

**COSMOPOLIS — PETERSON — CONVERSION-05 — JUNE 5TH, 2019 — FINAL SESSION**

*Educational Goal: To deepen one’s awareness of what you are doing when taking the position you are taking. Once brought to consciousness, it becomes possible to critique one’s own judging and deciding. After all, the only true position on any matter resides within the universal perspective of God; all our knowing and acting are proportional to being human.*

**EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS**

Existential questions have to do with the meaning or purpose of one’s life, often rising to the surface when one asks the question: What should I do? Such questions intend value, for the decision of what to do or not do depends on the value given to each option. We intend value when we weight the benefits and costs of making a decision.

In today’s multi-cultural world, there’s no agreement of what is or is not of value. There is no across-the-board appreciative system, a commonly held orientation with its own way of identifying problems (evaluation) that all can use to guide their actions. Instead, there is massive confusion wherein only the use of force “guarantees” what is done—but even that is conditional, for sabotage of one type or another is always present.

Before one can take up the question of what should be done comes the question of what is actually going on. In other words, before questions of ought or should can be raised there first has to be a clear idea of what is taking place. Note that “what is” does not refer to a static state of being but rather the kind of recurring schemes of operations involved in the world view of emergent probability.

But there is no common agreement of what is, for such judgments are conditional upon the person’s epistemological stance and the world of an empiricist is very different from that of a conceptualist, or a naive realist from that of a critical realist. This is not a matter of semantics, but a fact that each creates fundamentally different world mediated by meaning to the point that even the meaning of the word “myth” is not the same.

Why is this lack of a common appreciative system a problem? Why does “diversity” not bring the benefits promised?

The reason lies in the fact that a common appreciative system (orientation, common evaluation, common diagnosis) allows for the self-regulation of all those involved in the situation. Lacking this means that any “common” action can never be assumed but must be imposed by those with power over the powerless. Ruling by decree in the face of multiple orientations only creates resistance expressed by outright sabotage or non-compliance behind the scenes.

It represents a breakdown in the good of order. Who can you trust when there’s no or little common ground? How can you carry out business when you don’t know the person you are dealing with, or can no longer rely on the courts to ensure compliance?

**METHODOLOGY**

1. What are the dialectical issues confronted by Peterson? (Appeal only to evidence provided in the video; lay out the fundamental options.)
2. What position does Peterson take concerning these dialectical issues? (Which of these options does he consider positions, and which counter-positions?)
3. Given his position(s), work back through the functional specialties to lay out his foundational stance.



**FINAL JUDGMENT**

**INTELLECTUAL CONVERSION:** **No**  
The key is when Peterson talks about how *in some sense* words create the world. This he considers a metaphor and not an actual statement about reality.

**MORAL CONVERSION:** **Yes**  
Both from his tone of voice and the reality of a non-present presence, Peterson is there out of a sense of duty (responsibility) to resist a Utopian takeover of the public sphere through their extreme mis-use of language.

**RELIGIOUS CONVERSION:** **No**  
The closest Peterson comes to religion is through the therapeutic use of religious “myths” as instructive parables concerning human realities (in effect, common sense proverbs); these myths are real in the sense that they can and do have a dramatic impact on a person’s life, but not real in the sense of actually being real.

**INTENTIONS**

Lonergan’s approach doesn’t start with psychological or neurological “scientific” insights but with human intentionality. Truth is what is sought when we

ask the question: Is it so? Value is what is sought when we ask the question: What do I do? Questions do not arise out of the blue; they are the result of a need to know.

There are different kinds of questions such as the immanent meaning of circle (mathematics), the immanent meaning of a falling object (empirical heuristic structure), the missing piece that will make a time-and-space-specific situation meaningful (common sense), and how do we come to understand (reflective intelligence). In each case, each type of question spawns its own distinct methodology. Confusing boundaries only creates illusions.

The answer to any of these questions involves the

foundational stance of the questioner. Authentic individuals (intellectually, morally, and religiously converted) will have one set of answers, while the inauthentic will have another. The former will arrive at sound positions that can be developed, while the latter end up adopting counter-positions that can only be overturned. Progress and decline in action.

There are two basic positions currently being played out at the institutional level in Western civilization. One is globalism, a universal perspective seeking a unified world government; the other is specificness, the common sense of particular times and places. Of the two, which one is a position and which a counter-position? (They cannot both being positions as a fundamental dialectic is at play.)

Discernment is a function of your own foundational stance. Choose wisely, young padawan.

**EVALUATION**

Problems are “not out there to be seen” but a function of one’s orientation. And one’s orientation is a function of one’s foundational stance. The problem is that what may be an existential problem to one is not even considered a problem by someone else. For example, Peterson talks about an economist who created teams of economists to rank different problems—only to find out that Anthropogenic Climate Change didn’t even make it on the list of real problems (the one chosen by these economists had to do with child nutrition in developing countries).

When there is no agreement on whether a problem is even real or not, then any action taken can only be the result of one side gaining cultural, economic, and political control over meaning. This is currently a major problem among Western nations, for the emergence of an inbred and incompetent ruling class (Codevilla, *The Ruling Class*, 2010) has created a civilizations-wide conflict between two appreciative systems: the globalist ruling class and the specificness of the country class. The former consider the latter as deplorable while the latter consider the former as insane and quite out of touch with reality.

This conflict is in fact a dialectical one, i.e., a fundamental conflict at such a basic level that no dialogue or compromise is possible. Depending on which side you choose, yours is a sound position while the others hold only to counter-positions. But how do you distinguish between the two, especially when the consequence of making a wrong choice may be dire indeed. It is perhaps the existential crisis of our times.

This is where conversion comes into play, where the question of the existence of God sets the standards for all that is to follow. If God does not exist, then the individual is left adrift to his or her own interests—be they egotism or group bias. The temptation is to treat human interests as sufficient unto themselves, i.e., “man is the measure of all things.”

If God does exist, then the only true criteria are to be found in the universal perspective of the Divine Mystery. This opens a gap between who we are (our transcended self), and who we might be should God have a say in the matter (our transcending self).

Acknowledging the existence of God is quite an adjustment to make. But the real challenge lies in assimilating what this means in one’s life—and this is a matter of falling in love with the transcendent. One of these changes involves the relationship between you and others, where both are considered equal in the eyes of God. Domination belongs to the “Satanic.”