

Political Correctness



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So, think about it this way.

Imagine that you need to describe the world in order to perceive the world and act in it, both of those; *not just act in it but also to perceive it.*

And that you need a description at different levels of resolution.

You know, then you can think about how you use your computer when you're dealing with images. You know there are some times what you really need is a thumbnail.

Because it doesn't require much processing power and it's sufficiently represented above the reality so that you can do whatever you need to do with the image with the thumbnail.



And you never replace the thumbnail with a high-resolution image if the thumbnail will do. I really like that.

I don't think it's an analogy I actually think it's a description of a very large number of cognitive operations, and maybe **there's a rule of thumb**, which is, **never use a high-resolution theory when a low-resolution theory will do.**

The converse is also true, by the way.

So then let's say that in order to orient ourselves properly in society we need a general-purpose low-resolution existential theory.

Something like that. It's not precisely a description of the objective world It's more like an agreed-upon narrative about how the world is constructed in relationship to human experience, and how we should act in the world.



So how we should look at ourselves, how we should look at history, how we should look at our social being, so that we can coexist peacefully, so that we can move forward, so that our societies function.

And then imagine that comes in broadly two forms, and I think it does.

One is a **collectivist form**, and I would say that that collectivist form is built very deeply into human nature, it's essentially a tribal outlook.

It's an outlook that you can trace back hundreds of thousands of years and perhaps more deeply than that.



We know, for example, that chimpanzees have a tribal outlook and that chimpanzees will patrol the borders their tribes looking for chimpanzees who aren't of the tribe, and when they find them, they will tear them into pieces.

And so, that was revealed by Jane Goodall in the 1970s, it was very shocking to everyone when that was first discovered because there was a very influential line of thinking, mostly derived from people who were influenced by Rousseau, that you know, human beings were innately good and that only culture made them cruel and capable of atrocity.

But the fact that the chimpanzees patrolled their borders and tear apart their enemies really did that theory in, in a very serious way.

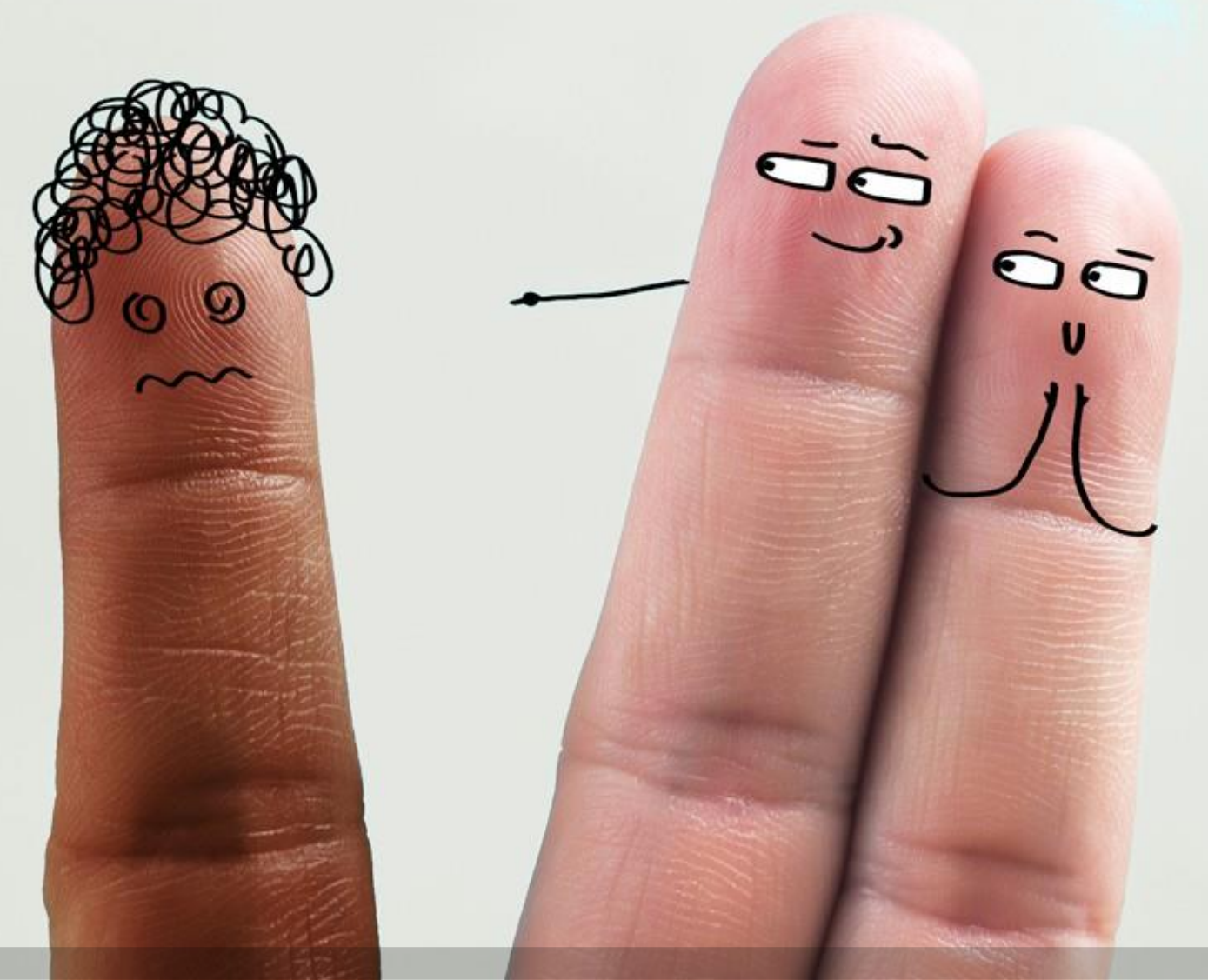


So at least it made it more complicated.

So, the collectivist view is essentially that, the best way to conceptualize what a human being is, is to look at what tribe they belong to.

And the tribe might be...well, this is one of the problems with the collectivist view, is which of your tribal allegiances is to be paramount.

And that's actually a fatal problem, by the way, because there's an infinite number of ways you can be categorized, and it isn't obvious which of those tribal allegiances should be canonical, and hence the rise of intersectionality, which is something that's, that's a dragon that will eat its own tail certainly.



But there's a notion there it's like the most important thing about...forget about that for a minute. We'll say, the most important thing about you is your group, your gender, your sex, your race, your ethnicity; all of the multiple categories that we are supposed to be considering as fundamental realities now.

And that the best way to construe reality is that, it's a battleground between those groups for dominance, power.

And that's the postmodern ethos, and it's a pretty decent thumbnail sketch of reality. You can sum it up quite quickly.

You can use it as a guide for action in all sorts of domains.

It has its consequences, however.



And one of the consequences is that it's tribal.

And tribal identities tend towards mayhem.

Now the alternative low-resolution view is the view that I think has been articulated most effectively in the West, and perhaps of all the places where it's been the most effectively articulated in the West, the most effective articulation has come from the UK.

I mean there's something remarkable about what your country has done with regards to laying out the idea of **individual sovereignty** in a fully articulated manner in a way that allows a political system to arise predicated on the assumption that the individual is of intrinsic value.




And, if you need a thumbnail view of the world, the most effective thumbnail view of the world isn't that you are the member of a tribe, even though, in many ways you are, and the member of many tribes.

The most effective thumbnail view is that you are to be regarded as a sovereign individual and you are to treat other people that way as well.

Both with regards to their rights, but even more importantly and often forgotten, with regards to their responsibilities.

And I think that polities that are based on the first set of presuppositions, the tribal, degenerate into precisely what you'd expect, which is tribal warfare.



And the second, have the possibility of blooming into exactly what they have bloomed into, which are the most functional societies, the most peaceful societies, the most successful societies, societies that are the best at generating wealth along with inequality that the world has ever seen.

And so, I would say, we sacrifice the latter to the former at our great peril.

And I would also say that, and this is something that I am very ashamed of is that *the Universities, broadly speaking, are doing absolutely everything they can, as fast as they possibly can, to ensure that we sacrifice the sovereign individual view for the collective tribal view.*

And I think that is appalling beyond forgiveness.



So, the reason that free speech is so important, as far as I am concerned, because why I don't really think about it as free speech, I think about it as respect for the manifestation of the Logos, it's something like that, that's the proper way of conceptualizing it, is that it keeps the balance between those two tendencies.

Right? Because you need the questioning, and you need the order.

And so, you think how much of each? And the answer is, the recipe changes day-to-day.

And so you think, if it changes day-to-day how are we going to keep up? And the answer is, by keeping up.



Right? Here we are, we're alive. Right? We can keep up, but we do that by thinking.

And we think by talking, and we think and talk by disagreeing, and we better disagree conceptually, because then we don't have to act out stupid ideas that will kill us.

Right because, so really the abstract, the abstract territory of conceptual dispute is a substitute for war and death.

And it can be a brutal substitute because conceptual disagreement can be very intense.

But compared to war and death it's hardly intense at all.

And so you keep the landscape open for serious dispute, including dispute that's offensive obviously.



Because if you are ever going to talk about anything that is difficult and why talk otherwise.

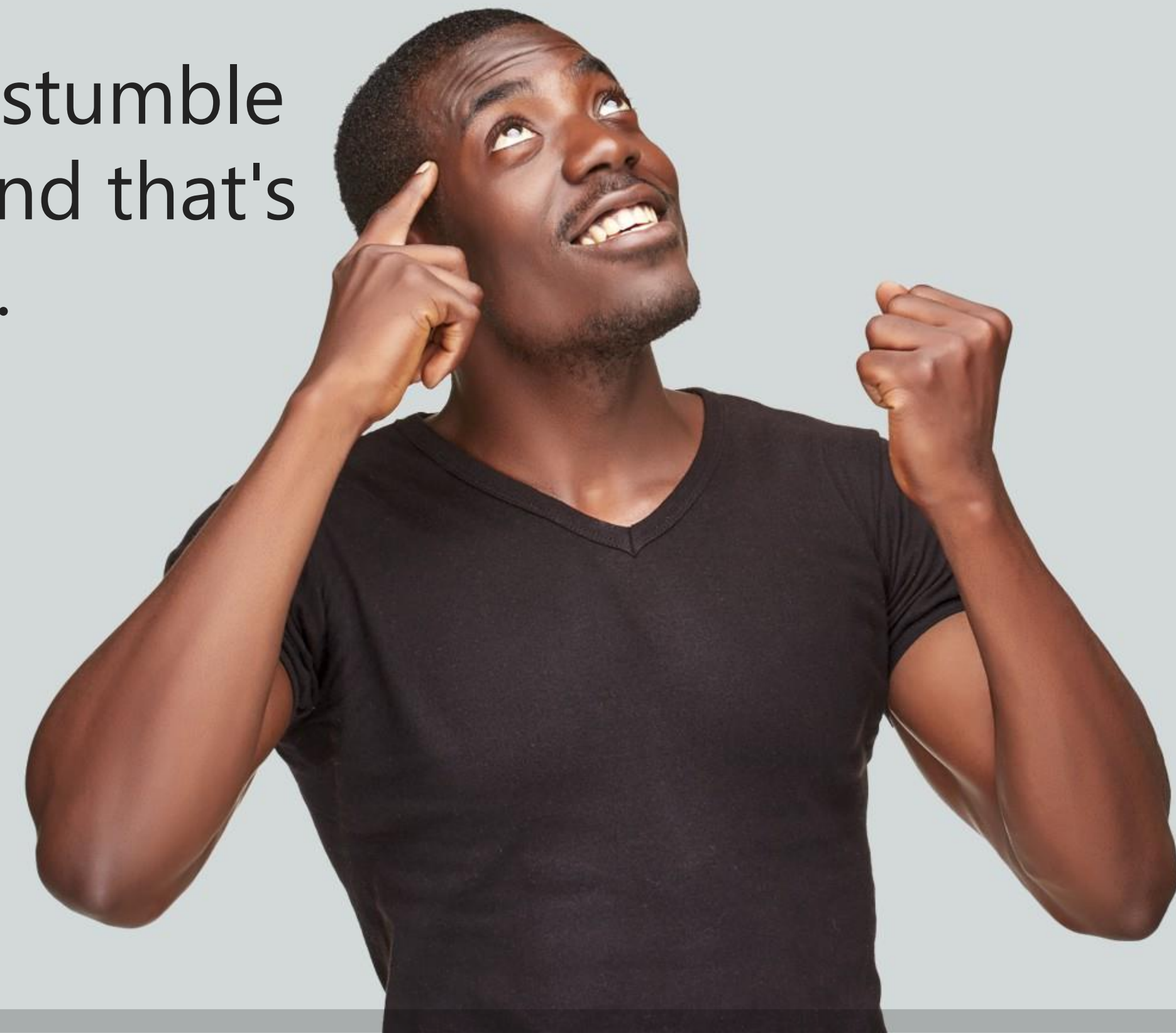
Then you are going to talk about things that are offensive to people.

And you are going to do it badly, you are going to stumble around when you are formulating your thoughts, and that's horrible, it makes people anxious, it alienates them.

But it's better than pain and death.

And that's the alternative.

And so, that's what I think about political correctness.



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