

## The Madness of Crowds

Douglas Murray

A rich analysis of SJW issues: gay, feminism, race and transgender. Rationality versus Emotion

Douglas Murray addresses four of the categorizations of humanity expounded by progressives/cultural Marxists that have defined our societies over the past few decades: gays, feminism, race and transgender. The result, as Murray says in his opening paragraph is:

"We are going through a great crowd derangement. In public and in private, both online and off, people are behaving in ways that are increasingly irrational, feverish, herd-like and simply unpleasant. The daily news cycle is filled with the consequences. Yet while we see the symptoms everywhere, we do not see the causes."

Murray is a rational man, an Enlightenment man. He points out the absurdities and internal contradictions in the arguments. At the same time he points out the very reasons why his logical approach is bound to fail. The winning arguments are emotional. While presenting themselves as rational, they are at the core profoundly irrational.

Progressivism, being "woke," or being a cultural Marxist is a religion to which adherents cling as doggedly as they once did to Christianity and now due to Islam. Murray writes:

"The explanations for our existence that used to be provided by religion went first, falling away from the nineteenth century onwards. Then over the last century the secular hopes held out by all political ideologies began to follow in religion's wake. In the latter part of the twentieth century we entered the postmodern era. An era which defined itself, and was defined, by its suspicion towards all grand narratives. However, as all schoolchildren learn, nature abhors a vacuum, and into the postmodern vacuum new ideas began to creep, with the intention of providing explanations and meanings of their own."

That is it in a nutshell. People need some kind of religion to give meaning to their lives. In the absence of a spiritual religion, they have invented the secular religion of social justice. They defend their positions with a fanaticism, an intolerant hatred characteristic of religion rather than the balanced dialog of scientific inquiry.

The common theme concerning gays, women, racial minorities and transsexuals is that members of these groups have been treated unfairly, systematically held back by society. The term "social justice" encapsulates the idea that all members of society are entitled to experience equal outcomes. And, of course, they do not. Equality is never observed, and cannot reasonably be achieved in any sphere. SJWs will never want for causes to champion.

Every virulent religion needs its Satan, golem, or similar object of hatred. SJWs demonize the affluent straight white male as the epitome of everything that is wrong with society. Murray fails to measure up only on the "straight" criterion. Looking from the inside, he can assess the absurdity of the gay arguments. There are strong parallels in the other three.

The book is extraordinarily rich in examples. Murray has done his homework, and he has an extremely good memory for the silly things that have taken place within his lifetime. Some of his recurrent themes are:

1. The incredible swiftness with which standards change. He cites gay marriage as something that went from being beyond the pale to beyond question in the course of a decade or so. The acceptance of transsexuals was similarly rapid: Caitlin Jenner appeared on the scene about 2013.
2. The fierce arguments with regard to nature versus nurture, which Murray calls hardware versus software. There are strong political reasons to argue that gays are born that way – it is in no way a lifestyle choice. On the other

hand, transsexuals decide that they are born in the wrong body. It is forbidden for a white person such as Rachel Dolezal to call herself black, but for a black to call themselves white is no problem.

3. Politics is related to the nature versus nurture argument. Peter Thiel is not allowed to be gay because he is conservative. Ditto Kanye West and blackness.
4. The Marxist notion of dialectic. Whereas internal contradictions would doom a rational argument, Marxism treats them as a part of the process of working toward the truth. Murray has quite a lengthy section on the extremely intelligent irrationality of Michael Foucault, whom he says is the most cited social scientist of all time, whose most obvious genius was in the ability to write things in such an obscure way that his many contradictions were not glaringly obvious.
5. The closer we come to the expressed goals of non-discrimination, the more virulent the arguments become. As Daniel Patrick Moynihan observed decades ago, "claims of human rights violations happen in exactly inverse proportion to the numbers of human rights violations in a country."
6. The impersonality of social media exacerbates the problem. Murray has a wonderful essay on the quality of forgiveness. The need to be able to, for instance, forgive Justin Trudeau for his blackface incident or Donald Trump for something indiscreet he might have said to Billy Bush in an interview years ago. He observes that it is all political. A person with the right politics can be forgiven for inexcusable behavior. A person with the wrong politics receives no mercy.

These changing currents mean that people can be put on the wrong side of history very quickly. The Internet has a long memory. At the time TV host Joy Reid opposed gay marriage, she was in a majority. The majority shifted but her soundbites had been captured for posterity. It took a lot of explaining. She is lucky to still have a broadcasting job; being a black woman no doubt helps. Likewise, to the delight of conservatives, Justin Trudeau's blackface for the Banana Boat song. Second wave feminists who argue that male to female transsexuals should not be allowed to compete in women's sports are in the same boat.

People are different. Murray attempts to deflect criticism by assuming the pose of a reporter, describing what has happened to other people. For instance:

"Research into IQ and genetics is among much competition probably the most dangerous and cordoned-off subject of all. When Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein published [[ASIN:0684824299 The Bell Curve]] in 1994 they were believed to be setting off precisely this landmine. Even though few of their critics read the book, criticisms of its investigation into the hereditary aspect of genetics were widely attacked. A few publications realized that the subject was of such significance that it had to at least be discussed. But in the main the reaction to The Bell Curve was to try to shut it and its author down ('author' because Herrnstein had the misfortune, or luck, to die shortly before the book's publication). Almost all publications that reviewed the book noted that its findings were 'explosive'. But most critics decided to do a very specific job with those explosive findings. That was to cover them with as much soil as could be found and then pat it down as tightly as possible. One extreme, but not uncommon, piece about the book by a fellow academic was headlined 'Academic Nazism' and claimed that the book was 'A vehicle of Nazi propaganda, wrapped in a cover of pseudoscientific respectability, an academic version of Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf'. Not just any old Mein Kampf, but Adolf Hitler's one.

"The criticism of The Bell Curve demonstrated why almost nobody wanted to go over the evidence that suggests that intelligence test scores vary with ethnic group and that just as some groups score higher on intelligence tests, others must score lower. This of course is not to say that everybody in such groups does. As Murray and Herrnstein were at pains to point out repeatedly, the differences within racial groups were larger than the differences between them. Yet those who have surveyed the academic literature on IQ differentials across racial groups appreciate better than anyone that the literature in the area is – as Jordan Peterson has said – 'an ethical nightmare'. And it was a nightmare which almost everybody seemed very keen to steer clear of."

Motherhood is atopic feminists find extraordinarily difficult to grapple with. Women should be equal to men, but only women can bear children. Raising children properly demands most of a woman's time and energy. Evolutionary psychologists will go even further. Sarah Blaffer Hrdy writes in [\[\[ASIN:0674060326 Mothers and Others\]\]](#) that a major evolutionary advantage of the human species was that a mother was able to enlist others in the tribe – grandmothers, aunts, older daughters – to help raise her children. Tecumseh Fitch repeats the theme, emphasizing the importance of spoken language, in [\[\[ASIN:052167736X The Evolution of Language\]\]](#).

As a result of feminism, not only did these alloparents disappear, but mothers themselves feel obliged to divide time between work and children. The disappearance of ethnic homogeneity in Western societies means that parents themselves may be of different ethnic backgrounds, whatever alloparents there are are probably of yet different ethnicity, and the schools that socialize the children devalue their ethnic background, discourage them from having children, and strongly discourage propagating their culture. The issues that occupy Murray are strongly eroding all Western societies.

Murray's focus is on the individual – struggles among individuals for recognition and power within society. He does not address the implications of all of the struggles on society as a whole. There can be no doubt that each of the social movements he discusses – the normalization of gays, women's equality in society in the workplace, and gender fluidity represented by transsexuals – impacts the society's ability to reproduce itself. Gays, feminists and transsexuals will in no way carry on the society. They will have very few children, a significantly smaller percentage of which will be their biological children, and they will not raise them with anything like traditional values. Perversely, it is the more intelligent members of society who are attracted to these lifestyles. See [\[\[ASIN:B00DNL37X0\]\] The Intelligence Paradox: Why the Intelligent Choice Isn't Always the Smart One](#). As Edward Dutton and Michael Woodley of Menie write in [\[\[ASIN:B07M8NG2CN At Our Wits End - Why We're Becoming Less Intelligent and What it Means for the Future\]\]](#), the result is that society is getting dumber. Quickly.

Give Murray credit for being brave enough to challenge political correctness to the degree that he does. He praises Stephen Pinker, whose 2002 book [\[\[ASIN:0142003344 The Blank Slate\]\]](#) ventured as close to the truth as a Harvard intellectual can get without being stoned to death. However, people who know Murray have told me that even he is not brave enough to venture into any deep discussion of human biodiversity and its implications for intelligence. It is for you, the reader, to decide whether Murray is being cowardly or merely displaying common sense. I fear that in today's environment the latter is closer to the truth, and we have to be grateful for the courage he has displayed in publishing this book. It is without a doubt a five-star effort.

I offer Murray's table of contents as the first comment below.

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