



ADAM SMITH

PANMURE
HOUSE

HATE, WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? A SMITHIAN PERSPECTIVE

BY ADAM DIXON AND DANIEL B. KLEIN

Dan Klein is interviewed by Adam Dixon, on hate, hate speech laws, hate crime laws, and Adam Smith.

Adam Dixon, the Adam Smith Chair at Panmure House and the host of the New Enlightenment podcast, invited on Dan Klein, an economist at George Mason University.

Klein explains how hate belongs to Adam Smith's system of moral sentiments. Disliking and fervent disliking—hate—are essential. But also essential is that such 'unsocial' passions be moderated more than their positive counterparts, liking and love. This truth, Klein suggests, is being weaponised with hate speech laws and hate crime laws. He draws on the legal philosopher Heidi Hurd to contend that such laws are anti-liberal.

What follows is an edited transcript of the podcast published by Panmure House on 12 July 2024. Klein has supplemented the transcript with a figure that taxonomises sentiments.

Links to the Dixon-Klein podcast:

[Panmure House](#) [Apple](#) [Spotify](#)
[YouTube](#)

Adam Dixon

When we met at Panmure House in June, you mentioned that you had been thinking a lot about hate. Hate speech. And whether hate is hateworthy.

And I said that's fascinating, not least because in Scotland there was a recent hate crimes bill that came into force. The likes of J.K. Rowling were involved, saying to the police, come and arrest me.

I was a bit afraid to talk about the topic and I remember saying, "I don't want to get cancelled, Dan, not just yet."

But part of what the Enlightenment was about was having difficult conversations, and so even though this is a sensitive topic it's still worth having a conversation.

What is hate? What's the landscape? What's going on in the world today?

Dan Klein

There is a rise in hate crime laws and legislation, by the government. And in hate speech laws.

There is a distinction to be made between hate speech laws and hate crime laws. They're both on the rise and both being utilised in unsettling ways. What's the distinction?

Hate *speech* laws are about criminalising certain forms of speech, basically making certain forms of speech acts of crime, criminal acts.

Hate *crime* laws are about *enhanced penalties* for regular crimes, like, say, I smash somebody's window and it's determined that part of my motivation was racial bias or sexual bias or gender bias. And so there are specific enhancements to the penalties, attaching to what are normal acts of crime.

Those are both on the rise. And I think it's a matter of great concern. But I think it's also great that we talk about the sentiment of hate in a more philosophical way. Apart from the politics, just to domesticate the concept, rather than let it be used as an alarmist, scared-to-touch matter.

I think hate is very much part of any complete system of sentiments and system of virtues. And Adam Smith certainly talked about it. It fits into schemes in his system.

Adam Dixon

To reiterate what you said, there is more hate crime legislation that has been enacted across North America and Europe. It's not new necessarily. A lot of, at least hate crime laws, have been around for a couple of decades in some places. And then there's hate speech, which is the more recent iteration.

Dan Klein

There is a sense, though, in which even three decades ago still makes it new. If we think about the longer tradition of jurisprudence and law and

political theory, it is a new thing. And I do think we should keep that in mind, given that we're talking about Adam Smith and his time.

Adam Dixon

What is hate at a basic philosophical level?

Dan Klein

Hate is a sentiment. It fits into certain categories and is counterpart to other sentiments. There is liking and disliking. Fervent liking we call love. Fervent disliking, hate.

What are controversial conversations? It's when sentiments conflict, when my sentiment conflicts with your sentiment. And that's about my feeling that certain things are like-worthy or lovable while you think those things are hate-worthy. It's a natural part of modern life. Life in general.

Hate is fervent disliking. I hate to be caught in the rain. The things I hate are, in my mind, detrimental to the good of the whole. Or good of my whole, good of myself. But I'm part of the larger whole and so that's also detrimental to the whole.

It's natural and proper and necessary that certain things are regarded as hate-worthy. Let me say, some things are love worthy and we should love them. And other things are hate-worthy, and *we should hate them*.

Let me quote Edmund Burke on this:

“They will never love where they ought to love, who do not hate where they ought to hate.” ([Burke 1795](#))

So, if you love certain things, you should *dislike things that harm those things or reduce those things*, that you love. And a fervent dislike is hate. There's no reason to never feel that your disliking should be fervent. I mean, there's no broad theoretical reason.

Now, that said, without question, these, love and hate, the handling and expressing of these two sides of sentiment, *are not symmetric*. Smith expounded on this. The two sets of sentiments here:

Smith distinguished as social passions those where the person feeling the passion has a positive feeling of like or loving towards someone else. In this set, you could think of liking, loving, affection, gratitude, kindness, generosity, compassion. It is a social passion not only because the two people easily find each other agreeable, but someone else finds that they the two of them are agreeable and easily enters into sympathy with both. It is very social from the spectator's point of view.

An *unsocial* passion, his term for the other set, includes disliking, hate, resentment, indignation, anger, revenge, malice, envy. Here, the person feeling the sentiment is at odds with the interests of the other person who is the object of the unsocial passion. And this conflict between interests, between the two persons, makes the situation awkward for the spectator,

makes it therefore an unsocial passion. An impolite passion to show in a public setting.

Adam Dixon

I'm going to ask a postmodern question: Is hate and other unsocial passions, are they a universal trait of the human experience? Or is hate something that is socially constructed and culturally variant?

Dan Klein

In the generalised form, it is absolutely universal. And if any of the promulgators of hate crime laws that deny that, they are either being deceptive or they lack self-understanding. These people hate too. If there is at least one thing that the anti-hate people hate, I suppose it is hate and haters.

They might deny that they have some fervent dislike for anything, but I find it hard to believe. Do you think they perhaps hate Putin or hate Trump or hate something else? So, I think it's a universal to answer your question. Now, what object one hates, *that* is highly cultural.

Adam Dixon

What it comes down to is it is okay to hate, but it is *what you hate is what is at issue*.

Dan Klein

Yes, but you cannot say simply, "It's okay to hate." Adam Smith does emphasise this asymmetry, where you must tamp down unsocial passions more than you tamp down social passions. There is an asymmetry and there is a responsibility with hating. It is a troublesome thing, but that does not mean you should try to eradicate all hate or stop all hate. That is a nonsensical aim.

Adam Dixon

That, I think, gets at the response of those who are uncomfortable with hate speech or hate crimes legislation, that they're accused of not recognising the asymmetry that some hate is bad and we should reduce it. They're saying, "Well, how do you define what is hate? What should be hated?" How do we manage that?

Dan Klein

Yes, people who are objecting to these laws have a good point where they express a concern about what is going to be tagged as hate crime/hate speech and that that can be manipulated, even weaponised.

Adam Dixon

How does Adam Smith deal with hate in this asymmetry of passions. In other words, is all hate hateworthy?

Dan Klein

Here is an elaboration from Smith about the unsocial passions. He says:

“[With the unsocial passions,] our sympathy is divided between the person who feels them [the unsocial passions], and the person who is the object of them. The interests of these two are directly opposite. What our sympathy with the person who feels them would prompt us to wish for, our fellow feeling with the other would lead us to fear.” (Smith TMS, p. 34)

That is the conflict. That is the division of sympathy. And that is the basis for the broad distinction between unsocial and social.

Adam Dixon

When people today think of *passions* in today’s parlance, they think of something erotic. But passions, as it was used in 18th century philosophical writings, means feelings.

Dan Klein

Yes. Passion has a bit more of an active connotation, whereas emotion has a bit more of a passive connotation.

FIG. 15.1: MORAL SENTIMENTS, PASSIVE AND ACTIVE

| | MORAL SENTIMENTS | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| | <i>passive</i> | <i>active</i> | |
| | EMOTIONS | PASSIONS Passions tend to be reciprocating: | |
| | | | |
| <i>Positive</i> | liking, love | gratitude | recompensing, remunerating, reward |
| <i>Negative</i> | disliking, hatred | resentment | retaliating, redressing, rectifying |

[Link](#) for figure

There is no necessarily a hard line there. What Smith is saying here is that when someone feels an unsocial passion—such as hatred towards someone else who is then the object of that hatred—the spectator has a division of sympathy between the person feeling the passion and the object of the passion, because nobody likes being hated. With hatred

comes blame. You can quote Smith saying that we hate to be blamed, and we hate to think of ourselves as blameworthy.

As such, the interests are directly at odds with unsocial passions. This is one reason to tamp them down, because somebody is more justified than the other. It is not a lovefest, a party, a love-in. There is a conflict. You [the spectator] need to enter situations and discern whether the hatred is justified or whether the actions, which are hated by the other, are justified.

And, next, this conflict can create trouble and escalation. There could be damages or injury between the two parties. And in Smith, losses loom larger than gains. So, any of these downsides of unsocial passions—whether it's (1) just feeling blamed and being hurt by that, (2) the division of sympathies, or (3) escalation that leads to injury—always remember that losses loom larger than gains. You must be especially careful on that side, the downside. For all these reasons, Smith is saying we should check our unsocial passions and our expressing of them.

It is one thing to think in your study and think about whether certain ideas or doctrines or thinkers are bad and deserving of intense dislike. But it is another thing to go around being intemperate in your expressing of such dislike. Smith does say there is a big asymmetry.

I think that that is what the hate crime/hate speech laws play upon. They are taking advantage of that truth. It is a politicised move. That is, it is actually putting their finger on the scale in a certain way, which can then be used for certain political purposes and certain cultural agendas. I do not think it is proper.

Adam Dixon

When he says we should tamp down, that's on that personal level. The subtitle of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which is *An ESSAY towards an Analysis of the Principles by which Men naturally judge concerning Conduct and Character, first of their Neighbours, and afterwards of themselves*. This is a big difference between that text and the *Wealth of Nations*, which is much more macro in focus.

But Smith is writing at a time when he and his contemporaries talked and thought about the civilised gentleman, the civilised person. They considered their own situation, how, at a personal level, virtue is inculcated in individuals.

How does he perceive this instruction becoming something that individuals from the lowest classes all the way up are reflecting on? How do we move from the theory, if you like, to the practice of tamping down on one's hate?

Dan Klein

The answer goes for all the cultivation of proper sentiment, not just the management of hate. It is the broad answer of culture, organic community,

bottom up, civil life, good examples, exemplars, the whole sociology of judgment. That is the big cultural question.

I think a lot of us feel, and I certainly do, that our culture is in trouble, to put it mildly. We would like to figure out a way to make it better or pick up some better place where we had been. I do not think there is any easy way to do that.

Adam Dixon

There is the broader kind of liberal who wants to avoid regulation, but there still needs to be social regulation, if you like, that tamps down on things. We do not want people to be discriminated against because of their race or their gender or other immutable characteristics. That, for us, is not acceptable. If we could avoid having to codify that and police that through the state, we still need some other mechanism, whether it is through the culture or civic education.

Dan Klein

In treating the micro social interaction, Smith speaks repeatedly about someone being subjected to unsocial passions between two *other* people, and that an almost immediate response is to feel *dislike towards the one expressing the unsocial passion*. He suggests that often hatred, resentment, indignation arouses our dislike, not of the object of that person's hatred, *but of that person*.

That is part of the organic nature of morals. You might say a spontaneous order of morals. So, to some extent, excessive hatred or other unsocial passions is a self-correcting problem, organically, in natural human groups.

I am not claiming that it works perfectly or that false modes of thinking, false philosophies cannot sustain wrongheaded passions. But there is some natural correction mechanism here.

Adam Dixon

Within like-minded groups though?

Dan Klein

Yes. But another thing about conflict and any escalation to injury is that nobody really wins, like the Hatfields and the McCoys—other than those liking the fight and liking the hate, which could be a problem in and of itself. It is not like they gain anything by damaging the person that they feel this way about. There is a certain tendency to resolve conflicts because of mutual damage.

Adam Dixon

But still, if we just look at the world today, military conflicts, ethnic tensions in various parts of the world that, something is not right. It is not as if what is happening now is different than any other period in history.

So, is conflict avoidance an inherent trait, or is it something else that is a function of civilisation?

Dan Klein

It gets into whole political issues. Are we talking about non-political groups within a stable polity, where there is a political superior? I do think that that tends to go well between the jural inferiors, between you and your neighbours, if you have a half-decent government.

Other wars are wars *between governments*, and they seem to have a certain knack for sustaining those sometimes-complex interests.

Adam Dixon

You mentioned the increase in hate crime and hate speech legislation. But what are the politics behind that? You mentioned that these new laws are not necessarily about protecting particular groups, but about pushing forward a particular perspective, a particular view.

Dan Klein

Yes, I feel that they are a stratagem in that sense. My sentiments and opinions on this might arouse hatred among certain readers.

Before we discuss that further I would like consider Heidi Hurd's work on these types of laws. She dealt with hate legislation in an article from 2001 before most of these hate speech laws became fashionable.

The title of her paper is bold: "*Why Liberals Should Hate 'Hate Crime Legislation'*."

She explains that there is the *criminal act* and then there is the *criminal mind*. The criminal act is called *actus rea*, like wrong act, versus *mens rea*, wrong mind. That is an important distinction.

If I run someone down with my car, in one case it is murder and in one case it is only manslaughter. If I accidentally run someone down with my car, I do not have *mens rea*, a criminal mind, whereas murder implies criminal mind. And criminal mind should and does affect penalties.

The hate crime, enhanced penalty, idea is tacking on a special sort of *mens rea*. One big point Hurd makes is, why should this have a special penalty? Why should sexism be more heavily punished than generalised misanthropy? Or whatever motive, whatever sentiment?

Suppose I smashed the guy's window because he stole my girlfriend. So, you could say jealousy. Why should sexism be more penalised than jealousy?

Maybe that challenge has been addressed somewhere and maybe it's compelling, but I don't immediately see why it would be compelling. And I don't think people think this deeply about it.

Basically, what hate-crime law is doing by enhancing penalties for certain imputed motivations is discounting other motives. I mean, it's creating an inequality between *this* wrong mind and *that* wrong mind. And it's just a question of, why?

Adam Dixon

To give an example. First-degree murder is premeditated. There was an act of thought, “I’m going to kill this person” because of jealousy, or, “I’m gonna kill this person” because of some passion. Second-degree murder, by contrast, is you decided to kill that person, but it was not premeditated, and it was for other split-second reasons. There are further degradations, such as manslaughter where you got in a fight with somebody and that person died, but it was not your intention.

But what you are saying, at least, is that the category of first-degree murder, where it is premeditated, should be sufficient to encompass the various forms of hate that one may have in the decision to commit that particular crime. That would include killing someone because that person is gay, for example, or killing someone because that person is of some other ethnic minority group. Enhanced penalty is unnecessary because it is already incorporated in that first-degree murder classification.

Dan Klein

Yes, that's right. It is like almost giving a special privilege to this penalising.

Let me mention her second major point. And that's that racism, sexism, and the things which are associated with hate laws, she feels are more like *character traits* or *general dispositions* a person has, rather than a momentary or specific situational thing such as jealousy over some specific incident. If someone's a racist, it's not like he was racist just the day he broke the guy's window, right?

And Hurd says the idea that the law should be out to punish certain character traits is very dangerous and troublesome, very anti-liberal, because, we are going to differ in our character.

First of all, it's not clear how much you can choose your character traits. Some people might be jealous or envious or misanthropic by nature, and it may not be something they can very well correct.

Whereas, suppressing jealousy and feelings of anger in the moment is something which you can learn to control. That's what Smith called self-command. And so, the distinction between situational impulse versus broader character trait, she makes that a big point, and she says it's very unliberal to use the law to try to socially engineer, punish and reward, different kinds of character traits.

Liberal society is about us cultivating through a bottom-up organic way different points of view, different worldviews, different associated character traits and sets of virtues that go with them. That is what the whole liberal proposition is about.

Then of course, there's just the fear—which gets us to this final topic of how this use of law and politics could be abused. And she ends her piece on this warning. She says—the last sentence of the article—:

'[T]he burden remains on those who would operate on people's personalities with the state's most powerful instrument to assure us that they will excise only what is diseased.' (Hurd 2001, p. 232)

In other words, she is worried about using this power against character traits to punish political opponents, to weaponise and, basically privilege a certain cultural or political point of view.

Adam Dixon

To play devil's advocate. Hurd was writing in the early 2000s. I remember the [Matthew Shepard tragedy](#), as I grew up in the Denver metro area in Colorado. The Matthew Shepard murder was in Wyoming, not far away. Shepard was a young gay man who was tortured and left to die on a fence post. I remember the case vividly. It made national news and international news.

The case spurred a lot of concern about what we as a country, as a society should do to tamp down on this kind of crime. How do you separate out the murder where the guy kills the other man because he's jealous that he stole his girlfriend, versus two people who took Matthew Shepard and tortured him and tied him up to a fence post in the outskirts of Laramie, Wyoming for him to die, supposedly because of his sexuality?¹

It seems like we need a first-degree murder *plus*. One can accept Hurd's argument, but then you look at those cases, and you think viscerally that maybe we need more. What is the argument then against that?

Dan Klein

I'm a father of a daughter and I always had this horrible nightmare about my daughter being abducted while she is out running and being enslaved and tortured. I would want to crush the person that did that. I have all the same revulsion to someone stalking and imprisoning someone and then torturing him or her. But I do not see why, say, [Jeffrey Dahmer](#), or someone who abducts someone should receive enhanced penalties beyond the crimes they have committed.

It is one thing to be Jeffrey Dahmer, but if you're anti-gay, then you're really a bad person. This leads to having to determine that it wasn't a generalised misanthropy, sadism, whatever. Then you must get into what was going through the guy's mind. Was he merely a misanthrope and a sadist or was he actually also an anti-gay person?

¹ The Matthew Shepard case draws attention to the challenges of enhanced penalties. Although the case initially was portrayed as a hate crime due to Shepard's sexuality, later investigations have challenged this account. See, <https://www.advocate.com/print-issue/current-issue/2013/09/13/have-we-got-matthew-shepard-all-wrong>

Smith says that when motives and sentiments themselves become criminal, he says “every court of judicature would become a real inquisition” (TMS, p. 105). And like the Spanish inquisition, you get forced confessions, and it does not work out very well.

There are other ways to decry and denounce and socially ostracise particular problems like that. It is a sicko thing, obviously, and people are and ought to be accustomed to hearing, “You shouldn't treat fellow creatures of God in a bad way.” And, yes even fellow creatures who have different worldviews or sexual practices or colours or whatever.

Adam Dixon

Because it's too difficult from a legal perspective to get inside the mind of somebody and adjudicate those character traits and to adjudicate those motivations.

Dan Klein (42:41)

At issue, moreover, is what is driving the proliferation of these laws. I feel that it is a stratagem to silence certain forms of speech, stuff that then gets deemed or associated with racism or bigotry or prejudice of some kind—redneckism, Trumpism, MAGA, populism, populist, anti-immigrant, racist. It all gets wrapped up and there is danger of using this stuff to criminalise political opposition, political dissent.

You might say, I'm overstating things, “They're not putting people in prison for this.”

I do believe that it can intimidate people. *The process is the punishment.* They do not have to actually end up locking the guy in jail or fining him or de-banking him. It is just the intimidation, the chilling, the process, the being questioned, the police showing up at your door, being questioned about your media content.

I'm an academic in the United States. I see this. I cannot say that I have myself been a target of this, but I know many people who have, who say anything, and it gets dressed up and thrown around or just lied about in these terms. Then there are petitions and witch hunts.

The courts and the procedures can be very kangarooish. The lawmakers might be counting on kangaroo courts to let this go through or to actually punish the person.

This is a matter of real concern, to put it mildly, and it is part of a broad censorship agenda. Just like the mis-, mal-, disinformation nonsense, which I see as a censorship stratagem.

Adam Dixon

I'm glad you mentioned academia because I do see a certain level of self-censorship happening on the part of academics. And it's not simply exclusive to those that might have notionally conservative views. I think there's even those on the left that are afraid of speaking out with their views. Or for fear of a right-wing mob attacking them. So, it's not

necessarily that it's partisan. I think there's a lot of bipartisan censorship and intimidation happening, unfortunately.

What does this say about, in terms of hate speech laws and that general stratagem as you say, what explains that? Where is it coming from? What does it say about liberalism today?

Dan Klein

Liberalism, in the Smithian sense, is extremely hurting today. It is really ripe for a comeback. I hope appealing with people at large. Scotland certainly ought to be ripe ground for it, given the heritage. It's in very bad shape today.

I think especially in our political leaders, I think political structures, government, parties are in very bad shape. Frankly, I feel that the vicious tail is wagging the parties.

Association has a distribution of virtue and vice, if you will, and maybe a normal distribution, the lower end is the more vice as opposed to the higher, virtue.

Then sometimes things happen in such a way where the people with lower virtue somehow, wag the party, wag the group. I feel that that is happening to some extent. I do think elites in government and those affiliated with them have been weaponising more, abusing power more, tyrannising more, lying more. To avoid accountability and to sustain the big lies, what do they do? They find they must double down. It is a downward descent situation. I feel that we are in a phase of civilisational crisis

Adam Dixon

It is interesting to see in central and Eastern Europe, places like Hungary, where we see illiberal policies, constraining the media and outlawing foreign NGOs. It is about constraining speech and the free expression of ideas.

But then if you go to Western Europe, go to Scotland, you go to Ireland, you go to North America, and you see concerns around misinformation, bad speech, and then almost explicit efforts to quell it through illiberal means. Viktor Orbán has quelled speech institutionally by outlawing organisations or banning particular media organisations or kicking out the Central European University. He's doing it in a very explicit manner. But, then, it seems, in the more developed liberal democracies, they are not necessarily doing it through codification, though that is happening. They are doing it through intimidation, by having speech censors, creating the sense of, well, people are afraid to speak up.

Dan Klein

Yes. And they are intimidating the platforms and just align themselves with them. There are huge operations by the government now to get Facebook

and Google and so on to do their bidding that way. There was just a court decision, which unfortunately did not go against censorship. ([The dissent](#) is very good.) The six threw it out on standing, which seems preposterous to me, because if they do not have standing, who does? Who then does have standing for free speech violations? I do not get it. I think that censorship is very much a Western agenda as well. It is happening.

The *mis- -dis- mal-* information nonsense is another stratagem in my view. I've written on that ([1](#), [2](#)), about how inapt it is to dub all of these interpretive and judgment content claims as 'information'. That is a big part of the trick there. They are dubbing it as information. If someone is spreading misinformation... Because information has a certain straightforwardness to it. And so, if the information is wrong, why are you pushing something that is straightforwardly wrong? But *it is not straightforward stuff that is being censored*. It is judgment, it is interpretation, it is knowledge, it is truth or falsehood. It should not be flattened down to information.

Adam Dixon

And what role do universities have to play in this? What has happened at universities that has exacerbated this? I think there is no centralised force that is leading it, but where do universities fit in this broader censorship diet?

Dan Klein

They are part of the broad constellation—the censorship industrial complex, as Michael Schellenberger calls it.

Adam Dixon

The concern I have is that the university culture in general is lacking in real debate. There is little embrace of viewpoint diversity.

Dan Klein

I agree.

Adam Dixon

I must be careful saying this because then some people think, “you must be one of those conservative voices that's keeping his mouth shut.” It is not that at all. But again, I do not recoil when someone has a view that is conservative or has a viewpoint that is different. I think actually, “Okay, let's go, let's hear it.” But unfortunately, it seems that there has been a lot of discouragement of having a different perspective or questioning things.

You have these conversations in the pub after the conference because people are saying, yeah, this is what's really going on. It is terrible. But everybody is afraid because they are afraid of students revolting. They are afraid of their careers being destroyed, even people with tenure.

Dan Klein

I would say, Adam, to you personally, that as the Adam Smith Chair at Panmure House, it is really part of your responsibility to have conservatism part of the conversation because Smith was a liberal, but he was a conservative liberal. He believed—it was within a functional, stable polity—he favours allowing every man to pursue his own interest his own way, by and large. That is the liberal part. But when it comes to the forms of the polity—the procedures, the institutions—he is really rather conservative. He is a conservative liberal. (I think that the pitting of conservative against liberal was in a way another stratagem.) And so that side of him, which is like Hume and like Burke very important.

Adam Dixon

For me it is also the tolerance for difference or tolerance for diversity of thought. I always think of, and what I say to people, at least with regards to the ambition at Panmure House is that we are happy to talk to anybody. We may discuss Smithian liberalism with Dan Klein. But we are also to open to a discussion with, for example, a Marxist that has a different viewpoint. For me that is important, but I think people are afraid to do that. People are afraid just to platform somebody and have a conversation with them. We should be having these debates.

What I have noticed, when you look at different podcasts, I find that there are the more conservative podcasts and their guests are all the same and they do the rounds. They all go on the same podcast tour.

Then there are the more left leaning podcasts. It is all the same characters that come together. There is not enough intersection going on.

I think partly—just to think about the development of this podcast and Panmure House generally—there is a risk of being put in either of those camps just by platforming one person. So, for example, I have Dan Klein on and someone says, “well, he's one of these libertarians out of George Mason. Panmure House must obviously be in that camp.”

That is what we need to go against. That is why are we afraid to have different types of voices speak. For me, that is what is so fundamental to a liberal and open society.

Dan Klein

I agree.

Adam Dixon

I want to hear from a Marxist, for example, because I want to understand his or her perspective. I am unafraid of looking at the world through a different lens. I might not agree with the perspective per se, but it makes us think about things that we maybe have not. I have time, as well, for postmodernists who want to deconstruct everything and think about how we use language; let's have a conversation about that. But even that is not possible it seems anymore.

Dan Klein

I totally agree. There are many topics which we wish we could have a nice big public debate on, whether it is vaccine safety or Project Ukraine. And the two sides just do not come together.

Adam Dixon

Yes, and I think it is unhealthy for democracy, it is unhealthy for society, and I think it is unhealthy for our communities, and it makes life less enjoyable than it needs to be.

Last question. What is it that we need to do to advance liberalism in the classical sense? By that I mean a society, a polity that allows for people to flourish, to be who they are, to express themselves freely.

Dan Klein

In a general philosophical response to what we could do more of or think is, is Adam Smith. It all comes back to a relational sense of existence. Which is to say relating to another being, even if it is a spiritual imaginary theistic being, quasi theistic being. So, the idea of that spiritual relational understanding of things, as opposed to a mechanistic understanding. This relational notion of ethics and morals and virtue. Virtue. Much more focus on virtue.

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