

# OpenTheo

## 'The Ways of Judgment': Part 1—Introduction (with Susannah Black)

September 17, 2020



### **Alastair Roberts**

Susannah Black (Plough, Breaking Ground) joins me for the first part of our discussion through Oliver O'Donovan's 'The Ways of Judgment'. If you are interested in following along, I highly recommend that you purchase a copy of the book here: <https://amzn.to/2ZeXFXW>.

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## **Transcript**

Welcome back. Today I am joined by Susannah Black for the second of our discussions of Oliver O'Donovan's Ways of Judgment. We're going to be looking today at the introduction of the book.

And to begin, I thought I would begin by reading the poem with which the book opens. Buckle Street High where the valley's edge gave a line to the old road that bore Rome's rulers and warriors along the wild hill spine and steered them down to the plains and the ways of judgment. There flows a stream now, bedded in rubble and unnaturally suspended above the banks of ancient plunging woodlands, calmly watering genial of land pastures.

So grace, the invader scornful of gravity, follows the traces left by our interdicts, scoops

out from hardcore legal strictures, runnels of kindly communication. Thank you for joining me, Susannah. I'm very pleased to be here.

So to begin, I thought we'd start with a discussion of the quote from the bottom of page 10 in the introduction. The gospel proclamation I take to be in its essential features luminous, the political concepts needed to interpret the social and institutional realities around us obscure and elusive. The work of political theology is to shed light from the Christian faith upon the intricate challenge of thinking about living in late modern Western society.

So this is, I imagine, a fairly programmatic statement for all that he's doing within the book. How would you describe the project that he is undertaking and how it differs from some of the other classic forms of political theology? That's a really interesting question. And I think he's, I have a theory that he is being a little bit, or at least what he's doing is a little bit more complicated than it first appears.

He earlier talks about, this is the second book in a series of three books. *Desire of the Nations* was the first one. And in that, that was more or less a close reading of scripture.

It was very exegetical. And he says that he started with theology from that. And in this, he's just doing, he's starting with political questions.

But he's also very distinctly doing something in a 20th century, primarily 20th and now 21st century project. He's doing political theology. And he talks about that in a kind of a funny way.

He says that, he doesn't name names, but he talks about basically people who, the implication is people who have used theological language to shore up essentially liberal institutions and liberal norms. And I think he must be talking about Habermas and, mainly Habermas actually, and maybe Agamben. But he, because he's talking as though there were a settled project that everyone knows how politics ought to be and what our rights are and how our institutions ought to function.

Now let's kind of plunder theology for random terms and ideas to shore that up. And he's saying he's not going to be doing that. He's kind of starting from the opposite end.

He's starting, not thinking that it's not the case, that it's totally clear how our institutions ought to be or what it means that we have rights, but that those things are, we sort of have inklings about those things. And what is clear is the creeds. But I also think that there's something strange about this because the actual interlocutor that you'd expect him to have is Carl Schmitt, who kind of, I guess, the phrase political theology was the title of one of Schmitt's books.

And he's sort of the most commonly associated with that phrase. And his project was very much not in the service of liberalism. He had a vision of what politics was that was

focused on questions of sovereignty.

But he did do what O'Donovan describes, which is he kind of had a vision of how politics, what politics was, what the essence of politics it was. And then he, it's sort of that he worked backwards to grab theological ideas to support that. But it's more that he thought that what politics, what political language and ideas were, were things that had originally been theological, had originally been bits of Christian theology, and had then gotten translated into a secular register as political ideas.

I think Schmitt was very wrong about a lot of what, how he understood that. We can talk about that later. But I guess the point is, this is why I wanted to start with the introduction is like a whole book in itself.

It's really annoying in a good way, in the O'Donovan way of just being like as rich as a Christmas pudding. He's trying to look at basic questions of political order and political institutions, starting with the idea that the gospel is true, and that the creeds are accurate. But it's a little bit more complicated than that.

A little bit more complicated than that. Does that, am I, do you think that's right? Like, does that? Yes, I think that's correct. It can be interesting trying to discern who his interlocutors are at various points, because it's not always clear.

And occasionally you'll have references to them in the footnotes, but you have the sense that he is taking part in a far more extensive conversation that he's aware of than many of his readers would be alerted to simply by reading the text. And I actually, I meant to look up Schmidt in his, you know, in his index before we started, but I forgot to. And it seems to me that some of the people with whom he would identify more in the sort of project he's engaged in would be people like Richard Hooker than many of the more modern thinkers in this area.

Absolutely. But he's, and well, this gets into the question of whether or not he's a liberal, which is a really interesting question. Yeah, I think his conclusions are very much Hookerian, I guess you could say.

But where he's located in the conversation is very much post-Schmitt, I think. And one of the things that, one of the cases that he makes, I think, for himself and for this Hookerian vision of politics is that all of these things that we assumed were good and right, there's not really any account of why we should believe those things in secular majority, I guess, in Jürgen Habermas's worldview, for example. This is like, I'm sort of reading, this is like me thinking that I understand what he's saying.

I think he's saying something like, you think that these liberal institutions and norms can be supported without Christianity, without theology, but you actually, you can't support them without theology and without these, you can't have a coherent account of both the

institutions and your own best instincts without Christian theology. And if you think you can, look at Carl Schmitt. I think that might be, not to make Schmitt a kind of demon figure here, but I think that might be something of what he's implying.

It seems to be slightly more complicated than just support, though. He focuses a lot upon the concept of interpretation to make sense of these things to us. And so that is an aspect of supporting those institutions, but the task of shedding light upon these matters, I mean, these realities are there in the world.

It's not a matter of trying to support them so much as trying to give an account of them. And that's why he talks about the gospel, I think, as luminous. It's that theme of light and interpretation that really comes out most clearly.

Yeah, he says, there's a really great line where he sort of describes that. I'm trying to look for it. It's not a utilitarian project.

It is not what he calls a project of legitimation of quote unquote our institutions. But it is the case that our institutions and practices and some of our intuitions about justice are what he starts with. He does find them rather than with a sort of theory of natural law or social contract or anything.

And then you ask, well, what institutions should we have? That's why I wanted you to read the poem because I think he might be referring to, I forget if it was, I think it was Belak who talked about the waters of baptism running on the aqueducts of Rome. And I think he's got a similar vision of political order and political institutions and jurisprudence coming to us from Rome. And that that is itself a kind of grace and that we can't really understand the good in our political traditions and institutions without understanding that.

And when we say, like I've been saying are a lot and it is, he starts with the English countryside. He starts with, this is very much a kind of like English book and Anglo American to the degree that American institutions track those of English common law and English practice. But he traces those back to Rome and by implication to in a non-Roman Catholic way to St. Peter or whatever, or to the gospel as it was proclaimed by Peter.

He says, what he says is we need the reality of our own political experience disclosed to us as the prevailing master narratives can't disclose it or disclose them. And that's what he's trying to do. He's trying to see by the luminosity of the gospel, what it is that we are doing when we engage in political deliberation and decision.

And he describes this as an apologetic work in part that partly this is the justification for him delivering this material as part of the Banpton lectures, but there is a more serious claim being made there. I was sort of trying to think of, I was trying to figure out like

what is the genre of this book? And he denies that it's a mirror for princes, but it kind of is a mirror for princes. If except that he says Christian theology in these circumstances resumes its ancient role of educating people in the practical reasonableness required for their political tasks.

So it's kind of a mirror for princes understood as a mirror for citizens and subjects and heads of households and leaders of institutions and follow, you know, members of institutions. But it is also Christian apologetic and he, but it's a strange kind of apologetic because he doesn't really exactly make arguments. He, and he says that he's not making arguments.

He's, you know, he says, I'm going to basically, I'm going to describe, I'm going to articulate as clearly as I can, what did, how it is that the world works and how it is that politics works. And if that doesn't convince you, then nothing else that I say can, will be able to convince you. And it's, it's strange.

And I asked myself whether, whether it was a kind of presuppositionalist political theology. And I don't think it exactly is because it's very much not something that cuts off the Christian from the unbeliever. It draws them together rather.

So it's not Ventillian in that way. So it's not presuppositionalist, but what it does, what it is, is profoundly, profoundly, he has a profound belief in the natural law in the sense of both human nature, as we are political beings. And he has a kind of like natural law theory of second nature in a way, in the sense that he thinks that our institutions and our political practices and beliefs have a kind of second nature natural law to them that we can read from.

It's an interesting sort of apologetic. It's not what we'd usually think about if we heard the term apologetic, we'd expect a very different sort of book. But reading the book, it seems that he's giving an account of these political realities by the light of Christianity, that through its exposition and his presentation of these realities in a way that is interpretive, that opens them up to the thinker, actually proves the truth of the source of illumination placed upon them.

Right. In other words, if what we're saying, if what I'm saying provides an adequate account of what you already know to be true, then look to the source of what I'm saying. And that source is both the gospel and the Christian tradition that was developed out of the luminous inspiration of the gospel.

And clearly a contrast with secular thought to which these things are becoming increasingly opaque. And so he talks about a crisis that has followed after a period of extreme certainty. And then as it were, that ice shelf of certainty breaking up and certain parts continuing, but even detached from each other.

So you have science and technology, but then you have these other things that have broken down and collapsed. It reminds me, I mean, it's very Alistair MacIntyre in that way. He says, Western civilization finds itself the air of political institutions and traditions, which it values without any clear idea why or to what extent it values them.

And I mean, the thing that, and he sort of says that, what it reminds me of is kind of Copernicus versus Ptolemy in a way. He has the naturalist and materialist account of political institutions of things like why there ought to be the rule of law, why there ought to be balance of powers, whether it's on a very basic moral level, like why someone who's powerful shouldn't use that power to exploit someone who's less powerful. All of those things, secular modernity or materialism has these potentially sort of maybe explanatory elaborate epicycle explanations that don't explain and finally can't really say why it's better, why might ought to be in service of right.

And if you come along and kind of provide a model that is that like Copernicus just simplifies everything and kind of makes every, oh, that's how it works. Yes. If reality were this way that the earth goes around the sun, that sure makes a lot more sense of what we observe than all of these elaborate theories of social contract, of Darwinian explanations of not meaning to make arguments about Darwinism, but like all these post-Christian attempts to reground what are fundamentally theistic and Christian ideas.

He just comes along and says, you know, reality is actually, it does make sense. Let me describe this to you and maybe it will make sense to you too. That gets back to some of the things that he says about apologetics as a discipline more generally, that apologetics isn't distinct from the task of doctrine except as a mode of exposition.

So he observes the only satisfactory reason to believe is the reason of belief. If I could think out for myself a total and rationally coherent account of all my beliefs, I would have found all the reasons I knew for anyone else to believe as I believed. If I were then to urge some other reason for believing, it would have to be a pseudo reason that I did not myself believe, and I would be a charlatan.

Apologetics is on the other hand, a distinct genre of exposition. So it seems that's one of the issues with modern thought. It doesn't really have that reason for beliefs that it clearly holds.

I mean, many of the beliefs that liberal society continues to hold have fallen away and the beliefs linger. They're convinced that these things are true. Concepts like equality, he will get into later in the book, which they clearly matter very deeply.

And if you lack some account of equality, people see the yawning abyss that lies beneath that. But yet they're not able to give an account that actually gives light to something that they believe so strongly. Yeah.

Like should some men be used as instruments by other men as though they weren't human? If the men who are using them can get away with it. Like why or why not? There's not a good reason within any sort of, within utilitarianism, within Rawlsian liberalism. It just, it falls apart on a fundamental level.

And it also seems to go directly against the empirical reality that we see in front of us. People aren't equal empirically. Right.

And so in what are they equal? Yes. What does it mean that they're equal? But also, I mean, on an empirical level, one of the strongest, I don't want to say strongest, but one of the ways in which I experienced a kind of, I guess, conversion to Platonism before Christianity was this sense of like, look, I see right and wrong. I don't see them with my eyes, but I see them, you know, I see such a thing as tyranny.

If, you know, if police are behaving tyrannically, I see that as unjust. I see it as, I perceive the good in taking care of kids rather than, you know, abusing them or something. And I don't, I can't explain that, but that's like a thing to be explained.

And if you've got this explanation that doesn't actually explain that, which, you know, I didn't find materialist explanations to explain it. You know, go back to the drawing board and start again, because it hasn't done the job of explaining the world any more than, you know, I don't know. It's the only way that that doesn't bite in is if you have this presumption that the perceptions that we have should be ignored for some reason.

Or that those political concepts such as equality are not realities. Right. Which, I mean, I think like equality is a little bit further down the track.

But the sense of the value of human beings and the good of them living together in friendship and in peace. That there's a good there that we perceive that is beyond utilitarian. And if a purely utilitarian account of things can't explain that, look for another explanation.

He talks about the relationship between the deliberative and the reflective tasks of theology and theory on the one hand, and on the other hand, ethics and this very practical purpose. How does he conceive of his project relative to this supposed divide between practice and theory? He's deeply practical and he's deeply aware that there is a moment when someone is going to have hands laid on him, like there's going to be some coercive force used as a result of what he's talking about, or at least as the result of when we do politics. That's what eventually happens.

And he doesn't think that, you know, he thinks that like basically the two sides need each other and they're not actually separate. The deliberative and the sort of reflective and the practical are not fundamentally separate things. I feel like there was something else that I wanted, that I remember thinking as I was reading that section, but what do

you think? Yes, he sees, I mean, if we're going to deliberate on particular actions that must be taken, the relationship between the good and the right is such that you cannot understand the right, what is the particular sort of action that I ought to pursue in this specific instance, without having some grasp of the good.

Because the good is that which drives your sense of the right. And if the good is not being actually affected in the realm of the right, in actual things that you ought to do, I mean, it's very easy to talk about the good in the abstract of hospitality, but if you're not actually welcoming people into your home and preparing food for people, giving gifts to people, whatever it is, then that good is not really being recognized as a good. So there's that relationship between the two sides that cannot be broken down.

Yeah. I mean, I actually, there's, I think that in this way also, he is almost the anti-Schmitt because he talks about the point of decision as, he says, the last deliberative moment of practical reason. And he says that what he's doing in this book is basically everything leading up to that.

And Schmitt actually starts from that. Schmitt sort of starts from the decisionist moment. And there's not really anything interesting that comes before that for Schmitt because it is, it's a question, he starts with will and O'Donovan does start with the good, which moves the will and the reason from the outside.

I can't, like, I think he, I think this is a quote from him because I don't think I wrote it, but without a knowledge of the good, which political practices serve, analysis can give no account of the way in which they serve it, is the way, is what he says, I think. Is that right? Yeah. And so, so you can't start from what you ought to do without a perception of what the good is, and then you can't just stay there.

You actually have to operationalize it. And in that way, it's extremely practical, but it doesn't start with praxis. And he's thinking about politics as a realm in which we have to think about the way that we come to decisions, the way that we deliberate about decisions, the structures and the forms of deliberation by which we arrive at these things.

So there is, the way he describes it, I think, is as a train of practical reasoning about practical reason, a reflection on how, by whom, when, and in what order decisions are to be made by human beings on human action. It is a reflective train of thought, not oriented directly to the last deliberative moment of practical reason, the point of decision, but to the social setting from within which that final point may be approached. Yeah.

Again, he's starting with the the facts of the matter, like the truth on the ground or the reality on the ground of institutions, of the ways that we talk to each other, even about justice. I think there's something a little bit Socratic in his approach in that he starts with



common sense. Like we'll see this later as we go through the book.

He starts with asking, how do people talk about this very frequently? And kind of looking more carefully at both what our institutions do and how we think about what they're doing. And that's kind of, that's the background to the point of decision that he wants to lead us through so that when we do make, or if we are political, I guess, sovereigns in the sense, if we do make a decision, it is going to be from the basis of understanding rather than as a mere act of will. And there seems to be a sense of the danger of the urgency of decision preventing us from actually spending that time in proper deliberation.

But there's a sort of a marrying of a deep reflection and a keen pragmatism in his approach. On the one hand, he's getting into very philosophically involved concepts, exploring those, but then bringing them to bear upon the most practical situations of political urgency and immediacy. And it's that connection between those two realms that I think really sets his project apart from many others.

Yeah, it's, he's, he's not, it's not pie in the sky. It's not purely abstract. And he's always aware of the moment of decision, which could lead to someone going to prison or someone being executed or something of that nature.

But he never wants to have that moment of decision be divorced from a prior, even no matter how urgent it is, that's never divorced from a prior reflection, embeddedness in this gift of a legal order that we've received. And finally, it's never divorced from the movement of the intellect and will towards the good which is outside us. And he talks about the way in which this task of political ethics and theology that he's engaged in is caught in this middle position between on the one hand, the institutional and practical realities, and then the moral judgments.

So you have what can often happen is a divorce of these two things. So you have this very pragmatic approach to politics, real politics, and that sort of approach where the important thing is effectiveness. And that tends to squeeze out the moral judgments that would otherwise be brought to bear.

And on the other hand, you have sorts of desire for perfection, that is detached and divorced from the actual realities on the ground is ineffective, that is not actually going to make any practical difference, but posits this ideal society that may always stand in judgment against us, but doesn't actually change things on the ground or exert a gravitational pull upon the actual way in which politics plays out. And he wants to occupy a position between those and bring them into a fruitful, critical dialogue. Yeah, and he's also, the other thing that he doesn't want to do, and he sort of returns to this again and again, is he doesn't want to start from scratch.

And he thinks that we can't and we shouldn't and we're not. And so he's never going to

ask, like, if my abstract idea of human nature and the purpose of politics were true, what sorts of institutions ought we to have? How ought we to decide things? He's essentially doing the opposite, but he's not doing the opposite from a kind of, there's a tradition of jurisprudence, that was another 20th century tradition of jurisprudence, that was much more just like, well, you know, law is what we notice lawyers doing, and that's also not what he's doing. He's really, it's almost incarnational, like that's kind of the way that I would most describe it, but like civilizationally incarnational.

One of the quotes that stood out to me from this particular section of the book was on the final page of the introduction. It was an evil day for Christian thought when prophecy became the fashionable category for political reflection in place of practical reasonableness. On the threshold of the 1848 revolutions, Kierkegaard remarked ironically that in this age in which so little is actually done, such an extraordinary amount occurs in the way of prophecy.

A prophet has no need of ethics, for he makes prophecies, nothing more. A prophet can do no more anyway, but ethics has by its nature the force of an apologetic, not merely because of the existence, not merely because the existence of a community reflecting systematically out of Christian belief upon the challenges of living in love is attractive, as children playing an innocent game may be attractive, but because it is interpretive. What do you make of his critique of prophecy? What does he mean by that? I'm not quite sure.

There are two things that I think he could mean and I wonder what you think about this. One of the things that we often hear the sort of the call of the church is to speak prophetically into the world and Russell Moore talks about this frequently and there's a very kind of Anabaptist tradition of doing this and I don't think that it's entirely wrong. I think he actually undersells prophecy in various ways, but the call to the idea that the job of the church or the job of Christian political thought is to speak prophetically, just sort of to declare what is right or to declare what is right without without reasoning is kind of what he's implying there and also I think he's implying to declare what is right without a sense that it might be you who needs to carry that out or a sense that you are part of the polis, you are part of this political body and you're not just speaking to it from outside.

That he sees as a lack in the purely prophetic tradition. Do you think that's sort of close to what he means? I wonder. I think that's probably one aspect of it, but there also seems to be a lot of more secular talk about politics that takes the form of a sort of prophecy which predicts the way certain trends are going, the way in which the world is changing in these particular directions, the inevitability of certain political structures or systems arising on the right side of history.

Yes and in that sort of context Christians can be very tempted to engage in that same

sort of discourse and yet there is a danger there and what he's doing is almost stepping back from that sort of engagement. He's not speculating about what direction history is heading, he's not talking about inevitabilities of certain developments or the tendencies within the modern liberal order. He's talking about the basic structures by which we can interpret and make sense and reason within the political firmament.

This is not something that is engaged in declaring the destination of history and what politics means in the light of that. So he's very much not a Hegelian here, is sort of how this nets out. But I'm not entirely certain what he means by this particular passage.

That was my initial sense of it. So prophecy as prediction rather than prophecy is the word of the Lord. I think there is an element of prophecy as the word of the Lord that is off-putting to him though as well because I think he feels that it removes the prophet from the community and removes the prophet from the realm of what he calls ethics which is sort of giving reasons and working within what is.

And sort of being connected to, he even seems to imply that the prophet is kind of disconnected from the good in the sense that it's just it's prophecy as kind of voluntarism. And in that I was sort of thinking about that passage as I was rereading it in light of what you'd been, what we had talked about earlier and what you had have been talking about James Jordan's idea of the priest, the king, and the prophet as the three sort of as three stages. And so O'Donovan is very royal in that framework but it almost seems to me that if he understood prophecy the way that Jordan does where the prophet is someone who is brought into in a kind of theosis-like way into the counsel of the Lord, which means into the Lord's reason like into his logos and into his good, the nature of him that goodness, and is enabled by being by inhabiting that counsel to speak to the people, he wouldn't actually have this kind of anti-prophetic bias because prophecy would in that case seem to him to be rooted in the good and rooted in reason.

But I think the main thing I think that he wants to do is have the person who's talking about political philosophy or talking about what ought to be done in a community be someone who's within the community and bearing the weight of rule to one degree or another. Yes I think that's part of it. I do wonder what he would make of that sort of system.

I think he'd quite critical of it in certain respects in as much as it can be a framework that's imposed upon history that has some sort of prospective vision of how things are going to pan out. So the idea that we are on a particular trajectory, we find ourselves at a particular point in it and how we should act here and now is defined primarily on where we find ourselves within this schema of history and that is something I think he would be very wary of. On the other hand, as you say, the prophet within scripture is not this character that's detached from the realm of ethics.

They are not presenting the covenant. They are covenant lawyers in many respects

speaking the lawsuit of the Lord to his people that have broken the covenant and then also defending the people speaking on their behalf to the Lord. So I think there is that ethical aspect of the prophets throughout but there's certainly that danger of projecting a sort of historical framework onto history and thinking about our task in the present very much in terms of some destination that history has and speaking to our society not from a meaningful framework and reasonable framework of action that has more fixed points of reference but more in terms of this.

This is how it's, this is where we're going anyway so you'd better get on board. Partly and also maybe this is where we're going. You need to take this as the framework within which you consider your ethical action and that is not sufficient.

I think that's true but at the same time he is a Christian and therefore he does have a sense of the direction of history and in particular he has a sense of there being, we are heading towards a last judgment and this might actually be a kind of way to give a preview of the first chapter because we've just been working on the introduction but he does because he has a sense, I think that you can't really completely take away that eschatological horizon or the direction that history is going in horizon from him because his fundamental belief about what politics is, he calls the political act, he says the political act, M-dash, the act of judgment and as we'll get into in the first chapter which is called the act of judgment, he has a sort of fundamental belief in the connection of the judgment of a human judge with the judgment of God while at the same time those are not at all the same thing. But it seems to me that what he's talking about if there is an eschatological horizon which I think there is in his thought, it is the ultimate eschatological horizon. It's not the penultimacy of prophecies that function within history.

So it's not Barth's Bible in one hand, newspaper in the other. Right. I think that's true if you read that in a Barthian sense of we are seeing or even in a kind of like evangelical or fundamentalist we are seeing the book of Revelation being played out in front of us sense.

But in another sense I actually think that the Bible in one hand in a newspaper and the other is very much an O'Donovan way of thinking because you are allowing the Bible, you're allowing scripture, you're allowing the gospel to illuminate the practical realities of everyday politics and everyday decision making. And in that sense it's there are kind of many apocalypses there because there are many unveilings of what's just. And in that sense there is a little bit of a proleptic vision of the final judgment that he's aiming at.

Part of what I think he might be getting at here is the need to avoid the urgency of news and our preoccupation with orienting ourselves with the news. Actually he wants us to step back from that moment of decision, the moment of urgency that so preoccupies us when we're reading the newspaper and to actually think about the basic principles and

the structures within which we would arrive at a healthy decision. One quote I find helpful on this is his remarks, Judging when political questions merit prophetic commentary requires a cool head and a theological sense of priorities.

The worship that the principalities and powers seek to exact from mankind is a kind of feverish excitement. The first business of the church is to refuse them that worship. There are many times, and surely a major election is one of them, when the most political criticism imaginable is to talk about something else.

I mean and that could be taken in two ways, many more than two ways, but one could use it to say, or one could think through it and say, yeah and that means that when the police are reacting to riots they can't be reacting from a position of pure panic or the need to establish order at all costs. There is actually, there can be even in that urgent decisionist moment, a moment of reflection on what it means to, or at least there should have been baked in ahead of time, reflection on what it is to do policing and to create order with justice in a society. And then the other sort of application that you might draw from it is being very very sure of the rightness of all acts of protest and the necessity of all acts of protest, no matter what form they take, and the desire to prophetically condemn anyone who questions that is also a kind of urgency that refuses the cool head of deliberation and refuses the obligation of just actually trying to go back to not necessarily first principles but what the principles of our civilization and what the principles of our moral intuitions teach us.

It's that reflective moment of the deliberative act, that sense of bringing the question of the right into association with the question of the good, but doing so in a way that recognises the complex pathways within which the one will be enacted in the other. Yeah, but he's always going to be aware of the fact that, but there's also urgency, and this is also all happening in time, and these are also questions that you can't perpetually be deliberating about. There is going to be the political act, the act of judgment, and that sense of dealing with these questions in time I think is very important for him.

There is a false urgency that is given to us by the speed of our media, for instance, that actually by forcing us into this sense of false urgency creates situations that are far more resistant to solutions than they would be if we actually had a cool head and approached them in a more measured manner. Yes, but at the same time, there is going to be a moment when you've got to decide and you've got to take action. Whether or not we are people who are taking political action, whether it's police or protesters in the example that I was using before, we are hopefully part of a people who are thinking clearly about it and being really aware that there is going to be action that's taken, and we can't put that off forever.

Thank you very much for joining me. This is probably a good note to end on and to whet people's appetite for the conversation to follow. If you would like to buy a copy of the

book, I'll leave a link to where you can do so in the show notes.

Thank you very much for listening, and I hope that you will follow us in the conversation that follows. Thank you for joining me, Susanna. Very glad to have done so.