, although, I suspect we don't differ all that much on that question. And we may differ on our sensitivity to the particular hazards of change. But in a sense, I think it's both something to do with you and me, and to do with other people. And the you and me part would be to the extent that you are serious about understanding these issues, rather than posturing, and in an attempt to bring about something that you want, you will discover a world of nuance, and you will recognize it's a complex system, you'll have self skepticism, you know, with the particular toolkit, one ends up able to have this conversation and that the deal breakers if the values don't align, but once they do, the rest is a question of where are we and where might we go? And how good an idea is?

**Douglas Murray** 17:08

Well, if I say that, it's it's that but it's also, I think, we've talked about this before, when we've met is that one of the things that seems to me to be holding back all public conversation, and an awful lot of private conversation now is that is the level of distrust which which may not be unjustified on occasion, but the level of distrust that you can allow yourself to go through a set of ideas with a person of different political views. Because the fear is that that person, when you're at the edge of your own competency, is going to do something nasty on you, you know, so in our case, we might discuss something which you are far more knowledgeable about the me I, we could we could find an awful lot of cases where that could occur, and vice versa. And possibly, but anyhow, the point is, is that is that we could get onto a whole set of things which you know more about the me. And if if I think that when I'm not looking, you're going to smuggle some communism into me, and you know, or vice versa, when we're on some competency of mine, and you're not looking I suddenly like make you do Hitler salutes and things, then, you know, we're not it's not possible to have any of this and, and one of the reasons why all the trips, the traps rather allayed at the moment is that there is some, there does seem to be in society, a genuine belief that when you're not looking the other side are going to turn out to be Nazis, or communists. And you can have almost no discussion in that situation, because nobody wants either of those things. And, and so nothing happens. I'm fairly confident that if we get onto a particular issue of evolutionary biology that you can transmit on that, you know, you're not doing it in order to, you know, reopen the Gulag and send me into it. I, I'm confident of that. So I don't, I don't, I don't mind that discussion. But but that's that's the great problem at the moment. And I don't know how much of it is sincere and how much of it is opportunistic, and how much of it is just deluded. But it is that it is that that fear of what happens in the gaps.

**Bret** 19:26

I totally agree. I have said elsewhere. One of the places Eric quotes me sometimes is bad faith changes everything. And to the extent that you detect bad faith or even fear, bad faith, a whole set of moves that are necessary for nuance are off the table. But one of the videos

**Douglas Murray** 19:48

go ahead. No, I was gonna say I mean, I just noticed this in. I noticed it in television studios all the time. I was in radio studios in public discussions. That that's what's going on. Is this how trap and and and and that's one of the reasons why we're playing all these strange language games at the moment, you know where people want to read into what the meaning of words is other than their avert meaning, you know, the, the search for dog whistles and the identification of special sounds in the stratosphere, we're in all of this. And yeah, that's everywhere. That's our public discussion.

**Bret** 20:22

So I was going to say, my fear in reading your book, something that just lurked for me, every chapter really, was that I had the sense that the argument was so well presented, and so thorough, you know, it's really a very up to date, exploration of this entire landscape and done by somebody. I mean, you know, it's not written as a PhD dissertation. It's written in a very accessible form, but it has the kind of encyclopedic thorough nature of a PhD dissertation. And my concern is that there is one move to disarm it. Okay, go on. Well, it's unfortunately, an uninteresting move, but it will be deployed automatically, which is that this book is so preposterous, that no person who understands the arguments on the liberal side would dare engage, right. And so the point that many arguments, many strategic arguments in the modern landscape come down to this, which is that which you cannot actually defeat on its merits, you have to defeat by driving up the cost of engaging it. Right. So driving up, the cost of engaging with Douglas Murray, is the go to move because Douglas Murray presents a very compelling case, even if you have a radical view of what needs to happen on Earth, you can still hear this book loud and clear, right? I mean, I don't know that somebody who wasn't aware of your reputation as a conservative would necessarily, if this book fell in their lap, and they weren't sort of aware of the argument that it sits in, that they would detect that you're a conservative at all, from what you say here. Yeah, I think that's possible. So I hope that doesn't happen. And I guess I would say maybe that maybe we have to invent a counter move, you know, an honorable one. But I dare you to read this book. If you if you think that this is a simple question. I dare you to read Douglass's book.

**Douglas Murray** 22:25

Yeah, I mean, I'm, there has been some engaged, there's been less than uncIe ation. so far. Famous last words, of course, but less than an ideation than I was fearing. But then that was a case of my last book, too. So I don't know. One possibility is that the people who ought to read it, don't. I was in a radio studio in London the other day with a writer for The main left wing paper here who we were discussing her latest book and my latest book, and it became clear before we went on air that she hadn't actually read my latest book. And at the end of about an hour together on the radio, our interviewer asked if we'd learned anything more about each other in the time we spent together. And she said, No, because I read Douglas, and I know what he thinks. You actually told me you haven't read this book. And I know for a fact that you have not read any of my books before this one. So but I just love that I get No, he can't tell me anything. That's new, because I've not read his stuff. And I know what he thinks,

**Bret** 23:26

right? I know that that is that is the exact object in question. It was

**Douglas Murray** 23:31

so annoyed by where he went to the bookshop the day before, got the staff to get her wretched butt off the trolley at the backwards civic, I bought it with my own cash, my own hard earned cash, and then I read a book. Yeah, that is, by the way, that is something I find I find an awful lot. That I mean, I read a lot of I don't read everything, sadly. But I mean, I read a lot of what, you know, people write that I disagree with. But I too rarely find the favor is returned.

**Bret** 23:58

Yes. And there's a lot of covering for the fact that people I mean, at least in that case, she acknowledged that she hadn't read your book, and she called me off. Yeah. Oh, well, right. So but people will often not even do that. But the amazing thing is that the the argument is its own indictment, right? I mean, and and you know, you you made it very clear. The idea that you know, what Douglas Murray thinks and therefore don't need to discover what he thinks is, it's hermetically sealed.

**Douglas Murray** 24:32

I've got to tell you, by the way, sorry, I was on my mind. I was in Sweden last year and there's a Swedish translation of my last book, The strange death of Europe. And I had this very unnerving experience of being interviewed on Swedish National Radio that wasn't unnerving that was absolutely fine. But they interviewed me for about 10 minutes and then because it's me they need a discussion about me afterwards. And so I'm still sitting in the studio and two Swedes abroad on to have a discussion about me in Swedish By the way, really unnerving because they say really limited Douglas Murray limited, and I just have my fake Swedish should go out anyhow.

**Bret** 25:07

But the point is, it's pretty compelling. And I'm American, so I wouldn't know. But

**Douglas Murray** 25:12

it was a summary anyhow. But the point is, is that I discovered off I sit to this, I said, Do you mind if I leave because I don't really want to sit here listening to an argument about about me in Swedish. Anyhow, I cycled out, but I learned afterwards that apparently the left wing journalists and a journalist quillette were having the discussion and the left wing journalist said, there's nothing in this book that's new. Because I've read and heard all this for years. And and the gentleman Colette said, Have you read the book? And he said, No.

**Bret** 25:45

There's nothing in the book that's new. That's why I didn't read it. I mean, it's like, Look, I I just I'm gonna give you a microphone, and I will let you indict yourself. It's it's the obvious answer. Yeah. So all right, you you raise the strange death of Europe. I will confess upfront I read a good fraction of the strange death of Europe. I did not read the whole thing. It doesn't mean I won't pick it back up. Oh, are you looking askance at me down your nose? Possibly. Oh, that was an askance look okay. askance. All right. You're You're subtle with the facial expression. So I have to

**Douglas Murray** 26:20

go to kill you if we'd been in the same room? Well,

**Bret** 26:23

naturally. But let me ask you a question just to explore further down this particular minefield, you make a very strong case in the strange death of Europe that Europe has succeeded in producing many things of great value that we ought to guard carefully against that which threatens them. Is that fair? Yeah. Yeah. And I think it's also, as much as that must be a controversial statement. At some level, there's no analytical reason, it should be a controversial statement, it's obvious that it's true. You make a very strong case for it and a thorough exploration. But nonetheless, let's just say for a second that it is true. And you discuss in that book, in fact, the focus of the book has a lot to do with immigration and the threat that immigration may pose to the achievements of Europe.

**Douglas Murray** 27:31

If it comes too fast, and yeah, into like

**Bret** 27:35

this. So two questions I want to engage with you. One is the question of too fast is, at some level, it's an empirical question. Is there a border of a rate of immigration that is too fast for something that has existed prior to that wave of immigration to persist through it? Right? Either there is or there isn't, may not be a simple number may be a function. But nonetheless, we could find a rate and we could say above this rate, something happens and below this rate, it doesn't happen. And so maybe we want to stick below that rate. But then the other question is, how, let's say, for example, let's just take the Enlightenment itself as a major European achievement. The enlightenment produces tools of great value, right ways of thinking that are simply disproportionately useful. It's not to say that there are not conceivable alternatives that would achieve the same ends, but in some sense, they are a discovery rather than an invention. Does it matter? It clearly matters to you that those tools are defended and preserved, right, that they not be washed over by us by the view that that you know that European culture is dirty, and therefore, let's wash it clean with other cultures? Does it matter to you who's operating those tools? In other words, if the population of Europe through some normal process simply transitioned to a different population, but the culture that the achievements of the Enlightenment were preserved and honored? Would that matter to you?

**Douglas Murray** 29:38

I would say it wouldn't matter, especially to me if the enlightenment and more was preserved. I mean, in that it's not just about are we still carrying the Enlightenment through this period because Europe is more than just the enlightenment. But yes, I mean if I mean, we know all all societies change over very long periods of time. The Greeks today are not what the Greeks were 2000 years ago. But yes, I mean, it's the three things that I always say always matter in the immigration debate, or none of which are properly discussed. One is speed. One is volume. And third is identity. And, I mean, in a way, the thing that we're links this new book, and the last book is, I want to be able to think aloud about these things, because I think we're incredibly bad at doing so. And being bad at doing so brings a terrible cost. You see, if we, in Europe, for instance, had been able to have reasonable discussions in recent decades about this whole question, we wouldn't have got into the state we were in in 2015, when when, when Germany basically presses the panic button. And, and I think that's the case on a range of these things. And I'm just struck by the fact that, that, you know, after years of what should have been a realization that we weren't having a proper discussion, we continued to not have the discussion. And you know, all that you get time for bits. But I mean, you talk to us about the issue of numbers, for instance, and I thought about this a lot, you know, when I was doing firsthand, traveling around and reporting from the migrant camps in 2015, and after, and, you know, there were some answers. For instance, in the UK, it was pretty much agreed by, by world governments of the last decade that they were trying to get net migration to the UK down to the 10s of 1000s, rather than the hundreds of 1000s. Is there any meaningful difference between having a net migration of 99,000 a year versus 101,000? No. But it was recognized that there was something in that shift from the five to a six figure changes that we did, had definitely, in recent years, been one of the catalysts for an increasing public concern about the whole area. And I think that with all the landmines I'm trying to clear in the madness of crowds is that, for instance, we all know that the term transphobia can be accused of transphobic can do serious damage to somebody's career. But we also know that we should not medically experiment on children. And yet, we are stuck in like in that question that we've had with migration in recent years? Well, we know there are two things going on, we can't, we can't do both. We don't know how to do both. And, and that's what I mean. That's why one of the things I wrote about in the strange death of Europe, which I I'm told by quite a lot of politicians across Europe and elsewhere, they found very useful after the book was out to consider it this way was I said, look, I think you might have heard me say this before, I said, Look, how about considering there are competing virtues, you know, taken Aristotelian approaches. So there are competing virtues here. It's not the case that it's, you know, nice, generous migrants versus European Nazis, that it might be more complex, and that it is more complex, and that specifically in the issue of migration and mass migration, that it was a I said it was a it was a competition between the virtues of justice and the virtue of mercy. And that if you understood that or approached it like that, you could start to approach it from a more reasonable position and one which you were more likely to arrive at some kind of not just answer, but consensus over and I think and that's what I'm trying to do with all of these landmine issues and the madness of crowds with with gay with with with sex with race and with trans is to say, we all know it's all of these things are much more complex than our current public discussion allows us to concede. So what would for instance on the transit what what would it look like to be taking this seriously to be looking in a humane manner at the claims that are being made and to try and to try to hive off the the decent and reasonable humane case from the absolutely batshit crazy no way we're going to do that brigade. And I'm just stunned as I say on issue after issue with this, that, that we're still finding it this hard because it shouldn't be this hard.

**Bret** 34:17

So if I can rephrase it just slightly. It's not that it shouldn't be this hard. It actually isn't this hard. It's being made difficult strategically. And this is very confusing because not everybody on the other side is doing this, but we are all caught up in it. And so you know, you do a very good job in the book for example of parsing the border between queer and gay

**Douglas Murray** 34:46

Hmm, god that was a fun border. I tell you.

**Bret** 34:50

Well, it's a very dangerous border, but a really

**Douglas Murray** 34:52

dangerous border. But yours I was so pleased to finally say it, yeah, it's

**Bret** 34:58

it's it's beautiful. I don't know, if you saw it, it was some time ago, I unleashed a tweet at one point. I survived that, apparently. But the tweet was something like, if we were to eliminate the cue from LGBTQ who would be excluded, right? My thought being that the other letters, yeah, surely cover whatever it is that Q is unless Q is a political ideology? In which case, why is it in this in this set of, of letters? So in any case, the The problem is that if you took and I'm speaking from experience now at evergreen, we did have a pretty high percentage of the population was trans and so I knew quite a number of trans students. I never had an issue people would tell me, you know, I never asked about pronouns. But if somebody wanted me to call them she, they would tell me that, and I would abide by it. And never once did anybody ever asked me to say they just didn't come up. And nor did I find the, the trans folks I was interacting with strident are trying to corral my behavior, they were navigating a relatively difficult puzzle. But in any case, if you took the folks who are not on a political mission, who are really fighting a kind of human rights battle, they could have a perfectly reasonable discussion, I have the sense with those of us who are not in that community who are trying to figure out what to do with a complex issue, how to be compassionate at the same time that we don't disrupt the ability to teach biology, for example. So if you In other words, if you took all the people who are ready to acknowledge that there are trade offs, and that there is nuance, and that they are necessary to navigate this topic, we could have a discussion and it wouldn't necessarily be easy, but it wouldn't be a bloodbath. But the bloodbath arises when you are forced to choose sides between artificially pure perspectives, and you are penalised for evidencing a commitment to nuance.

**Douglas Murray** 37:21

Yes, I am. There are categories of problem by the way, it seems to me that we don't have words for at the moment. And I mean, which we should try to find words for quite fast. I tried to find out, there's not even a German word for the concept I'm about to suggest. But the for instance, there is a type of problem which an interlocutor cannot solve with you. Because to address it in a particular manner, and get to what may well be the truth would be so disturbing to the foundations of their character, that they wouldn't in some way be able to psychologically survive the experience. And an example it's not a perfect one, but would be whatever one's views on abortion matters, it's highly unlikely that, that a woman who has had an abortion and who feels even an ounce of regret about it, is going to be able to be persuaded by some male anti abortion activists that abortion is always wrong, because it's going to open up something bigger than she wants to open up. And so, so the thing is not a perfect example. But it's sort of one of the nearest I can get to, I think that these, this manner of problem actually exists in our society is far more than we recognize. And we've got to find a way of recognizing it. So that and I realized this when I was reading about migration was that the level of which for some people, rightly or wrongly, I think quite a lot of people wrongly, when they heard any criticism of any form of migration, including, you know, mass illegal migration, they thought you were talking about them, or their mother, or their friend, or the nice man who works in, you know, the shop. And, and so they would never get beyond it. And I think that there are, there are within all of these rights movements, elements of that where people are Miss hearing what the critique is, and, and are being led by other people to believe that it is the fundamental attack on their person that they can't survive.

**Bret** 39:30

It's a personal existential threat, it is heard as one and that makes it impossible to have a proper discussion.

**Douglas Murray** 39:37

And I, by the way, I should say, I do recognize, you know, the problem of that for people. I mean, I sense the madness of crowds came out and a few gay friends have said to me, I can't believe you've said that. And I know what it is that they are worried about. They're worried about me asking whether The hardware conclusion of recent years over the gay question is, I mean, somebody actually said to me, that's just so unhelpful at this moment. Yeah. Now my thing was, it may be unhelpful, but you know, for you or for other some other people, but it's, it's also what I think is true and what the evidence is pointing to. And but I mentioned that only to save that to each of the gay friends who said that since this book came out, I've said the same thing, which is, I happen to be gay myself. And I don't know how that comes about. But if I was told tomorrow, there was a gauging, I wouldn't feel anything very much. And if I was told tomorrow that more recent studies have found there was more of a, an issue with, you know, I know, environment at a particular age, I wouldn't feel all that much. But why is that? It's because the gay bit is really not very central, if at all central to my sense of myself, or my worth or place in the world? I don't, I don't find that it's the source of any real sort of meaning for me. But I recognize that some people aren't in that position. And maybe I didn't know they don't have a loving family or, or others. And it is, it is an absolutely foundational thing. And I don't know how one can, I don't, I don't think once you just dismiss that, but at the same time, I don't think that facts can be elasticated to fit around them.

**Bret** 41:35

No, and it's very dangerous to try because later when it's discovered that you have gild the lily, as it were, the whole thing comes toppling down. And it's far worse than if you had just acknowledged the nuance in the first place. I will say this is I think why biologists and in particular evolutionary biologists find themselves in a funny predicament at the moment is that in a sense, there is a toolkit for this. And if I can just give you an anecdote. When I got to graduate school, I was already very much interested in evolutionary biology. But at some point, I found the people who were discussing it with respect to humans, it was a particular group of about 15 or 16 people, some of them quite famous, actually. And I remember as a young graduate student, first year, I walked into my first seminar with these folks. And I may have been four minutes late or something I walked in, in the middle of a discussion and the discussion was this brutally honest exploration of what human beings are up to, in which it was quite clear that the entire room had either explicitly or not agreed that nobody was to be held to account personally for what they acknowledged about human experience in this discussion. In other words, nobody was posturing to portray themselves as particularly altruistic or whatever else. I walked into this room, and I heard this discussion in which there was just only a dispassionate analysis of people by a group who was clearly compassionate. And my thought was, Oh, thank God, you know, and if I had said it out loud, they would have said who, but But in any case, the I think my point is that what you are talking about, is difficult because it is a skill that most people have not been they've not acquired it either through training or through their own discovery, and that if there is hope for taking the lessons of your book, and exporting them so that more people can engage the argument at this level of sophistication than it depends on people becoming comfortable with the tool which means putting aside you know, the the story you tell about your your gay friends, being concerned about you poking at the question of whether or not being gay is a hardware or a software issue. By the way, an analogy I also use and really, really like it's, it's so useful to think it just it's a clean divide, and everybody into it's it. But here's the thing, there won't be a gauging if the data we have already is for real. And you No one can always discover that there's a problem at the level of the data that you're not in a position to know. But assuming that the data is what we think it is. There won't be a gauging. Can there be gay genetic influences? Sure. That could be but there are patterns that are simply inconsistent with a gauging And what's more, I don't think the questions are insurmountable as to whether or not a gay gene could propagate evolutionarily. But it's not a simple question of how they would. But in any case, the to build the protection of homosexuals on the idea that there is simply no environmental influence. And therefore, as you argue in the book, that effectively it would be immoral to hold people responsible for something over which they had no control. That's not a sound foundation. Now, it may be that people have very little choice, especially here, we're gonna step on a big landmine, okay, or I am,

**Douglas Murray** 45:40

you go first, okay.

**Bret** 45:44

At least for males, there is likely to be not very much choice, because the switch will have been flipped very early. So, in any case, we don't need a gay gene in order to fully support the argument for compassion and understanding. But it was a useful crutch before we had enough information to know what was going on and people are understandably reluctant to give it up.

**Douglas Murray** 46:19

Yeah, by the way, that the landmine you just definitely definitely tripped over. This one, the ones that fascinates me because I say to everyone who complains about what I'm saying about the gay bit that when I say, look, maybe it's a bit more, maybe it's a bit more mellifluous, even after a certain stage and we pretend, and that a gay isn't necessarily, as I say, a one way street. Even the people who object to that deeply can see concede I might be onto something in the case of female lesbianism. Right? Well, because it's definitely more, there's definitely more adaptability there than there is among male homosexuals. But, I mean, for instance, I mean, you do sometimes there are some lesbians who have had horrible experiences with men, or had a terrible husband or, or worse, and they end up falling in love with a woman, I do not know of any case with a man who's married to the most horrible woman. And as a result, starts to screw around with men. I just, yeah.

**Bret** 47:30

As a straight guy, it's hard for me to imagine a woman that horrible, but

**Douglas Murray** 47:35

that's right. I believe. That's it. I'm leaving you. I'm going to the local gay bar as a result.

**Bret** 47:40

Yep. But I mean, if you think about it, look, the reason that they should be more flexible on the lesbian side, is staring us in the face. It's just obvious, as you said, it's not that hard. Gay men. Have a really and you know, again, among the many amazing points that you make in this book that I've never heard anybody else say, but you know, we're begging for an exploration. Gay men have a problem producing babies. the mythology of the moment may be that they don't, but you know, Monty Python, correctly nailed the fact that a pair of men don't have a uterus, you know, and therefore, that invites questions about how it's going to be done. Women don't have this problem. In fact, a lesbian couple, has a couple of uteruses. Right? What that means is that there is an opportunity. Your let's just do this straightforwardly, in an evolutionary sense, human babies are extremely expensive to raise. And they are much better raised when people team up, right? So a straight partnership is a team. And its primary objective is the successful raising of babies, the production of resources, the nurturing the delivery of information on how to be a successful human. A single individual has a problem raising a baby, there's just not enough labor, it's too labor intensive. A pair of lesbians has the labor, and the uterus is what they lack is a single cell. Right? All they need is a single cell to trigger a baby and then everything else they've got right now, there are plenty of ways that history can deliver a circumstance in which there aren't enough men around for example, warfare. warfare will eliminate men from the map. Are we really to imagine that evolution will take a bunch of people who are perfectly capable of raising offspring and sideline them from that most fundamentally Darwinian objective, because there aren't enough men around for people to pair off? Oh, no. That's not how it's going to work. Surely people who have everything that's theory to produce offspring of their own will team up and do so, especially if all they need in order to trigger the process is a single cell, they'll find one, right? And so the point is, lesbian couples make perfect evolutionary sense in many circumstances. And that would mean that the ability to facultatively go in that direction at the point that it becomes a viable path forward should be there as a contingency plan built in to women, we can't make the same argument for men. At some point, I will make an argument for the evolutionary nature of male homosexuality, but I'm not ready to deploy it in public just yet.

**Douglas Murray** 50:39

I have to say I do want you to do that bread. All right. Well, you know, I lay down that Chinese slightly in the book, I say, the evolutionary biologists have been ducking this one for a long time now.

**Bret** 50:52

Yes, ducking, notice there's plenty of room under the table here for me to duck if I must. Alright, so where were we, we were talking about the understandable desire amongst people who feel that they have something personal at stake, to avoid certain kinds of exploration, and then others of us find those explorations are necessary, even to the very protection at the focus of that concern. Right, I would say, gay people are far safer. If we explore this carefully, then if we pretend the issue is simpler than it is,

**Douglas Murray** 51:33

yeah, absolutely. I mean, I mean, I give the example of actually, why gay actress who want the gay gene to be discovered should be careful of what they wish for. Because even if they did suddenly, rather unlikely, though, there were a few and I think it is even if I did find such engaging, what people will do about that, we've already had a couple of little glimpses of it, I give the example that Alex Drager gives him Galileo's middle finger of the unbelievable Stampede that occurred when one scientist was rumored to have found a gay gene and sheep and as a result was experimenting on sheep and the gay rights groups were were caught up by by Pete I think for the animal ethics people and and they whipped up the the animal people whipped up the gay people, the go for the guy who allegedly found the gay sheep. And, and he hadn't, but they were so enraged that that this man might have done and might be doing something terrible with it, that might, for instance, be taking homosexuality out of the sheep pool. And, you know, so when we're clearly not going to be any good with dealing with this, if it was what they wanted, either. And that's, that's sort of By the way, I should say, that's sort of why I started with the chapter on gay because I wanted to demonstrate in a way that sort of subliminal thing was I wanted to demonstrate to readers that I could do this with some one minority interest group that I've got any alleged involvement in to say what not alleged, but have any involvement in to say, look, and then we should also be able to do that on these other issues. So it shouldn't be this hard for men and women to talk about each other specifically for men to talk about women. And we're making it much harder than it should be. And, you know, I, I sort of hoped that that comes across. So that's why I've done it that way, let alone then I get under recent trends. But just to say, look, we this is a different manner of approaching these things we have to try to find and it has to take our purported characteristics. It has, we have to lean on them less.

**Bret** 53:45

I think, what you do in the book with gay, actually, I think the book would stand without it. Frankly, I think it's good enough. But I think the fact of watching you explore this in a place where you do have a dog in the fight is it is exactly the necessary thing to demonstrate that the bad faith isn't there. So in other words, this is again, why I say the defense against your book has to involve people not reading, right? Because watching you do this in a place where obviously you have a great deal at stake in how society views gay men. And you know, doing it in a way, frankly, that as I was a little surprised as a straight man that you dealt so carefully and effectively and insightfully with the way a a straight man views male homosexuality, which I write, I'm perfectly accepting. I believe it that male homosexuals are deserving of protection. But there is a way that I find I find the idea of being a gay man. And a bit distant, I can't, I can't relate to it very easily. Now.

**Douglas Murray** 55:03

That's why I say it's it, there is something, there is something that's problematic to us one of the times of the error. I mean, I noticed that a long time ago because there is a certain type of woman who, for instance, with gay men, wants to talk dirty, like they want to talk sex with you. And equally, there's a type of straight man, as a lot of questions. Well, not even just about what it's like to have sex with a guy, but questions about sex in general, like with zoom. And what I realized was, this was a long time ago, this came to me that both parties thought that gay men was some kind of translation device. Yes, I'm not even highly Romar.

**Bret** 55:52

It's not entirely wrong, right.

**Douglas Murray** 55:55

And, and that's why you see, one of the things that I find fascinating about this is actually if you open up the game better bit, you also get to some of the truths about male female relations.

**Bret** 56:06

I loved that exploration, I thought, you slam dunk that

**Douglas Murray** 56:10

was very kind, I know that the women chapter was, in some ways, the most fun bit to write because I knew that, you know, I think I've said before, but I'm all the problems in this book, I sort of boiled down to the fact that we're pretending to know about things we don't know about trans. And we're pretending not to know about things everyone knew till yesterday, relations between the sexes, and the role is complex. It's not as complex as we've been been pretending it is. But, you know, some of the things of recent years, I did feel, for instance, in the, in the post me to a period, that there was something that gay male relations illuminated on the truth of what we weren't able to talk about, in the whole male, female, when a men taking advantage of women question, which was to return the question. So are there occasions when women are taking advantage of men? And because you can do exactly that play in the gay world, you can I sort of carefully laid out. Everybody knows the situation in which if you want to reduce relationships to power dynamics, that the person who the sort of intersection lists would regard as being the powerless figure in a particular dance is actually the one commanding the whole dance. And that the person whose society claims to be the person with unbelievable amount of power, is a pathetic, vulnerable manipulatable person in the wrong or right hands.

**Bret** 57:48

Yeah, it's, it's a, it's a marvelous description, it matches perfectly. What I've seen so many times now, including at evergreen, very personally, where this naked exercise of power is described as, basically a cry of powerless people that is, and always will be unheated, or something like that. And it's, you know, it is one of 1000 ironies in this area. But, but you, you demonstrate exactly the thing that I saw in that seminar, which is the ability to take yourself, not to pretend that your particular way of being in the world isn't who you are. But putting it aside with respect to what you conclude, right? You do a very good job of that in the gay chapter. And then it does allow you to explore the same with to use the same analytical tools with respect to race with respect to trans, which is, in some sense, the hardest of these, my guesses, that's why you left it to last in the book. And then, you know, trans kids being the sort of gold standard of really heart wrenching, difficult issues. But, you know, I said something to Chloe, Valerie the other day, while I had a discussion with her, and I said, you know, the irony at evergreen was that we were watching the breakdown of a college and it was breaking down over the beliefs of a group of people who, more than anything else desperately needed a good college education. And, you know, I can't quite make it. I can't put flesh on the bones enough but imagine standing in a college watching a microcosm of civilization break down when every tool that you should need to solve the issue was like right there rendered in you know, concrete and steel, right? We had the buildings, we had Have the library. In theory, we had a faculty? Why don't we just take the perspective that is being advanced and take it as a premise, put it on the board and then explore if we extrapolate from this? Where does it actually lead and I have the sense that your book is in it is like, I don't want to say it's a textbook, that's not fair to it. But it it is like the curriculum for such a discussion

**Douglas Murray** 1:00:31

that I'd like to think so I'd like to think to make it if it became so but I, I'm terribly conscious of what we're throwing out. I mean, as you know, I write about the Evergreen thing in a couple of pages in the book, because it does seem to me to be one of the most emblematic examples of this breakdown of our, our, our day. And one of the things that fascinates me again, in this is that people who wish to read the world in these rather ugly power, dynamic terms, keep missing out the fact that again, in that sort of situation, the power is exactly the opposite. opposite way around, the students have the power, the authorities have none. And, and there's all sorts of fascinating things that one can trace that to, I think, and you experience it firsthand. But there's an awful lot of cases of the some of the madnesses, I write about in the book where something similar is happening where the grown ups appear to have insignificant chunks lost faith in the process that had got them where they had got to, and they had designed decided at some level to hand over the keys to the kids. And the thing that's so disturbing about that is not just the loss of knowledge, the loss of opportunity, I mean, unbelievable loss of opportunity for those students, and others, but that, but anybody who's been through an education knows that there are always times when you wonder if you could do that. And if you could pull that move, I remember very distinctly for my student days, if I tried to use an insincere tool, will it get me through, and the job partly of education, or not just education being made into a citizen, the person in the world is, is the adults turn around you at that point, say, Sonny, there is no way around this, you have to go through it, you have to just do what you need to do, you need to do the work. And there is no, there's no cheap way through. And I'm just amazed that in subject after subject and discipline, after discipline, and institution after institution, the implication is given and sometimes stated boldly, there are other ways around this, for instance, you don't actually need to do the work, you could call an insincere card on a person in a more senior position. And that will get you to the same place.

**Bret** 1:03:08

Right. And the jaw dropping conclusion from this is that these students are learning. But this is what they are learning is how to get by through this mechanism. They're becoming expert at it. And the question is, what world will we live in? As these tools are refined, they're going to be wielded by people in ever more powerful positions. And I think this is this is one of the harder points to make lots of people say well, yes, okay. The evergreen thing was very dramatic Yale this that. But it's a small number of people. You're exaggerating. I hear that all the time. I think it's hard to compel people at you know, it's like, Well, okay, smallpox is terrible. But, you know, the release was only a few cells. It's only in one part of the country. And it's like, No, no, no, it's smallpox. Do you realize how dangerous this is? Right? So yes, it's a small number of people wielding a tremendous amount of power learning to wield it better teaching others to do it distributing the toolkit through the internet, this could hardly be more dangerous.

**Douglas Murray** 1:04:34

Yeah, I mean, and and the, the Why just read this week about the case of the Seattle school boards, maths teaching curriculum, where, where they decide to do identity politics, stuff in maths, and you just go you know, for those of us who were, who were educated in the humanities, you know, our only hope or is is that at least there are still some hard sciences and This crap isn't going to roll through that. And whenever you see it rolling through that, and you realize that the mathematics is going to be, you know, how is power to power structures rely on bla bla bla, that you think, you know, if you do that the bridges are going to fall down at some point, you know, just nothing is going to be able to stand up. And that's, that's sort of the bit that that's one of the bits that worries me. But by the way, I just wanted to say, one one way through this, or at least one way I started to think about this is how about how about we we try to work out like, the, the unpleasant questions, which everybody knows are legitimate. I get I gave, I gave you one earlier about the male female thing, you know, you know, obvious thing is, is other forms of female power that men don't have. But there's one that struck me in recent days, which is, well, just let me line up, because I'm going to the point I'm going to make is going to be a problem. But if I don't get one more for it, in the in the book, as you know, I raised the issue of what could be regarded as gay privilege, which is a study show that across early life, male and female homosexuals are going to display disproportionately more in their career than their heterosexual counterparts. And there's a number of very interesting reasons why that might be from that rather mundane way, you know, they don't have children tonight, so they can stay in the office later and last, get promotions and so on, to more psychological explanations to do with mimetic issues and child and much more. But you might call this a gay advantage. And if you were interested, and one of the things of the as you know, that the books trying to do is to say, look, this stuff is not just in the humanities, and it's not just in the social sciences department, it has spilled out across the entire working environment of corporate America, or Britain and other other other developed Western economies. And that it's a deranging game, because it's an unwinnable game, but I say, Okay, if you're going to do that game, is this gay privilege? And if you're trying to even things out, which is is what this purports to do, why don't you know, why don't we look at taking some of the money from the gays and giving it to their heterosexual counterparts? Because Hell yeah. That wasn't.

**Douglas Murray** 1:07:24

I knew I knew I'd get you. And that's why I'm writing a check this evening. It's reparations. Yeah, for your suffering for being heterosexual. Right.

**Douglas Murray** 1:07:41

Your untold suffering. But no, but the point I wanted to make then was, okay, so there's loads of advantages that we know that I mean, one of the nice things about you know, people now reading this book is a number of people who've written me, who I and spoke to me who I know and strangers who are saying, I said things like, Oh, my God, this is a conversation my wife and I have ever done. And in a summary, 70 of the conversation, my wife and I have over dinner, my wife said, Mr. McDonald, never say this outside of this room. I like, I like those sort of ones. It's like, you know, anyhow, but there must be forms of piss taking we'd call it in the UK. But let's say just advantage taking to sort of D load language a bit. There must be lots of advantages that do exist in society, and which we pretend down here is one which is just so alarming, but and I'm bound again, trouble even just voicing it, but are there on occasions and this isn't to deny the history of racism, this is not to deny that there are inequalities including racial inequalities and racial injustice that goes on today in America and around the world. But are there situations where there is an advantage to being black? Are there situations where there is an advantage to being a woman or being gay or being trans? Okay? Yes, Yes, there is. Definitely. I had one, incidentally, the other day in a television studio. It's not exactly the worst depression anyone's suffered. But I had a female black model for my model, discussing some of the issues in my new book with me. She was very nice. And she just wouldn't stop talking. And it's possibly because she was brought up in Scotland, Glasgow, and they just don't shut up in Glasgow. And but, but, but the reason I mentioned this is because she just wouldn't stop. And she was and I knew at the moment I saw her, she was on interruptible, absolutely uninterrupted engineering engineer. And she did what she said, the host Piers Morgan, actually, at one point, he said, I just want to get Douglas in because because he hasn't had a chance to speak. And I said, Oh, well, you know, and I tried to come in and she said, No, I think he's spoken a lot. He had to listen to him already. And and I just thought, okay, I can't do anything about this. In this studio. This one There, we have got a black advantage, and you've got a female advantage already. And the reason I mentioned this is because I think that a lot of people know their stuff I think she knew. And I and I definitely knew, and I know the hosts knew. And there's a lot of those things going around in the system, the society. And, and we don't have any of it out ever, because we have all fallen for the social justice interpretation, which says there's only one type of power and it's elderly, white, heterosexual sis normative power. And, and it means that there are these very, I mean, the example I give of my television experiences a very minor one, unimportant but but there are major weaponization of this power happening at major institutions all the time, which everybody can see, and no one can identify.

**Bret** 1:10:55

Beautiful. Now, I want to take your last two points, because I think it gets even more dire if we extrapolate. No doubt, you will have seen this coming. But Alright, so you've got these ideas that create a kind of power, an unacknowledged sort of power that schedules what can be said and who can say it. And you know, who gets to take up space in a conversation or something like that. And you have these ideas that become an explorable, right? So we can study genetics, but it becomes difficult to study genetics anywhere around race, or gender or sexual orientation. And as you say, the bridges will fall down, well, they will, but something worse will happen. Also, you have a competition between those who can figure out how not to succumb to this nonsense, and those who can't. And those who can figure out how not to have their engineering school deranged by these ideas, will have a Superior Engineering School, their bridges will be much less likely to fall down. And so what I'm concerned about as an evolutionist is that what we are producing is a recipe where those people who find a find no reason to engage the question of oppression come out on top, because those who are obsessed with oppression will self hobble. And so I don't want to live in the world on the other end of that where the people who may suffer from a total compassion deficit come out on top because they figured out a way to shut this stuff down. Maybe for the wrong reasons. Even

**Douglas Murray** 1:12:39

I don't I don't know what I'm about to say it was it could be misinterpreted. But, look, I mean, there's a chance that even if the intersection lists and the identity politics, people got what they wanted, the likelihood I mean, I think that they can't ever get what they wanted, for reasons I demonstrated, it all runs against each other as a horrible, great big bloody mess, or can it just keep making, you know, the my favorite Orwell quote when he wasn't spiritual communists in the 40s? And you know, norwell says, It's communist, you know, well, you know, what have you got to show this wretched stuff? And then the communist says, Well, you know, he admits the show trials, he admits the famine and, and so on all well says, you know, what, Spider Man and the communist says, you know, well, you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs. And all well says, Well, where's your omelet? And you know, there is a sort of, even if the intersection is got what they wanted, it would be horrible. But if they did, if they ever actually managed to create the exact perfect system, which allowed everyone to work out their place in the hierarchy all the time, and the working complaints in corporate America was exactly along the lines of what they wanted. They do it just in time for China,

**Bret** 1:13:54

right? It won't hold truck there. And so suddenly, they will be opening the door to a competition from they will be opening the door to a superior competitor that just simply won't be playing this game. Yeah.

**Douglas Murray** 1:14:07

Yeah. And I've very little doubt that that's, that's that's what what happened. The By the way, there's also there's a, there's a sort of more mundane, but more painful, day to day thing that I noticed, which is, I mean, we hear a lot of talk about, you know, disenfranchisement, and much more and but let me give you one example of that is that it seems to me that emerging is that slightly more privileged. If you wanted to play that game slightly more privileged, say, young white men are able to work out the game and are able to adapt, play around it, do the stupid stuff everyone's got to do to perform it, but actually get what they want. And the problem is that less advantaged including less intellectual advantage, less economically advantaged people are going to get stuck in the game. And I see this all the time with what I would you know The careful fish analogy I give. I know, I know exactly the type of rich Western man who has worked out how to how to feminize themselves sufficiently around women to get to shag the women. And I know exactly the type of man who is failing at that, because they just haven't worked out the game. Yeah, and I think there's just it's a horrible, horrible thing. The secret knowledge.

**Bret** 1:15:32

Yeah, secret knowledge, right. And, again, it goes to your point about whether gay men know something that both straight men and straight women are fascinated by and need to know something about. I should tell you, that cuttlefish analogy, you know, is is a fascinating one. It is not the only version of this it's actually a strategy that evolves many times across the animal kingdom, right? It's called a shemale strategy. Maybe it's not called that anymore. Because

**Douglas Murray** 1:16:10

it's very offensive to Bangkok to Bangkok, ladyboys.

**Bret** 1:16:13

Right. But anyway, the the evolutionary dynamics around it are fascinating. But you're right, what we've effectively created is a niche for people who can figure out how to game the system in a particular way. And anytime you set up a system that can be gamed and won by those who do it, that's what you're going to see. And so we are creating a very dangerous environment in which even those who are well intentioned in setting this up do not understand that, okay, you may advance the interests of black people, for example, but which black people are going to end up at advantage in the end of this game? It's going to be the bad actors in that group, not the people who are most deserving. So anyway, we are we are in a terrible pickle in this in this regard? And the question, I guess, I feel like we are in an arms race, right, there is an attempt to take over society and restructure the rules around these very naive syllogisms and the like. And then those of us who are fighting back and blowing up landmines are trying to spread the instinct towards applying nuance and extrapolating carefully and these things. And the question is, which of these two instincts will will win? One thing that is maybe going to act in our favor? Is that the point you make about even if the intersection list could have what they wanted, it would be horrible. I don't even think it's horrible. It's unstable, that this conclusion about, you know, the left eating itself, I do think there's a way that doesn't have to be true, but it is often true.

**Douglas Murray** 1:18:05

Did you see just this morning about the the the Guardian in the UK reports that apparently Greta thunberg has now got it in the neck for being white? The

**Bret** 1:18:16

was a terrible choice on her part.

**Douglas Murray** 1:18:24

Can she get nothing? Right? Yeah, she, the, the greater thunberg has been criticized by the I think it's extreme reaction, or to call the any one of the other sort of got to shut down all the cities now people, and they're all going for access. And she's only got the attention because she's white, and people aren't highlighting enough black women who are also in the belief that we're all going to burn to death in the next 48 hours. And I just, you know, I just, yeah, that's it is always eating itself, always.

**Bret** 1:18:57

So it's always eating itself, because of a basic game theoretic instability, right? These Coalition's function when they're pointed in the same direction, and at the point that they have spoils to divide. They turn on each other. And so one of the things that struck me, I've been saying that for a long time, but in in reading your book, it struck me that the question of trans women that is people born male who transitioned to female competing in women's sports is the first wave of the turning on itself, because at this point, trans is now backing Women Against the wall in a way that will destroy the hard won access to sports that women have enjoyed for the last several decades,

**Douglas Murray** 1:19:53

yeah, as you know, I think that I think the trans one is important because it reveals some of what is actually going on and because it runs fundamentally again, see other groups that it's alleged to have so much in common with. So obviously runs against women runs against men as well. But people are less bothered about that. But it runs against women in a very fundamental way, which I tried to show. And it also runs against gay, which is one which I mean, almost nobody has bothered to point out. And it's been presumed that trans is just the next stage in gay, but actually it runs totally counter to it. So the female tomboy in her teens actually might be told now actually, you are a boy, and we'll make you one. And so I'm very concerned about that. I just by the way, you started to say something there, which led me to remember that, that, of course, when we talk about how to get out of this, I'm very struck that there are, there are several ways what I tried to do in this book, obviously, is to undo the intersectional thing to extent that it can be done to show that it how it's woven to unweave it. And then to redirect people on to I think, and I don't I'm not as you know, I'm not dogmatic about what it is, I think they should do. But don't redirect people on to better paths. And of the various options open to us. Those of us who think that people are wasting their time, it does seem to me that a very important thing must be addressed, which is, okay, let's say we can get lots of people out of this horrible retributive zero sum game, what ought they to be doing? And, and I think that, that we, you know, it's like, we can't get out of this unless that is also in in the frame. And I'm very concerned about this, and I give some hints in the book of what I think might be an answer. I'm concerned about the opportunity cost in this generation of doing this stuff of this intense navel gazing with the idea that if we gaze it at enough, we will, we will sort out the navel. And, but but but in a way, I think one of the faster ways out of this is to say, why don't why don't why don't people for many disciplines, start to talk about what we should be doing instead, you know, because rather like setting up a prize, you know, it's always a good way, if you say, you know, $10 million. If you solve this problem, you know, it's quite a good way to solve a problem is why don't some people just start to work out what actually we would like to be be doing? And now it might be, I'm not a great, I don't think the purpose of life will simply be longevity. And if we all live 250, we've won because you still got all the same problems we've always had. But but they should be attempts, I think. And it's not like I'm not saying we need to fabricate them. I just think we need to identify them accurately or as accurately as we can manage across many disciplines and say, wouldn't it be wonderful it because the thing that the thing that just amazes me at the moment, I've said this before, but everywhere I go the way I travel all the time, I'm in a different country every week and I I speak to so many people from so many different backgrounds and disciplines. And so I think one of the greatest things one thing has just excites me most has made me most optimistic in recent years, has been the fact that a young person anywhere in the world who's smart, and who has access to the internet, is now right at the cusp of the conversations of that time, in a way which never before in human history is possible, you know, one of my great you know, heroes in the 19th century Alexander hats and those people had to leave Russia and go to Paris and Berlin to pick up the latest critical ideas and, and, and it just took such a long time. And it was such a small class of person that was able to do it. Now we're not in that world where as I say, we're in this extraordinary situation where anyone in any country have access to the internet and enough enough, you know, can just can be right at the edge of this. So why would we not be trying to work out what we can do in not that there's not harnessing but like, unleashing that potential.

**Bret** 1:24:04

So I completely agree with you and I think the the irony of attacking not only the Enlightenment, but the idea of enlightenment as if it was a con is the irony is just gargantuan. And you're right we are on the verge almost accidentally of being able to democratize access to all of the highest quality thinking and we're fumbling the ball but you got Do you know what? course I was teaching at the point that evergreen blew up golf Go on now now there's no reason you should I just you mentioned that a break my heart go on. Oh, it's gonna break your heart. I think I was teaching something called hacking human nature. So this was a full time 16 credit course. So I had these students full time that was my only job, their only job and we were studying. Basically the premise of the course was, it's very hard to get the power to change civilization. Nobody knows how to solve that problem. So let's skip it. If we had the power to change civilization, given what we understand about what works, and what doesn't work, what would the rules of a good civilization look like? And the core tool was really the trade offs between competing values. So at the CIO, a, I should tell you, my students were entirely loyal, the students that you saw, were ones I had never met. My students and I were exploring this question. And we were deeply into that exploration at the point that evergreen boiled over, such that at the very end, I had to hold my evaluation conferences, off campus in my backyard, in fact. So I met with every student after, after the fiasco had disrupted our ability to meet on campus. And a number of them asked me, if I had somehow created the entire catastrophe, to illustrate the principles in the program. And that, you know, it wasn't like they thought that it happened, but they couldn't shake the the idea because it fits so perfectly with what we had been studying.

**Douglas Murray** 1:26:18

Very good of you to lay that on. Yeah,

**Bret** 1:26:20

yeah. It was, you know, the ultimate teachable moment, I guess. But, but anyway, I agree with you completely. What we should be doing is agreeing on the values as this conversation started there, you and I seem to agree on at least a great many of the values, maybe all of them? And then the question is, well, if you were serious about those values, you're not going to achieve perfection on any of them. But what would an optimal balance look like? And what rules would stabilize it will retrieve it and stabilize it? It's a fair question. And we really, we ought to be having a broad explanation for it much as Even

**Douglas Murray** 1:26:55

then, and then what ought we to be doing? That that is that is the most enormous gap in our society, is the fact that the adults have become distracted, or lacking in confidence and have decided, as I say, hand over the keys, I mean, Never before have we seen phenomena, where are these not not not for a very long time, where the adults are willing to tell the children what to believe, and then say, we must listen to the children because only the children know. And, you know, for whatever the reasons are, I'm just struck that there is this vacuum, and I wrote about this in my last book a bit more, but it's obviously touches on it in this one, but that this vacuum of purpose and meaning. And I know that that is, it's what it's what everybody hopes for, in their adolescence in particular, that at some point, somebody is going to stand across their lives and say, let me tell you what we're doing. And what you should be doing, and what would be a life that would be worth living. And, and it was in not everyone ever got it. But to have a society in which no one gets it, and no one is expected to get it. And we all just, I know, save up for the next holiday is is not it's not not fit for the enormous luck of the situation we find ourselves in.

**Bret** 1:28:30

I think Unfortunately, the reason that we are in this predicament is that very few people actually reach meaningful adulthood, that the adults are incompetent. And part of why they are turning the reins over to the kids is not only do they not know what to do, they wouldn't have the first clue how to figure it out. And maybe it dovetails with what you were saying about anybody anywhere with the access to the internet can be at the forefront of the most important conversations. The small number of people who have some idea what to do next, are emerging in the strangest quadrants and participating in these conversations. And that as much as this is a very perilous moment for various reasons. It is also it's a horse race. It's It's It's a hopeful moment in the sense that some curious force is causing people to stand up who otherwise might never be heard from and to participate in really bold discussions about well, what is true of our situation, and what what would be a reasonable objective, how do we get there and maybe, I hope, I don't think we can paint a well rendered picture of a good future but I think we can essentially figure out the path toward A good future. And if those of us who are inclined towards that mission who have some of the tools necessary to do it can participate together and not be driven off the map or caricature it into oblivion or whatever it is, that might happen. Maybe this perilous moment could end well. Yes. Hoping. Yeah, well, that didn't sound very convincing Douglas. All right. This has been a marvelous conversation. I've really enjoyed it. Is there anything that you would like to say in closing,

**Douglas Murray** 1:30:37

I'm sitting in front of one of my bookshelves, as you can probably say, and just as you were talking, there was something that when we were talking earlier, there was something I was reminded of, and let me just thank them. It's a it's from Arcadia. And it's, it's, it's later on in the player that I remember. Yeah, Hannah and Valentine are talking and he's talking about relativity and quantum. And he has a great description, he says I just it was on my mind I, he says at one point about the drip of a tap. He says we're betting better at predicting events at the edge of the galaxy, or inside the nucleus of an atom. And whether it will rain on Andy's garden party three Sundays from now, because the problem turns out to be different. We can't even predict the next drip from a dripping tap. When it gets irregular. Each drip sets up the conditions for the next smallest variation blows prediction apart and the weather is unpredictable the same way will always be unpredictable. When you push the numbers through the computer, you can see it on the screen, the future is disorder, a door like this is cracked open five or six times since we got up on our hind legs. It's the best possible time to be alive when almost everything you thought you knew is wrong.

**Bret** 1:31:51

Oh, that's delightful. And it does. It goes to a point I forgot to make at the beginning of the conversation. There is, I think, a single switch that is flipped differently in people who are participating well in this conversation and people who are doing something perhaps more destructive. And it is whether or not there is delight in discovering that you had something wrong, or is there horror, if you delight in discovering that you had something wrong than the room for growth is tremendous. If you recoil, then you don't grow and it's a it's a very sad predicament to be in. So I feel that you are one of these people who smiles when you discover you had something a bit off even if it's embarrassing. And I joined you in that. And I hope others will join us as well.

**Douglas Murray** 1:32:51

Absolutely. It's been enormous pleasure, Brad. Thank you. All right, be well, Douglas.