

## Episode 174: James Lindsay

Speaker 1 ([00:04](#)):

Welcome to The Bill Walton Show. Featuring conversations with leaders, entrepreneurs, artists, and thinkers. Fresh perspectives on money, culture, politics, and human flourishing. Interesting people, interesting things.

Bill Walton ([00:24](#)):

Welcome to The Bill Walton Show. I'm Bill Walton. I'm back again today with James Lindsay. This time about his new book, Race Marxism. For fun, let's start with his conclusion. "Critical race theory is a disaster, critical race theory is the tip of a 100 year long spear that's being thrust into the side of Western civilization. It is in its simplest terms, race Marxism. That is, its Marxian theory that rests upon a belief that racism, that benefits white people is the fundamental organizing principle of society." Wow.

Bill Walton ([01:06](#)):

And I think there's so much truth to it. So I really wanted to dig into it, but just a bit of an update. James was on the show last April, and he's been successfully building new discourses with podcasts and seminars and books and all sorts of very important material on this whole area of theory. And he calls new discourses, I love it. "A home for the politically homeless, especially those who feel like they've been displaced from their political homes because of the movement sometimes called critical social justice." James, great talking with you again.

James Lindsay ([01:44](#)):

Yeah. I'm excited to be here. Thanks, Bill.

Bill Walton ([01:47](#)):

There's so many places to start with this. I don't think most people really have a brief definition of what Marxism itself is. What's the frame for this issue?

James Lindsay ([02:00](#)):

Well, that's a complicated topic in and of itself because Marxism is a ... Marx wrote a lot of things. He actually had a very wide range of views that were all kind of focused around a single thing. So I'm going to give a kind of non-standard answer, but I guess I should pay lip service to the standard answer first. Is that Marxism is a particular approach to a socioeconomic theory called communism. So communism was an idea that had been floating around, socialism was an idea that had been floating around a little bit before that, very briefly. Socialism in general means that the state is somehow going to be responsible for managing the economic affairs of a society.

James Lindsay ([02:46](#)):

Communism actually means that the state itself will become ... Meaning, that the polity, I should say will become like a commune and the people therefore will share responsibility for the economic fate of society, but in a way where it's kind of all for one, and one for all. It's going to be communistic in the sense that it will be a commune approach. Like you might see in ... Here in Tennessee, we have this thing that got set up as a commune called, The Farm. Quite famously, where everybody shares resources, everybody's equal, all of these kind of things.

James Lindsay ([03:19](#)):

And so communism is this idea that you can create a socioeconomic order that is a stateless and classless society, where everybody is as equals, everybody shares. And you don't actually need any management because everybody has the same idea that the commune comes first and that's kind of the most important idea is that the commune, the collective comes ahead of every individual and their needs. So everybody's working for the collective. Marx synthesized a philosophy that we call Marxism that says, in essence, that society, in fact is progressing along a trajectory. He called his ideas the scientific study of history. The first in fact scientific study of history, and that he had worked out the laws of history and how history progresses in different places and in different times through discreet stages, it can be understood. Although, their boundaries are somewhat fuzzy.

James Lindsay ([04:10](#)):

Start in primitive communism, move forward, you have kind of a tribal or a commune type situation and everybody shares and everybody's equal. And there's no private property in particular. Then eventually people begin to enslave one another and figure out that they can dominate other groups. Private property comes into the picture. People say, "This is mine, and you're going to work for me. In fact, you are mine." And then we eventually progress into aristocracies, where you have futile estates managed by wealthy land owners and lords and ladies, kings and rulers of different kinds. And the serfs do all of the labor in exchange for security and prosperity of a limited sort, that eventually evolves into a capitalistic program that the serfs are now given their own property.

James Lindsay ([05:00](#)):

Everybody has access to own private property and they're able to do with their so-called capital what they will, that eventually though, because this is still going to be recognized just like the previous stages were all recognized as unfair. This will also be recognized as unfair, eventually by the people who make the capitalist economy work, who are the workers, the working class, which he called the proletariat, when it becomes class conscious and awakened. And they will seize the means of production and establish a worker's state. And they will administer the economy from a dictatorship of the proletariat. And this will be called socialism, where the state now manages the entire economy for everybody and make sure that the outcomes are fair and equal for everybody except apparently the socialists who are in charge.

James Lindsay ([05:44](#)):

And then finally the contradictions of that state, the need for management will work their way out. As people come to become what Marx called social man or socialist man, depending on how you translate the German. And that final stage will be the disillusion of the state, the withering away of the state and the classless society where everybody's equal. And you now have this ... The tribal communism for a 100 people who are all basically extended family in the way that they share resources will become a global phenomenon in the end with a classless stateless society. Where the state has withered away, and everybody is as perfect equals and everything is distributed according to how people need it. And given according to how people have the talent to bring it. So this is the classic theory of Marxism.

Bill Walton ([06:32](#)):

How'd that work out? [crosstalk 00:06:34].

James Lindsay ([06:35](#)):

See that's the thing. [crosstalk 00:06:36].

Bill Walton ([06:36](#)):

He wrote almost 200 years later and Marx was a man people don't ... He wrote on behalf of the so-called worker, or for the worker. He'd never been in a factory. He never left the four walls of the library in London. I mean, this was all sprung out of his own head.

James Lindsay ([06:52](#)):

Yeah. That's right.

Bill Walton ([06:53](#)):

Talk about theory. Of course, that leads us into the theory that became critical theory. And then now I guess we've got critical race theory.

James Lindsay ([07:01](#)):

That's right.

Bill Walton ([07:03](#)):

You document so comprehensively sort of the journey from Marx, and maybe even before him Russo, and some of the other fundamental thinkers and all these people are academics, they're theoreticians. None of them actually have been part of the society that they write about or that they would with reshape. But it seems like the end game for all of them though, is that they end up in charge.

James Lindsay ([07:29](#)):

That's right. People like them. We've paid lip service to what Marxism actually is. That it's this theory ... And this is the intrinsic thing. Now, I'm going to shift into something that I actually talk about in the book, Race Marxism. What Marx's theory actually is as a revolutionary theory. It is a program that he has written, for how do you get from a society where people generally have freedom and have their own private property? How do you go through a revolutionary process to overthrow that society and enter into a new one, where people like him are on top and everybody else does the work and shares equally?

James Lindsay ([08:04](#)):

So basically the idea for Marx is, is how do you create a theory that will lead to enough discontent to create a revolution, so that people that you claim to be championing, the working class for him, will seize control, while only if they're duly informed, where they will seize control of everything? And then the people, of course, who gave them these ideas will then be lifted up as kind of the philosopher kings, the newer aristocrats of the system. And so what Marx actually outlined is, what's known as a conflict theory of class. And he actually talks about this. One of the most common phrases in Marx is writing is, class antagonism. Sometimes he writes class conflict, but class antagonism is usually the way that it's written.

James Lindsay ([08:48](#)):

And what he's trying to do is to explain why the so-called upper-class and lower-class of society, the bourgeoisie versus the proletariat are intrinsically in conflict. And so you have a ... What Marxism really boils down to then, if we look at in kind of simple material terms without getting into kind of Marx's

more spiritual views about how things in society work is that you have a stratification ... There's some force in society, in this case it's class that causes a stratification. So there are layers, there's an upper-class, a middle-class, a lower-class. A completely destitute class, maybe below that. You think of it like strata in the rocks, the geological layers.

James Lindsay ([09:32](#)):

And so there's these different layers, strata of society and he says that those are intrinsically in conflict of one another. This is actually known as conflict theory and Marx laid out a class conflict theory, class antagonism theory. And the goal is actually to agitate the lower-class to try to overthrow the upper-class and replace them as the new overlords of society.

Bill Walton ([09:53](#)):

Well, what you do though, with your book is you simply drop the word race into the place of class where we've got ... Instead of class issues, it's race and it's sort of like, we've got everything defined in terms of white and everybody else is not white. And then of course, they've blurred all the distinction about who's actually white and that becomes a social construct.

James Lindsay ([10:18](#)):

Right, right, right.

Bill Walton ([10:19](#)):

I've wondered through your excellent book but I'm still looking for just sort of that succinct way to say, "How do you get from Marx to Ibraham X Kendi?"

James Lindsay ([10:33](#)):

Well, it took the entirety of the 21st or the 20th century to do it. There is a succinct way to tell the story. And I hope that the book being just ... really the third and fourth chapters of the book as kind of a sort of microcosm of the book, tell that story in a kind of succinct way. It's a difficult book. I'm not going to hedge around that. It's truly a difficult book, but it's difficult history. I can give you kind of the historical answer, where you mentioned the critical theory, then it leads into the critical race theory that then gets us to this Ibram Kendi character. But the answer essentially works out to, that Marx was wrong, but the Marxist didn't give up. And this is the very simple answer.

James Lindsay ([11:21](#)):

So if you understand that Marxism is a conflict theory that uses class, and then you understand, as the Marxist of the 20th century came to figure out that using class doesn't work, what happens is actually, as you agitate for labor reforms, you don't ... Or when you even activate the workers to organize, they do not agitate for a revolution of society where they become the dictators. They actually agitate for reforms. And as those reforms happen, and in the words of say, Max Horkheimer, a critical theorist who have coined the term critical theory, or in the words of Herbert Marcuse. The kind of chief critical theorist of the 20th century. These both are quotes from the 1960s.

James Lindsay ([12:04](#)):

They said, "Marx believed that ... " And This is quoting Horkheimer or paraphrasing Horkheimer. "Marx believed that capitalism would immiserate the working in class." But it doesn't. It allows them to build a

better life. And then if we switch from Horkheimer to Marcuse. Marcuse says, "In fact, it is a good life." That's actually his exact words. It is a good life, capitalism, advanced capitalism, he calls it, delivers the goods. And so he says that the working class becomes a stabilizing or stabilized phenomenon. They get their working reforms, they get better pay. They become a burgeoning middle-class, wealth inequality goes down. People actually can get a home. They can build a life worth living, and they're actually content with this. And Marcuse says, "This takes away the revolutionary spirit. They don't see the utopia that's possible any longer and they become a conservative and counter revolutionary force." So he says, we have to ... And this is exactly out of the essay on liberation that Marcuse wrote in 1969. He says, "We have to find a new working class."

James Lindsay ([13:05](#)):

In other words, we have to find a new revolutionary reservoir of energy. He says, "Vital needs for revolution." And he says, "Where do we find it?" In his act words and I always have to preface it with this because of what his exact words are, are the ghetto population.

Bill Walton ([13:21](#)):

Wow.

James Lindsay ([13:21](#)):

The black radicals. So he is looking at black nationalism. He's looking at the Black Liberation Army. He's looking at the Black Panthers. And he says, "These guys have revolutionary spirit. These guys are actually teaming up with liberation fronts around the world." Which were communist liberation fronts. Liberation is a communist project for the 20th century that derived straight from Marx, who said he was liberating people from class divisions. These populations became the new reservoir. And I keep telling people ... The metaphor I don't put in the book, I didn't think of it until a few weeks ago, is that, you can think that Marxism as a revolutionary conflict theory was running up an interstate of class division.

James Lindsay ([14:04](#)):

You can think of it like, I live here in Knoxville, Tennessee. We have I-40 intersects I-75. So it's running up north up 75 and it gets to the 1960s. That's where Knoxville is. It gets to the 1960s and there's a huge exit ramp. And now it starts running on identity politics instead, because the working class stabilized and they had to find that energy somewhere else. And to be a little more fair and a little more comprehensive and make it a little more clear. Marcuse says, the ghetto populations, the black population. And then he goes on and says the feminists, the sexual minorities. All of the societal outcasts and the unemployed, those people are going to be the revolutionary base. And they're going to be radicalized and brought into Marx's theory by a student population that can be radicalized in the university.

Bill Walton ([14:51](#)):

If I could turn this a bit towards maybe simplifying it, Marx as an economic theory clearly didn't work because capitalism delivered the goods in economic terms. Material wellbeing clearly improved, a couple billion people have been lifted out of poverty in the last 150, 200 years, maybe more than that. So it didn't work to explain economic outcomes and people were happy with that system. So instead, you had to find some other grievance groups, people or the disaffected, even though you had material of wellbeing. Socially, culturally, they were outcast and downtrodden as they felt. And so the most

obvious group were the group that was already up in arms in the '60s, the black community. And so he seized upon that as the nexus for the next stage in what you call the off ramp.

James Lindsay ([15:47](#)):

Yeah, yeah. That's right. Basically the argument, if you want take it in kind of the way that Marxists would phrase the argument is they would say, as Marcuse said, "Capitalism is working, it's delivering the goods." And then the next sentence would be, because they always have to ... As they say, expose the contradictions, but it's not delivering the goods for everybody. And so here are these groups, these racial minority groups, sexual minority groups, et cetera, feminists, women. That are not getting the goods delivered to them, at least not in equal measure. And therefore, they become, as you said, that grievance group. And that can be stoked with Marxist theory.

James Lindsay ([16:22](#)):

If you stop thinking of Marxism as an economic theory and think of Marxism as a conflict theory across a line of social stratification. In other words, you generalize what Marxism represents. Then it's very easy to see how you can swap out what the stratifier is. The stratifier might be class, money, wealth, or it could be race or it could be sex or gender.

Bill Walton ([16:49](#)):

I think that's a really important notion because, if we think about this and my background's in finance, business, Wall Street. If you think about it in economic terms, we had the free market people and the socialists and that was a conflict. That's really not the conflict. The culture of conflict is where the action is. And that's where we're seeing it playing out with critical race theory.

James Lindsay ([17:13](#)):

That's right.

Bill Walton ([17:15](#)):

Your definition though, you have a couple of them here. Critical race theory is calling everything you want to control racist until finally it's under your control. And then you get into the Marxian conflict theory of race. And then the third one, this is the one that I think everybody ought to know cold. Which is, they believe racism is created by white people for white people's benefit. And it is the fundamental organizing principle of society. And that I think is what is the thing. And I think is unbelievably pernicious because if you accept that definition, you're forever guilty of being white or not being white. And only the privileged people into this new system would be not white.

James Lindsay ([18:06](#)):

Correct. That's right.

Bill Walton ([18:09](#)):

I'm stumbling. They take billions of words to get to the point that they want us out and they want to be in charge.

James Lindsay ([18:14](#)):

I mean, that's what Lennon basically said. He said a 1,000 pages of theory or a 1,000 lines of theory. I don't remember the exact quote for every idea that exists or something like that. They write tomes upon tomes. Their academic output is unbelievable. Partly-

Bill Walton ([18:31](#)):

Thank you for reading them, so we don't have to.

James Lindsay ([18:33](#)):

Partly because it's really easy to make it. It's really easy to write this stuff, but yeah, that's basically the gist. If you are a racial minority who is successful, because it's success that they're after, it's success that they hate. They would say that you are upholding white supremacy or that you are buying into the white system or that you're acting white or that you're seeking white reward or that you've placed yourself as white adjacent. So that you'll be accepted into the property to class of society. It's the same Marxist idea that there's the property to class and the unproperty class. And they're intrinsically in conflict with one another.

James Lindsay ([19:10](#)):

The property for Marx was called capital, bourgeois property, as he refers to it in The Communist Manifesto, he wrote in 1847 and '8. In the second chapter he's very clear. He says that you have this thing called capital and that is bourgeois private property. And he says, communism can be summarized in a single sentence, the abolition of bourgeois private property. In fact, he says just the abolition of private property, but at the end of a paragraph explaining, he only means bourgeois property. The name for bourgeois property, for Marx is capital. The name for bourgeois property for critical race theorists as documented in a paper that gives away the punchline. In 1993, Cheryl Harris, a critical race theorist wrote a very long, it's 90 something pages, law review article titled, Whiteness as Property.

James Lindsay ([20:01](#)):

And so they characterized whiteness as bourgeois property. And in fact, she says that it is a reproduction of bourgeois property in the paper, in the footnotes at least. And so what you have is a reproduction of the idea that there is a property to class that either has capital or it has cultural capital and whiteness. Then you have other people maybe within the working class or the racial minority class who are scrambling to get access to that private property. Whereas, the people who control it, have the fundamental right to exclude them from it, generating the conflict.

Bill Walton ([20:33](#)):

Well, they go further. They also talk about whiteness as a social construct.

James Lindsay ([20:38](#)):

Yes. That's right.

Bill Walton ([20:40](#)):

White people invented whiteness, so that only they could be white and only they could control that class. And so it's sort of this endless inside loop where they're in and you're out, if you do believe white people invented the notion of whiteness, which was a new idea to me.

James Lindsay ([20:59](#)):

Yeah. That's exactly correct. So by moving into the realm of social constructivism and outside of the realm of material reality. They actually have made it even more unfalsifiable than Marxism. It's absolutely kind of arbitrary. If you read in the book, *Critical Race Theory an Introduction*. A lot of people ... I think this is particularly funny and I bring it up a lot, but they talk about whiteness in this regard, that it's a social construction that was created by primarily Anglo-Saxon people from England, but also whatever the groups of people that would've been in like Germany, et cetera, to classify themselves. Especially with the Anglo-Saxons, you had these other groups immigrating to America, they were coming into America and these people were Irish. They were German, they were Italian, et cetera, coming over in waves.

James Lindsay ([21:50](#)):

In *Critical Race Theory an Introduction*, which is by a founding member of critical race theory, Richard Delgado. They characterize, they say, "Well, when Irish people and Germans and Italians came to the United States, they were not classified as white. They're classified as Irish or German or Italian." And they were excluded and racial epithets were used, that would be familiar to being used for black people. And other racial epithets were used to exclude them from whiteness and then whiteness expanded. And they in fact document that the democratic party made a deal with the Irish and the German communities in the cities and said, "If you vote democratic, we will classify you as white." So this-

Bill Walton ([22:30](#)):

Wait, wait. Do they have the tapes for that? Do they have [crosstalk 00:22:36].

James Lindsay ([22:35](#)):

They don't have the tapes. No.

Bill Walton ([22:35](#)):

Did they just make that up?

James Lindsay ([22:38](#)):

I don't know, if they made it up. I don't know if it's true, but they chronicled that, the democratic party said, "We'll let you be white if you vote for us." And there's a book that was ... This is a very frightening book, that I think more people need to be aware of and need to read from, I think '98, or thereabouts by a woman named Karen Brodtkin called, *How Jews Became White Folks*. It reproduces Nazi ideology virtually perfectly. She claims it through the 1950s that the Jews, particularly in the cities of the United States position themselves as white. They threw other racial minorities under the bus so they could gain access to whiteness. And then they became the cultural trend setters of whiteness and rose to the top of white society and became the people by taking over things like Hollywood in particular and media. The people who define white culture.

James Lindsay ([23:29](#)):

And so you have this whole hoarding of resources worming their way into privilege they don't deserve and hoarding of resources, the narrative running through in *How Jews Became White Folks*. But this is the idea not to linger on that horrific reproduction of Nazi ideology. But this is the idea is that, whiteness is a category that was created by white people and is expandable according to their whims. The only

people, according to critical race theory, who can never become white are blacks because whiteness is imbued with anti-blackness intrinsically.

Bill Walton ([24:10](#)):

Just to jump forward to a couple years ago, we had the Black History Museum, the Smithsonian had an exhibition on whiteness and it was extraordinary. They categorized all these attributes that they considered white in a really negative way. And it was mainly what I would call bourgeois virtue. And a lot of the things that are the success factors and their success factors not for, "Whites," they're a success factor for Asians, for Italians, for Mexicans, for people from Costa Rica. It's basically a set of attributes that allow people personal agency and to get on in the world and to not declare yourself a victim as one of the whiteness factors. If you turn that around and you say, "Well, I don't want to be white." Then you end up with this culture, which is only a culture of victims.

James Lindsay ([25:08](#)):

That's right. That's right. And they call that race consciousness or racial consciousness, which is a critical consciousness of race in the same sense that the critical theorists or critical Marxist refer to as a critical consciousness, as an extension of class consciousness for Marx.

Bill Walton ([25:23](#)):

Now you use a word that I ... Define Gnosticism. That's a really interesting thing. It goes all the way back, but it seems like what we've got is kind of a Gnostic movement now.

James Lindsay ([25:34](#)):

That's what it is. Yeah. So Gnosticism is a very peculiar take on how the world is structured. It predates Marxism, it's arguably the thing that's recorded in Genesis with the snake. The idea with Gnosticism is a kind of Martin Heidegger put it. That we've been flung into the world against our wishes, whether that's because our parents procreated and made us, or whether that's because the deity formed us, knew us before we were born and cast our spirit into the world. But we were flung into this world and the world is actually a gigantic, to kind of paraphrase off of Michel Foucault, the postmodern philosopher. The world is a gigantic prison. And we created, or we hold up this entity God, as though he is the deity. But in fact, what he is, is the jailer that holds us trapped in this world.

James Lindsay ([26:31](#)):

But that if we can obtain the special knowledge to put it kind of in biblical metaphor, if we can eat from the fruit of the tree of knowledge itself and gain knowledge of good and evil for ourselves, then we can be as God is, and we can know right from wrong and we don't need to follow God's orders any longer. Then we will in fact, see that those orders were kept as a kind of a list of rules for the prison yard, rather than rules that would help us to flourish. So that we can actually rise out of the condition we've been flung into and enter into a new higher state of being where we're truly liberated from that, which imprisons us. That's the basic idea of Gnosticism.

Bill Walton ([27:12](#)):

But it's also, if you're a Gnostic only you can know the inner truth.

James Lindsay ([27:17](#)):

Correct. That there is some pathway.

Bill Walton ([27:19](#)):

And nobody else can. And that's what they've accorded themselves in this theory, which is only they can know blackness and anybody else is not allowed to, or can't possibly understand or see or talk about it.

James Lindsay ([27:34](#)):

That's right. That's the special knowledge. What they're outlining say, in critical race theory through what they call positional standpoint epistemology is that ... What they're outlining is, to use metaphorical language, how you take the bite of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. So for all of these theories from Marx going forward, Marx thought it was scientific. He had the true scientific study, but what it really boils down to is that, oppression grants you special knowledge, understanding that you've been flung into an oppressive prison by experiencing it yourself, or by having been enlightened by the theory. In particular, to interpret what you've experienced. That gives you the special knowledge that allows you to see the world as it really is. And to see whether it's God, whether it's societal structures, whether it's the leadership of the society, whether it's the hierarchy of society as the jailer.

Bill Walton ([28:28](#)):

Well, these theorists, and I'm not going to say black. Just these theorists of critical race theory, treat people like Jason Whitlock and Candace Owens who are black conservatives. They're no longer black.

James Lindsay ([28:41](#)):

Correct.

Bill Walton ([28:42](#)):

Now how do they throw them out of Gnostic heaven?

James Lindsay ([28:49](#)):

So you'll hear that they talk about structural racism, and that's when I give that definition as the fundamental organizing principle of society for critical race theory. Structural racism, or systemic racism, which by the way, are basically the same thing interpreted in two different ways is the reason. So what they believe is in a doctrine called structural determinism. So the structure of society, which is caused by the social relations between the super structure and the infrastructure in Marx's terms or the base. Let me actually back up and do it from Marx. He said that there's a super structure. That's where the capitalist and bourgeois are. And they create these ideologies that justify their supremacy over the base. It does all the productive work, draws the material resources out of nature and turns them into something of value that the super structure then redistributes for their own benefit.

James Lindsay ([29:38](#)):

And what he says, is this creates a set of social relations. And the social relations are the way that class conflict works out amongst or between the two. This is what he called dialectical materialism is, that these two are in dialectical opposition over economically materialistic concerns. And so this creates a structure for society between the infrastructure and the super structure is the structure. And so Marx actually believed in a concept called material determinism, that your material conditions determine your character. This has shifted since, structuralism didn't exist in Marx's day. It was invented by French

theorists, French Marxist theorists in the early part of the 20th century, maybe even in the late 19th century. I'd have to double check the history on that.

James Lindsay ([30:25](#)):

But structuralist thought has shifted this more into the cultural realm, into the linguistic realm, into the realm of knowledge and how we produce knowledge and ideas. And what happens is, they've shifted into this belief called structural determinism. Where you are in the structure of society with all of the different stratifying forces, whether it's class, race, sex, gender, et cetera. That structure determines your character, that structure determines how you see the world, what you can see in the world. Marx said that the social relations limit your range of subjectivity, they limit who you are, what you're able to perceive in the world and that's how it determines your character. Structural determinism is the same.

James Lindsay ([31:05](#)):

So what you have is that people who have the awakened consciousness in all of these Marxist theories, so a racial consciousness, according to critical race theory. People who have that awakened, can see the true nature of reality, and it gives them what critical race theory calls a unique voice of color. That comes from properly understanding. In other words, critical race theory, interpretation, understanding of their position as a racially subordinated class. So people like Candace Owens or people like Larry Elder, who ran for governor in California and was called by the LA Times, the black face of white supremacy for doing so, as a conservative. People like Kanye West, who put on a MAGA hat a few years ago and said, "I think for myself." And Ta-Nehisi Coates, writer for the Atlantic, came out a few days later and said, "He's no longer black." Dave Chappelle makes jokes about trans people in his most recent big special. And the article that came out about him says that he made those jokes from his position of white privilege, by which, they meant his ample wealth. That he had had earned by appealing to white people who paid him lots of money for his specials.

James Lindsay ([32:10](#)):

All those people are not expressing their voice of color the way that oppression by race should shape it. So therefore, they are not acting authentically black. And I've given a number of gross examples. But I think the most clear example comes from the democratic representative from Massachusetts Ayanna Pressley. And she said, I think this was getting toward the fall. I'd have to check the date of when she said this, the fall of 2020, after the BLM riots. And she said, "We don't need any more black faces who don't want to be black voices. We don't want any more brown faces who don't want to be brown voices." And so what she's saying is that, there is in fact, an awakened or a racially Gnostic view.

James Lindsay ([32:56](#)):

If we want to dip into what we just talked about, of what it means to be black or brown in a white supremacist America, and that if you have that consciousness, that race consciousness, then you will speak about race in a particular way. And if you don't do that, then what you're actually doing is upholding the white supremacist system, probably either in false consciousness or for cynical self-serving motives.

Bill Walton ([33:19](#)):

So for those of us that would call cynical self-serving motives personal agency and see personal agency as a key to human flourishing, to personal happiness, to understanding where you are in the world and

your relationship with the God. Those of us who believe in personal agency have no place in this world. If that is the key to happiness, then there's a reason why these people are all so miserable.

James Lindsay ([33:48](#)):

That's right. That's right.

Bill Walton ([33:49](#)):

This is a really unhappy crew. I mean, there's nothing that will ever satisfy them with that world view.

James Lindsay ([33:56](#)):

That's correct. That's absolutely correct. I mean, there's a number of different things we could say, but this is why they are so vigorously angry at people like Candace Owens, who they relentlessly label a grifter. They believe that people like Candace are not speaking the truth that they actually know. So rather than just seeing them as, poor saps who are ignorant and who have been brainwashed by society to think that this is just the way it is. They actually see people like her as traders. And so they treat them with all of the resentment that traders are given.

Bill Walton ([34:35](#)):

I think you and I could talk about this for a couple days, but we got a limited amount of time. Let me go to something I wanted to get at, because this is not just some abstract thing that's in academia. This is obviously jumped the walls of academia and it permeates every institution in America and Heather Higgin or Heather McDonald has a written very interestingly, about art museums and symphony orchestras. And we obviously this permeates university, but it seems to have seeped into a lot of these places where these terrible white people want to be liberal and they want to treat people as equal. And they don't want to have any sense of discrimination. So they're trying to bring the black community into these cultural institutions, which have typically been white. And yet what they're missing is a critical race theory is not liberal and it doesn't believe inequality and it doesn't believe in merit. And it doesn't believe in the sort of things you think of as liberal. It's just the opposite. Do you want to unpack that a little bit for me?

James Lindsay ([35:54](#)):

Explicitly, if we turn to Critical Race Theory an Introduction, which I remarked upon earlier, which was again, written by Richard Delgado with his partner, I think it's Jean Stefancic. Obviously, that's a name that unless you've heard said, it's not quite clear whether it's Jean or John, but anyways. In the very first paragraph of Critical Race Theory an Introduction, they explicitly throw out the liberal order. They say, and this is pretty close. I can quote it pretty close from memory at this point. They say, "Unlike traditional approaches to civil rights, which embrace incrementalism and step by step progress, critical race theory calls into question the very foundations of a liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment nationalism, and the neutral principles of constitutional law." In the next paragraph they say that the reason that they do this is because the point is not to understand society, but to change it, which is a direct paraphrasing of Marx.

Bill Walton ([36:51](#)):

That's their praxis.

James Lindsay ([36:52](#)):

That is their praxis. That's right. That's why Kimberly Crenshaw who's credited with naming critical race theory and is named as the founder of critical race theory, very famously and very many times has said, "Critical race theory is not a noun, it's a verb. It is something that you do." It's very important to understand ... And I actually regret that I did not include that quote in the book in chapter five, where it belongs and I should go update it.

Bill Walton ([37:16](#)):

We're going to talk about your next book too. So we'll-

James Lindsay ([37:19](#)):

Well, yeah. We'll have a couple coming. So at any rate, it is not liberal. It is explicitly anti-liberal. I happen to know in the first edition of the book on page 23, Delgado writes that critical race theorist. He actually says crits, to be clear to the quote, but that was a shorthand for critical race theorists at the time. Are highly suspicious of another liberal mainstay, namely rights. And he says in the next paragraph after that, that rights are believed to be alienating. And of course, alienation is the key Marxist theory. And why is that? Because if I utter a racial epithet or whatever, or if I say something racially tinged or toned or whatever, then I can say, "Well, I have a right to free speech." So rights are themselves alienating.

Bill Walton ([38:08](#)):

Can you expand on rights? Are these natural rights or are these rights that come from government or are they rights that come from something else? I mean, what do they mean when they don't believe in rights?

James Lindsay ([38:20](#)):

I mean, this book to be clear was written on the high school level intentionally, and it has classroom exercises at the end of each chapter.

Bill Walton ([38:29](#)):

I thought they were meant to be not understood. [crosstalk 00:38:31] understood.

James Lindsay ([38:32](#)):

I think this is a book that everybody who wants to understand critical race theory should read, Critical Race Theory an Introduction. It's 190 pages, like a four hour read. It's not a difficult read. In fact, it's at the high school.

Bill Walton ([38:45](#)):

We're only plugging race theory today.

James Lindsay ([38:49](#)):

But at any rate.

Bill Walton ([38:50](#)):

Which we can find on Amazon.

James Lindsay ([38:52](#)):

What they probably mean is something akin to what we would think of as natural rights or in particular, where we read, which is natural rights theory from the Declaration of Independence, that human beings are ... All men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, including to life liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, or if you go to John Locke, proceeding Jefferson, property is the third. And so it is probably that conception that they're attacking, seeing as equality theory, legal reasoning, neutral principles of constitutional law and enlightenment or nationalism are the things that they specifically named that they're attacking.

James Lindsay ([39:31](#)):

And so the idea of equality theory obviously echoes all men are created equal. That is equality theory, as a matter of fact. And then the idea that men would have rights that somehow precede the state. In fact, that this is why they are so fond of the word privilege. Is it not? Because they want to replace rights that precede the state, that the state exists to help citizens secure for themselves against potential tyranny. They want to replace that with privileges granted by the state. If everybody's thinking in terms of, who has what privileges? It's easier to shift into a privileged granted state away from a rights endowed state. So it's more than likely natural rights theory, but I want to be fair. I don't specifically know what Delgado means by the word rights, but the context suggests that.

Bill Walton ([40:22](#)):

Well, I tried to dig into some of these writings. I got interested in deconstruction. Gosh, almost 25, 30 years ago when it was in its early versions and have been struck though, by how impenetrable most of this writing is and how circular and this definition leads to the ... It's all circular as far as I can tell. And it's all ... What's the word solipsistic or something like that?

James Lindsay ([40:48](#)):

Yes. Yes. It's both. It's both.

Bill Walton ([40:53](#)):

How big is this cottage industry? It's no longer a cottage industry.

James Lindsay ([40:56](#)):

Oh, my gosh.

Bill Walton ([40:57](#)):

How many critical race theorists are we dealing with and how many books and how pervasive is this?

James Lindsay ([41:04](#)):

It's probably easier actually to track money than it is to track total numbers of people. I mean to kind of answer the question directly, there are probably ... Like anything, there's the kind of rock stars of the theory. And then there are the kind of everyday professors doing it. There are probably, if I were to put a guess on it anywhere ... I would say it's in the order of magnitude of 5,000 or so. Critical race theorists actually dedicated and kind of fully imbued. These are almost all going to be in think tanks and universities. Maybe more than that, maybe 10 or 30,000. The money though is easy to track because

you can look at how much money is being spent on the so-called diversity, equity and inclusion industry, which is almost completely informed now. Almost completely captured by critical race theory thought.

James Lindsay ([41:52](#)):

And that, even in 2013 was already approaching a \$10 billion a year industry. That has ballooned. And last year, I don't even know what the number would be, but astronomical amounts of money. Billions, upon billions, upon billions of dollars [crosstalk 00:42:08].

Bill Walton ([42:07](#)):

Diversity of equity inclusion had at University of Michigan or Michigan State is making \$450,000 a year.

James Lindsay ([42:16](#)):

That's typical. Yeah. To hire four to five of them for the course of a five year plan is usually a 5 to \$6 million budget.

Bill Walton ([42:23](#)):

If there's one big takeaway I would like people to get is this, this is not about affirmative action. This is not about including people in a way that makes it a level playing field. This is just the opposite. This is tipping the order completely. And it's outcome driven. It's not opportunity driven, this is the outcome we want to seek. So when you think about this nice little diversity officer in your university, you got to think about that in terms of what critical race theory really wants.

James Lindsay ([42:55](#)):

That's right. So how would you qualify as diverse being an expert in diversity? You have your unique voice of color. So you've taken on the theory. You don't represent that-

Bill Walton ([43:05](#)):

I don't have a job opportunity as a diversity officer.

James Lindsay ([43:08](#)):

Well, you could actually, if you were spouting the theory and apologizing for your whiteness constantly.

Bill Walton ([43:14](#)):

Okay.

James Lindsay ([43:15](#)):

However, if you had the weight like Larry Elder doesn't, Larry Elder doesn't have a black voice, Ayanna Pressley phrased it. So he does not represent ... If he were on a panel, he doesn't represent black because he is not speaking from a black voice and so he's not diversity. So only the people who say the things they believe should be said represent diversity. Your diversity pushes are actually commissar pushes. So people who spout the theory, who enforce the theory within the organization. Inclusion is actually kind of the other side of that coin. What inclusion is actually about, is making sure people who have the critical perspective feel included and therefore don't feel excluded. You have to be of your diverse perspective and have the unique voice of color.

James Lindsay ([44:06](#)):

But then if something challenges that, they can say, "I don't feel like I'm included in this discussion. I don't feel like you're giving my ideas they're proper due. I don't feel like I belong." Belonging is another one of the words that they use. It's the same as inclusion plus positive affirmation. You have to clap for your commissar as well as make sure that they don't feel offended. And what this does in practice on a light level, is it weaponizes people who can take offense, which is completely subjective. Anybody can whine and say that they don't feel included. And then if they are a member of a so-called protected class, they get treated differently.

James Lindsay ([44:39](#)):

If you said you don't feel included, they'd say, "Shut up, white man. We don't care." Because you already have your privilege. So you have to deal with it. But if say a black or a Hispanic or an Asian or some other racial minority, as it's said, would say that they don't feel included. They feel excluded or made uncomfortable or a homosexual or a trans or any of these things. Then all of a sudden, the whole mechanism has to come into action. Whatever made them feel not included or excluded has to be removed, whether that's words. In other words, so censorship, whether it's ideas, so more censorship or what Marcuse called pre-censorship, or even whether it's the presence of an individual. Say that you've said something offensive and they no longer like you there. So then it becomes an actual physical purge.

James Lindsay ([45:24](#)):

So diversity equity and inclusion programs, if they have adopted critical race theories or engine or critical theories of identity as their engine, are the establishment of a commissariat. Equity is the project. Equity is the goal. Equity is what they're shooting for. And what is equity? Equity is adjusting share, so the groups are made equal on the outcome level and that's what you were pointing at. So what you're seeing is the ... DEI, diversity, equity and inclusion programs are the installation of a Soviet commissary in your organization. The diversity equity inclusion officers, their goal is to create socialism, equal outcomes by group. And their mechanism is through enforcing diversity and inclusion, which diversity has to mean people who have their unique voices of structurally determined, whatever identity factor, color, sexuality, et cetera.

Bill Walton ([46:21](#)):

So this is like inserting a political officer into a military unit or a business or something like that, or having a Chinese Communist Party be on the board of your Chinese company. This is putting a political officer in your midst.

James Lindsay ([46:37](#)):

That's correct.

Bill Walton ([46:37](#)):

And they're very important at Coca-Cola, as we know at Pepsi-Cola, at Disney, Nike. You're saying these are political officers that are determining not just the narrow personnel policies, but everything that are organizations about.

James Lindsay ([46:55](#)):

Correct.

Bill Walton ([46:56](#)):

Wow.

James Lindsay ([46:57](#)):

It's a disaster and they've infiltrated, literally everything.

Bill Walton ([47:03](#)):

I want everybody to buy your book and you've got some wonderful phrases in here. One of them is, "This is a theory that it's about as broad in what it touches is a great lake and about as deep as a mud puddle."

James Lindsay ([47:18](#)):

That's true.

Bill Walton ([47:20](#)):

Because when you keep coming around to it, it's all about you have power, I want it. And we're going to redefine everything, so that you have to give it to me. And there's no other outcome, except we reverse our power positions. It's a little bit like animal farm, I'm simplifying. Let's sum up here, what do you want people to take away from your book?

James Lindsay ([47:46](#)):

I want people to understand that what we are actually going through in the West, throughout the West and critical race theory is the racial component of this, is a cultural revolution exactly. Like what preceded in China, 1966 or 1976 under Mao Zedong. The only difference is that there's no Mao. There's no one central planner who is taking over the whole power grab, it's diffuse. It's a cultural phenomenon rather than an individual phenomenon. And it is empowering a set of ideas. Whether somebody will rise up into the top of this pile and declare themselves in charge of it or not is unclear. Probably not, by the way it's being implemented, which is largely through kind of investment portfolio metrics. These ESG things we all hear about, environmental social governance. Guess what the social part is? It's in critical race theory, it's right in the middle of that.

James Lindsay ([48:42](#)):

So what I want people to understand though, is that we are in a cultural revolution. It is a communist cultural revolution and it is using identity politics instead of class. Race Marxism is obviously the racial component of the identity politics. And the goal of writing the book was, at the beginning, explain what critical race theory is in kind of an unvarnished way. I say in the introduction that the reason I wrote the book is because there are only two types of criticisms. One that's very naïve, which is often somebody opposing it. And then one that is written by cheerleaders from within, and those are extraordinarily varnished interpretations.

James Lindsay ([49:21](#)):

So the first two chapters of the book are designed to take the varnish off, explain what critical race theory is and what it believes. The next two chapters of the book are meant to explain, where critical race theory comes from. So you can understand in fact that it is Marxism, but it's just been reinvented through trying to solve the problem of, how do we get to revolution? The working class failed us. This

failed us. Different aspects of Marx's ideas weren't right. What do we do? How do we change it? How do we still get to revolution?

James Lindsay ([49:49](#)):

And then the last two chapters are, how does work? People tell me that's their favorite chapter, by the way. The most enlightening, chapter five and the sixth chapter is, what can we do about it? And that of course, is the most speculative because if anybody knew what to do about it, it wouldn't be happening because it's very stupid and very divisive and very ugly and very uncomfortable. But it's also very pernicious and very difficult to discern. So my hope is that, if people can discern critical race theory, where it is and understand what it is, then that resistance can grow in the necessary organic way that will actually be able to push this back out of our society and maintain liberty.

Bill Walton ([50:32](#)):

I'm with you. It's an important book. I almost see it as a kind of reference book. It's not something you sit down and you read straight through necessarily.

James Lindsay ([50:42](#)):

No, it's hard.

Bill Walton ([50:43](#)):

When you come into different chapters and as something comes, you've got some place to go to find out. You're saying, "Where'd this come from?" James, you've got it explained in the book. James Lindsey, author of *Race Marxism*, which is a book I highly recommend. It's not just the book, it's everything James is doing with critical discourses in his work, in his education. And I think we all need to support him because we need to support a free society and our liberties and James is all about that. And I admire what you're doing, as I joke. Thank you for reading all this stuff, so we don't have to.

James Lindsay ([51:26](#)):

Yeah. Well, I put a lot of quotes in there, so you can read some of it.

Bill Walton ([51:29](#)):

It's true. Thank you. This is The Bill Walton Show. I've been here with James Lindsay, intellectual extraordinaire and I'd say also has a lot of praxis in him, which is making his theory come about. And we'll have you back again. Soon I hope to talk some more about this. As I said, this could take a while to really get deeply into it. So anyway, thanks for watching, thanks for listening. We're on all the major podcast platforms, CPAC NOW for America, Apple, Spotify, the whole list of places you can find content, we're there and hope you listen and hope you'll come back soon. Thanks. Bye.

Bill Walton ([52:16](#)):

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