Populism, Aristotle and Hope

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I'm going to talk about populism, Aristotle, and hope, and I want to begin by reflecting on a very peculiar change in our civilization and our culture. We are sitting here in a room in which is embodied many of the fantasies of a previous era. I don't want you to turn around too much while I'm talking, but you can see behind you tapestries of knights in shining armour galloping in a tourney on London Bridge. You can see William the Conqueror's representative turning up to meet the City of London. And over my left shoulder in the stained glass, you'll see pictures of earnest clerics. And everywhere around us, in the stones, in the heraldry, is a reminder of an age that's past, an age which was defined by a sense of religion and spirituality at the very heart of our political construct, defined by rigid divisions between classes, the domination of the lords and the bishops over our society. And that world gradually evaporated and was replaced over time, over many hundreds of years, by the beginning of a liberal democratic consensus whose fundamental elements by the 1990s had become the idea of liberal democracy and the free market.

But this evolution, this change, was a matter of many, many hundreds of years. In fact, in a sense, this whole panoply of buildings is like an ancient oak tree whose bark somehow remains while the centre has been hollowed out. In some ways, in fact, the entire British Constitution is a little bit like that. You only have to go and peer at the House of Lords, see the bishops in the House of Lords to get a bit of a sense of that. But what is so startling is how rapid the change has been from the consensus of the 1990s to today, how something that previously took many hundreds of years has happened in a matter of decades. And I want to quickly run you through some of that change and examine some of the paradoxes and contradictions which we've lived through.

Let me start with 1989, a very obvious moment, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the beginning of what appeared to be the explosion of an age of liberal optimism, an age dominated by the U.S. and its allies. Going into the end of the 1980s, we are entering a world in which the United States stands unchallenged. And over the years between 1989, 2004, the number of democracies in the world doubles, not just in Central and Eastern Europe, we're familiar with what happened in Hungary or Slovakia, but in Latin America, in Asia, and even in some parts of the Middle East. And as this begins to change, we see other developments. We see the developments of peace. Every year from then onwards, as Steven Pinker likes to celebrate, the world appears to become more peaceful. Every year there are fewer civilians killed in conflict. There are fewer internally displaced people. There are fewer refugees. And the world becomes more prosperous, so much so that the world ends up on track to meet its goal of halving global poverty four years early. Hundreds of millions of people are dragged out of extreme poverty in this period. And this period, characterized, I would say, probably by five things, and I want you to try to keep these five things in your head as I plod my way through my lecture.

The first of those is the notion of consensus. This is an era in the 1990s, an era of Bill Clinton and Tony Blair, where the conventional wisdom is that politics, democratic elections, are won in the centre ground. The classic graph of public opinion in this period is a bell jar. The votes are sitting where my fingers are, not where my elbows are. The conventional wisdom is you need to scoop up the votes with the fingers. The

second assumption of this period is that there is a clear vision for prosperity, and that is driven by free, open, global markets. The third element of this moment is an idea that there is an ineluctable and inescapable connection between democracy and prosperity, that these free, open markets and a liberal democratic system are combined. And this is something which I will explore in a second, but is the core of what's called modernization theory in the United States from the 1950s onwards.

The idea basically here being that as you grow more prosperous, you are inevitably going to become a democracy. Once your middle class gets to a certain size, it's going to demand freedoms, and indeed your economic system is going to require those freedoms in order to grow. So prosperity creates democracy, democracy creates prosperity. The fourth element of this system in the 1990s is the idea of the moral legitimacy of the West, moral legitimacy of the West. And this is seen in the interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo and in Sierra Leone and Liberia, these interventions of the late 1990s. In these interventions, the United States and its allies takes it upon itself, takes it upon themselves to intervene, to do these humanitarian interventions. For the first time, state sovereignty is broken by military invasions in the name of human rights. The idea is that we're going into Bosnia to protect the Bosnian-Serb population in Sarajevo, 37,000 of whom have died from the Serbian artillery around the fringes. We're going into Kosovo to back the Kosovar Albanian population against the oppression of Slobodan Milosevic. And in Liberia and Sierra Leone, we are intervening against child soldiers and civil war. And this is based on a fundamental idea that we have the moral legitimacy, that other countries want to be like us. People do not want to live in tyrannies. They want to move to the United States. They want to move to Britain because we believe our system is better. And the fifth element of this, which comes out of much of what precedes it, is the idea that this is universal, that there is something called a liberal global order, that this liberal global order is just going to grow and grow. If the number of democracies in the world has doubled in that period of 15 years, it's just going to double again. And pretty soon, every country in the world is going to be a democracy because we're right, we're good, these things are logically connected, and they're all going to come together.

So a nice moment, it appears, for the world, and a moment that evaporates astonishingly quickly and begins to go wrong in the early 2000s. In the early 2000s, we enter a period where on almost every indicator I've mentioned, we move from dramatic growth to a form of paralysis and uncertainty. The ideas, the forms, the developments which have characterized the 1990s begin to re-emerge in slightly more grotesque shapes, slight echoes of the past, repetitions which are somewhere between tragedy and comedy. The most dramatic of all, of course, being the way in which Iraq and Afghanistan does and does not reflect what happened in Bosnia and Kosovo. But a series of these events, and these events hit every one of our five central pillars of the 1990s.

The first of those which attacks the notion of consensus, right, my fingers, is the development of social media. Twitter and Facebook begin to develop in 2003, 2004, and they reach their apogee in 2011 as a political form with the Arab Spring. Suddenly, for the first time, somebody setting himself alight in Tunisia, a man setting himself alight in a small town in Tunisia, is able to spark unrest, uprising revolution across Libya, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain. This is a very surprising phenomenon. Because in previous eras, you would have argued the differences between those countries. They're different in their sectarian composition. They're different in their constitutions. They're different in their geographical location. And it seems fundamentally implausible that somebody in a small town in Tunisia would be able to spark this kind of change. The second thing that happens in this period is going to strike the notion that free markets and globalization and prosperity are necessarily connected. And this is, of course, the 2008 financial crisis.

The 2008 financial crisis is devastating. Devastating for the credibility of our economic system. Devastating also for the credibility of our elites. Devastating for the bankers. Devastating for the politicians who failed to anticipate it. And devastating, of course, most fundamentally, because it leads, in countries like Britain, to 15 years of frozen GDP per capita and frozen productivity, exposing that the dreams of the 1990s have actually, in the case of many people, particularly on low incomes, corresponded with stagnant incomes and rising inequality. The third thing that happens in this period is a challenge to the notion of the necessary connection between prosperity, free markets, and democracy. And that, of course, is symbolized in our

period by the rise of China. The modernization theorists in the 1950s and 1960s fundamentally held that it would not be possible to reach a certain economic weight for your middle class to get to a certain size, for a certain GDP per capita to be surpassed, without you becoming a liberal democratic state. China joins the World Trade Organization in 2001. In 2005, China's economy becomes larger than the French economy. 2006, it becomes larger than the British economy. 2007, it becomes larger than the German economy. 2008, it becomes larger than the Japanese economy. 900 million people are pulled out of poverty, and the Chinese middle class becomes very large and very considerable.

However, China does not convert into a liberal democracy. In fact, sustained growth of nearly 9.5% since 1980 appears to be compatible with the retention of a highly authoritarian system, solidified in 2012 by Xi Jinping becoming the ruler of China and the moves that he makes to tighten party control and his own authoritarian rule. The fourth big change that happens in this period is a challenge to the notion of our moral legitimacy or superiority. And that actually is in some way combined with social media, because social media begins not only to polarize but to unlock various unstable coalitions of dissent and begins to question the fundamental hierarchies that have preceded it. We see it in the media landscape. We see it in the shift away from everybody watching the same BBC programs or in the United States watching the same news anchors to a world in which we begin to atomize into various different, very separate echo chambers. But we see it also fundamentally in the ways in which the West begins to challenge itself, and particularly the ways in which young people and movements in the West begin to challenge the authority of the old system.

We see it, of course, very dramatically in the environmental movement and the way in which fundamental challenges in the 2000s about the environment and climate begin to challenge the construction of our economic system. We begin to see it in 2013, which is the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States. We begin to see it increasingly in a concern that our own states, Britain, the United States, through their histories of racism or colonialism, are not, in fact, morally legitimate actors but are deeply indicted in structures of inequity. The fifth development of this period is, of course, the loss of the idea of the global liberal order, which stems from some of those previous factors but is exemplified and revealed to us most dramatically by the humiliations in Iraq and Afghanistan. There, most dramatically of all, the fundamental idea that it's possible for the United States and its allies to topple, in Afghanistan, a Taliban theocracy, what seemed to us to be self-evidently a repellent, oppressive system and replace it with a more liberal democratic model, or, in Iraq, topple Saddam Hussein, the epitome of the grotesque dictator, and replace it with a more liberal democratic system, is exposed as optimistic folly. The United States and its allies spend $3.5 trillion in these enterprises in Iraq and Afghanistan. That is, incidentally, the same amount of money that China, beginning in 2013, begins to spend on the Belt and Road Initiative. However, China's Belt and Road Initiative, which is China's endeavour to build dams, roads, ports, electricity substations, right the way across Pakistan, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, of course, returns far more to China than this extraordinary extravagance in Iraq and Afghanistan. This then leads us, with a degree of hysteria, into the third age that I want to examine, and that's the third age that begins in 2014. And because these changes are happening so fast, many people don't notice they're happening. Let me take a classic example of this.

A classic example of this whole world is a figure called, who many of you in the room may struggle to remember, but a figure called David Cameron. So David Cameron enters working life, as in the conservative research department, the end of 1988, the beginning of 1989. And it is, of course, true for him, as for most of us, that that first 15 years of working life defines your worldview for life. So he is coming into his working life with the fall of the Berlin Wall. He brings in, actually, as his chief-of-staff, somebody who's been Paddy Ashdown's chief-of-staff in Bosnia. He sees the world through the lens of humanitarian intervention. He has no idea of social media. He doesn't anticipate the 2008 financial crisis. He remains deeply committed to an idea of an old global order. And he remains in this world until 2005, when he is elected as the conservative party leader. And from then onwards, I can assure you, as an ex-politician, one no longer has the time to think. The key thing to understand about leaders of political parties, and particularly prime ministers, is that they're spending so much time on their focus groups, their polling groups, their campaigns, and simply trying to survive in the barrage and hostile media attention in the opposition, that the idea of actually being able to have any time to think about policy in global forms is for

the birds. This was actually pointed out to me when I left Harvard University. I came into British politics by Mitt Romney, who took me aside and said to me, how much longer are you at Harvard? And I said, four weeks. He said, that's the last four weeks you're going to have to think in your life.

So David Cameron comes in in 2005, and you can see the ways in which his experience from 1989 to 2005 defines his missteps as he moves forward. You can see it in his inability to predict the financial crisis. You can see it in the ways in which his intervention in Libya, his attempts to propel an intervention into Syria are very much part of an old world where he imagines the West is still going to be able to act in the way that it did in Bosnia and Kosovo. You can see it in his great reluctance to vote against Iraq or Afghanistan. He continues to endorse those interventions and is extremely reluctant to see any problems with them. You can see it in his relationship to social media. Famously, in an interview in 2009, he said he had no intention of using Twitter because as far as he was concerned, people who used Twitter were twats. It's David Cameron's great comment. And so he's not a man who is prepared for the world that is about to erupt. And you can see this from 2014 onwards.

So, 2014 is the beginning of the age of populism. And it's an age of populism where all these factors that I've mentioned are beginning to accelerate a very dramatic shift in the moral values, the political assumptions, the economic models, and indeed, the very state structures of the West. We see this first in 2014 when a barely known group, ISIS, manages with a few hundred fighters to route three divisions of the Iraqi army, capture Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq, and create a caliphate that stretched from Syria into Iraq, breaking that border. And this is very much a movement fueled by social media. But the same year is also the year in which Narendra Modi is elected in India, bringing a particular form of Hindu ethno-nationalism in replacement of the old structures, the old assumptions of the Congress Party in India.

2014 is also the moment where we see a shift in Erdogan. And maybe it's worth thinking a little bit about Erdogan because if David Cameron is a symbol of the old era, 1989 to 2005, Erdogan is a symbol of somebody transitioning into the new era. So Erdogan was from a very, very poor background in Turkey. He, in his teens, was to be found on the streets selling water bottles to truck drivers and simit, which is a sort of giant pretzel. And you'll see young boys and girls like that if you drive through Istanbul even today. These are people he's from a very, very low-income background. He probably didn't go to university, although he currently claims that he got some kind of degree. Nobody can find any record of it anywhere in the Turkish system. But in the late 1990s, he became the mayor of Istanbul. And he drove through some very impressive infrastructure investments, particularly in bridges and roads. And by the early 2000s, when he's beginning to come to national power in Turkey, he becomes the great hope of the West. He seems to epitomize the possibility of Turkey joining this liberal global order. He's pro-European. He endorses gay rights. He abolishes the death penalty. And he becomes, for people like the European Stability Initiative, a hope that actually democracy may flow not just through Turkey, because of course he's also moving against the military regime in Turkey, but that it may eventually spread from Turkey right through the whole of the Middle East. 2014, however, beginning of the age of populism, is the year in which a very different Erdogan emerges. Erdogan as president. This is the year in which when 1,000 Turkish academics protest against military operations against the Kurds, immediately, they are arrested. About half of them lose their jobs. About 20 of them remain in jail. This is the moment at which journalists begin to become arrested. This is the moment at which, perhaps most dramatically of all, Erdogan completes the construction of his $350 million presidential palace, representing a different vision of the leader to the man who is selling simit on the streets in his teens.

Moving forward through the age of populism, 2015, we see the Law and Justice Party come to power in Poland. 2016 is, of course, the Brexit referendum in Britain. 2018, Bolsonaro takes over in Brazil. And Bolsonaro is simply a symbol of something that is happening in a very accelerated fashion across Latin America and whose legacy is with us today. Latin America basically follows the model that I've laid out to you. Latin America goes from various forms of autocratic, military-backed regimes in the 1980s and finds itself in the late 1980s, early 1990s, entering this liberal world order. Technocrats emerge in Chile and Peru and Mexico and Brazil and Colombia. These are people who are great darlings of the international community, who push ahead with Washington consensus economic reforms, and who, broadly speaking,

stand for a centrist, technocratic vision of their country. But many of the things that we've explored, transformations in social media, transformations in the global economy, and particularly for Latin America, a later commodity crash, not so much the financial crisis, but for them, commodity crashes in 2013, 2014, begin to open the door to these bizarre figures, people like Boric in Chile, Trujillo, and of course Bolsonaro, on the left and the right, coming forward.

But in the centre of this period, in the centre of 2016, the person who epitomizes the age of populism most is, of course, that great, orange, grotesque Donald Trump. And we see in his election how all the features that are defined in the 1990s, the five features that I have identified, are beginning to be replaced by a very, very different universe.

So I talked about the first assumption of this period, which is the idea of consensus, the idea that we agree. Remember, I had my fingers in the middle and my elbows at the side. But in this new age, starting in 2014, my fingers collapse like the kind of souffle I make at home. It becomes, the graph of public opinion becomes a U-shape. There are no votes left where my fingers are, and all the votes are now at my elbows. The votes have moved to the extremes. And this is particularly clear, of course, in Donald Trump in the United States, where the country begins to feel as though it's teetering on the edge of a civil war. But actually, it's true with Brexit, too.

For the first time, we see in the Brexit remain conversations a situation in which half of Brexit voters say in interviews that they would not consider having a conversation with a Remainer, and half of remain voters say the same. And in fact, in the same polls in this period, only 25% from either camp would consider one of their children marrying somebody who came from the other camp. So that's the collapse of consensus.

The second feature of this phenomenon is, as I said, the necessary connection that seemed to exist between global open free markets and prosperity. And this is very much challenged by the emerging populist age. Donald Trump, of course, is an avowed out-and-out protectionist. He goes into a trade war with China. And we are entering an age in which it is assumed, with reason, that 2008 demonstrated that the old liberal market Washington consensus had not delivered for people, and where particularly in Rust Belt communities or in the northeast of England, people are looking for a different form of industrial strategy, a different form of investment, and no longer have confidence in the market to deliver for them in the way that they were led to believe it might in the 1990s. The third thing, of course, continues to accelerate. I was talking about the link between prosperity and democracy. During this period, we see the opposite of what we saw in the 1990s. In the 1990s, the number of democracies in the world steeply increases. From 2014 onwards, the number of democracies in the world begins to decrease as increasingly around the world, people begin to question the link between prosperity and democracy, and where many voters and certainly many politicians around the world begin to wonder whether prosperity might not be more important than democracy. I talked about Latin America.

A dramatic example of this at the moment is in El Salvador with a president who has managed to not just embrace Bitcoin as his national currency, thus relating to my comments about technology and change, but has also locked up about 5% of his population, imposed an extreme authoritarian rule, and has been rewarded with 85% popularity in the ratings. We can see it in Saudi Arabia, where Mohammed bin Salman has imposed an extremely authoritarian state, but combined it with the forms of cultural social liberalization, which have allowed women to drive, have led to an explosion of public music festivals, tourism, cafes, restaurants, a cultural transformation, which has not been combined with any changes in human rights, liberal democracy, and where he too has been rewarded at the moment with enormous popularity ratings and economic growth this year of 9.5%. It's a country in the G20, soon to be in the top 15 economies in the world, and a similar story could be told about UAE. In sadder ways, things are beginning to happen in Africa during this period. So, we found ourselves pre-2014 period at the back end of this idea of the liberal global order, and you can see it in Francophone Africa, the French deploying troops into places like Mali, advisors into Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic, trying to support pseudo-democratic governments against Islamist insurgency. By today, all those situations have flipped over. The French have

been thrown out of those countries in the Sahel, military coups have happened, and these new military juntas in the Central African Republic, in Mali, in Burkina Faso, most recently in Sudan, are beginning to turn to Russian Wagner mercenaries to come and provide the support that they previously would have received from the West. The fourth point, legitimacy, the moral legitimacy of the West. Well, the attacks on the moral legitimacy of the West have, of course, accelerated, but it helps the populist cause, because fundamentally, populism, whether under Donald Trump or under Boris Johnson, is a narrative of the people against the elite. And the more that the elite is discredited, the more the elite is made to seem selfish, in the words of Occupy Wall Street, the 1%, the out of touch, the corrupt, the more it suits the populist cause, the easier it is for politicians in Poland or Hungary to seem to stand for the real, pure national people against this discredited elite. But it's also true that the crack between prosperity and democracy also means that the same populists are able to challenge their own constitutions. There is a degradation of democratic practice. We can see it in microcosm in Britain, but in much more dramatic forms, of course, with the January 6th uprising in the United States. But in microcosm, you can see it even in Britain. You can see it in the way that Boris Johnson set out consistently to undermine most of the unwritten rules that governed the way in which parliament and our democracy worked.

He started first by challenging the way the Conservative Party worked. Harold Macmillan elected as conservative leader, 1950s, makes a great acceptance speech in which he says he will not even consider the idea of purging or eliminating people from the left or the right. He says the Conservative Party is, in one of his great metaphors, fed by many tributaries into a great stream. I embrace left and right, and I will want them on my left hand and my right hand, and we'll march forward together. This was not the vision of Boris Johnson, right? Boris Johnson's vision instead was to take power and immediately expel 21 members of the Conservative Party from parliament because they happened to represent a different one-nation tradition, and these people included, you know, Churchill's grandson, included Ken Clark, who'd held almost all the great offices of states and had been a conservative leadership candidate, been in every conservative government from the 1970s onwards, is thrown out the door. He then proceeds to try to prorogue parliament, try to lock the door on parliament in order to drive through his particular policies. He's then challenged by the Supreme Court that forces him to reopen parliament, and instead of making a speech of the sort that David Cameron probably would have made or Tony Blair would have made, which is sort of grudging deference to the rule of law, acceptance to Supreme Court, he stands up and spits fury, talks about the people against the elite, talks about how the Supreme Court is wrong, talks about how the whole thing is a disgusting conspiracy to try to prevent the will of the people. And notice, in this rhetoric, the will of the people is not, of course, all the people. It's barely a majority of the people in most of these cases, but it's nevertheless represented as the people. You can see it also, actually, in the development of conflict of interest, the degradation of the ministerial code. Again, Britain is a minor example of this, but remember when he's challenged for lying in parliament, and someone points out this is in contravention of the ministerial code, his solution is to rewrite the ministerial code to make it no longer necessary to resign if you lie to parliament.

But, of course, much more dramatic form in Poland, where we really do see the judges appointed by parliament and the parliamentary commissions, the judicial commissions, completely excluded by the Law and Justice Party, bringing Poland into a deep, deep conflict with the European Union. We can see it in Hungary with the development, essentially the absorption of the state media, the closing of universities, and we can see it, of course, in much more dramatic form in India, in Brazil, and, of course, in Trump's United States. And then the final thing that comes out of this is, of course, the question of the liberal world order. That was the fifth of my things. And during this period, the liberal world order collapses really because the other facet, the other facet of populism in its new form is isolationism. We move into a world in which we are retreating. One indication of this, and there are many, many indications of this, but one dramatic indication of this is the cutting of international aid budgets around the world. When I was the Africa minister, I had a bilateral development budget of about $4.5 billion. Today, my equivalent would have in the UK, and I wasn't the Africa minister that long ago, 2018 to today, would have a budget of about $1 billion. It's about a quarter. The rest of that money has either been cut, the 0.7% commitment's been cut down to 0.5%, or it's been diverted into looking after refugees in the United Kingdom. And the same situation is happening in Sweden, the same situation is happening in Norway, and the United States is about to announce enormous cuts to its international humanitarian spend, having held the burden that the rest of the world was dropping. And this isolationism is driven by two things. It's driven by the right

increasingly thinking it's none of our business, we don't care about them anyway, and by the left feeling so guilty that they feel all we do is cause trouble everywhere we go in the world and maybe we shouldn't get involved at all. Meanwhile, the number of people in extreme poverty in Africa has gone from 170 million in 1980 to 470 million people today, and yet do you hear anybody talking any more about ending poverty, are there any more live aid concerts, nothing of the sort. Instead, donations to Red Nose Day goes from 30 million during my period, rises to 100 million, and has now dropped down to 30 million again. That's a single indication of this move towards isolation and away from our global responsibilities.

Now, I promised Aristotle, and I'm bringing Aristotle and hope to conclude. How do we begin to respond to this? Well, the traditional way of responding to this would be within a classic enlightenment utilitarian perspective, and that was basically the way in which we saw the world in the 1990s. We had an idea that there was a relatively simple world which was not particularly concerned with moral values, was fundamentally governed by economists, and had a very clear idea of means ends calculations and actually a relatively Machiavellian world view. This is then developed by the populace into a much coarser and more extreme Machiavellian world view in which the end clearly justifies the means and most of the moral qualms begin to get shifted aside. In fact, many of the populace leaders portray themselves as unashamed rogues. They're able to create these very curious coalitions where they can get religious voters voting for them despite being flamboyantly adulterous, mendacious, and the rest. And what they seem to reveal appears at first to be a lesson from Aristotle. It appears at first that the populace are the people who understand Aristotle because what the populace understand is that one of the problems that has hit the liberal democratic consensus in the 1990s is that it's unbelievably boring.

The 1990s is actually characterized by a world in which because everything had been sorted, because we knew how markets created economic growth, because we knew that economic growth created democracy, because we knew that history had ended, a lot of politics in the centre ground in this period is largely a process of finding a think tank who's done a little study on something happening in Sweden and then trying to import best practice and capacity building into your civil service. Because fundamentally the idea is that all the big issues have been solved and all that's required really is a good managerial technique and a prime ministerial delivery unit to drive through the kind of change that you need. But Aristotle points out that political communication cannot just be about what he calls logos, cannot just be about the rational argument. It requires two other things as well. It requires pathos, which is emotion, and it requires ethos, which is the sense of character. And of course, what the populace do so well is to do the pathos bit or some version of the pathos bit. They're unbelievably good at finding how to get the great slogans going again, dust them off the shelf where the technocrats and the centrists have left them, bring back words like patriotism, nation, liberty, sacrifice. And above all, the secret really of Boris Johnson and Donald Trump is they bring back something that all the other politicians are lacking, which is a sense of humour. They're terrible human beings, but they are funnier than the other lot, and this is part of their secret power. However, what Aristotle suggests, and I'm going to finish with five Aristotelian concepts because I talk in fives. I don't know why I talk in fives now. Maybe I'd be better talking in threes. So, I want you to think about five Aristotelian concepts. I want you to think about those three rhetorical concepts, the idea of logos, pathos, and ethos. I want you to think about the notion of hope, which in Greek is called elpis, but particularly in Aristotle is eualpis, good hope, and I want you to think about his notion of eudaimonia, a particular Aristotelian notion of happiness or flourishing. What I think he would say to our predicament, and I understand I don't have, luckily for you, four hours to talk about all the problems in this argument, and I'd like to point out that there is a big problem with taking somebody who lived in ancient Athens and applying him to the current day. For example, he didn't have an iPhone, and he wasn't aware of social media and the developments of the global market system, and he wasn't particularly attuned to artificial intelligence, so take that as read.

However, I think there is something very interesting in the way Aristotle approaches the world, which provides an antidote to what was bad about the smug consensus of the 1990s and is also an antidote to what is deeply disturbing, immoral, and in some ways horrifying about the age of populism, as follows. He would say, firstly, that in order to deal with an age of polarization, my souffle, with the votes at the elbows and not in the centre, we need to understand that the notion of pathos, the notion of emotion, needs to find what Aristotle would call the golden mean, the intermediate state, the moderation between two extremes,

and those two extremes are, of course, the boring technocratic fantasies of the centrists and the hysterical emotions of the populists, and that intermediate state finds itself in the word empathy. The point about empathy, the emotion of empathy, is that it's emotion directed towards understanding the other, towards moving from this towards that. Absolutely central, because the core values of our democracies lies in the idea of compromise, lies in the idea of equality, the moral equality of human beings, which requires that we do not say that only 25% of us can countenance our children marrying somebody from the other side. Empathy requires understanding these alternative positions. That's the pathos bit.

The second thing that obviously needs to be addressed in my story is the story about the connection between a particular market system and economic growth, and here I think we need to look at the Aristotelian notion of logos, but the point about Aristotelian logos is it avoids, on the one hand, the problem of the centrists of the 90s, which is the problem of universalizing abstraction, jargon, and avoids, of course, the deep irrationality and the refusal to engage with facts, which is so characteristic of the populists. Instead, Aristotelian logos is embedded. It's a practice of practical reason, practical reason which takes into account the place you're in, the historical moment you're in, the constraints that you face, the moral context in which you operate, and which begins to move away from saying to somebody in the northeast of England, you don't fit the market system, and therefore either you're going to be forgotten or somehow in some magical way your life's going to be transformed in a way that none of us can anticipate, but instead actually engages with the reality of why governments need to get involved in markets, why industrial strategies which are flexible and thoughtful could make sense, and why it makes sense to make decisions across our country which are not purely based on return on investment, which can take into account landscape, environment, and deep structural injustices. The third thing that we talked about was the relationship between economic growth or economies, free market economies, and democracy. And here, I want to try to examine another notion in Aristotle. Right, so we've talked about pathos. We've talked here about the notion of logos. What was the third one? Anyone remember? Ethos, right? Okay, so the point about ethos here is to try to embed in the way in which we think about our relationship to democracy and understanding that democracy is not simply about the production of economic goods, that moral virtues are central to what matters about democracy, that democracy is not an instrumental means to an end, that notions of our rights, our liberty, our equality as citizens, and in fact what Aristotle would call the joint activity of politics is central to what makes human life livable. The fourth one of these things that I was talking about is the loss of the sense of our moral legitimacy, and in the loss of the sense of moral legitimacy, I want to return to the idea of eudaimonia, the Aristotelian idea of happiness, because the Aristotelian idea of happiness, again, is not simply vested in a means-end calculation. Its response to social movements is to say that happiness is not an end, it's an activity, and in particular, politics is a joint activity. It's a communal activity. It's an activity where ethical considerations combine with the practical considerations in the definition together of the good life. And the fifth is, of course, the question of the collapse of the liberal global order, and it's here where I want to appeal to the notion of euelpsis.

I want to appeal to the notion of good hope, because what characterized the first stage I talked about in the 1990s was unmoored optimism, a form of abstracted fantasy, which assumed that it was going to be possible to turn Iraq and Afghanistan into liberal democracies that generated books called "A Beginner's Guide to Nation Building". And the populist era was defined by a form of extreme pessimism. Many of these forms of nationalism are based on a deep, profound pessimism. But what Aristotle's eualpsis does is it says that the hope that matters is based on a courage that acknowledges failure, acknowledges fear. Again, it's an intermediate point where the courage responds to the fear and avoids foolhardiness. The courage is the intermediate ground between paralysis, which could be very easy, faced with this rather gloomy story I've given of the world's evolution, but also avoids the idea of slick, unconvincing fairy stories. Instead, it is rooted. It's granular. It finds its position in a tradition, in a place, in a country, because that form of hope acknowledges, and it's on this that I wish to conclude, that if we can often do much less than we pretend, we can do much more than we fear.

Thank you very much indeed.