

Emergent Cosmopolis, *Targeted Inquiry: Epistemology*, Day 5, May 9, 2018: Final Day

Rationality Rules, (YouTube Channel) February 26, 2018

Jordan Peterson's Truth—Debunked (16:51),

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwXAB6cICG0&index=29&list=PLo-1Jq23H_s5XVxAseMKYJA4aH3cOI07si&t=0s

Final Comments on Rationality Rules Video

1. **Jury.** The entire video feels like a prosecutor's final appeal to a jury, a summing up of the evidence in one cohesive narrative. This puts the viewer in a difficult position, for he or she is not being asked to engage in the material but to act as a judge or jury on the validity of RR's position.
2. **Authority.** Cast as a jury, the key question becomes: Whom do you trust? In this sense, the video is less about a coherent argument, for our detailed analysis over four days suggests no such coherence, and more a question of trust—or rather a lack of trust in any authority. An hermeneutics of suspicion combined with the emergence of critical theory that reduces everything to questions of power has made authority itself valueless. This suspicion is compounded by an self-professed elite who, through their efforts to fundamentally transform society, continually “jump the shark.” To all appearances, Western society seems to be led by an elite who have lost both their creative edge as leaders and any sense of competence in dealing with the critical issues of the day.
3. **Total confusion.** In this final viewing, the entire video comes across as a mess of intellectual confusion lacking any real internal consistency that might otherwise be found in adopting Lonergan's higher perspective of critical realism. Again, the video takes on a prosecutor's summation before a jury without the level of intellectual conversion that would supply a firm foundation to RR's comments. This gives a certain consistency to an initial viewing that soon breaks down under analysis.
4. **Sound bites.** There's no place in a short video, or even in a series of videos, to present any form of theoretical argument. Instead, any attempt to adopt a theoretical position with its associated specialized language soon falls prey to the limited interests of common sense intelligence that is more concerned with getting on with the business of the world that in understanding and evaluating any philosophical or theological issues.

The interesting thing is, issues of truth and reliability have entered into the common consciousness of many observers of the contemporary scene, so what was once the theoretical preoccupation of a small minority of specialists living in an academia is now an existential problem for society at large. Yet few have both the intellect and the training to sort through the mess created by the inadvertent crossing of intellectual boundaries and general “dumbing down” quick “factoids” and “sound-bites” that meet the non-theoretical standards of common sense intelligence.

This is an extremely dangerous situation requiring a delicate touch if it is not to be made worse.

Pangburn Philosophy, May 4, 2018

An Evening with Matt Dillahunty & Jordan Peterson, (1:43:34),

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmH7JUeVQb8&list=PLo1Jq23H_s5XVxAs-eMKYJA4aH3cOI07si&index=36&t=3844s

Contrasting “Dialogue” Video

1. **JP's Epistemology.** It is clear that JP's epistemology, like that of RR and Matt Dillahunty, is that of an empiricist. The difference between their positions has less to do with their reliance of empiricism and more to do with their respective state of being: JP, by talking about the phenomenology of religious is an existentialist, while MD, with a more “skeptical” secular and rationalist position could be considered to have a truncated self that refuses to accept “subjective” data as being real. This leaves any consideration of the transcendental realm of meaning or the realm of interiority beyond his vision of the way the world operates.

These differences in being accounts for the different objects each has selected to populate their horizon, for as an existentialist JP can consider myths as being true in the sense that such foundational stories claim a reality is themselves. The same cannot be said of MD, whose secular skepticism not only does not face the issue of existence itself but considers ethical decisions as relative and in some sense evolutionary inasmuch as the starting point of a secular ethics doesn't depend on a specific set of principles.

2. **Religion.** Neither JP nor MD have any concept of religion as a way of living or being in the world; at most they consider religion as a set of beliefs that in JP's positions serves at the fundamental mythological bedrock of Western society. Constrained by an empiricist epistemology, the question of the reality of a God cannot arise; at best all that one can say, at least in JP's position, is that there is verifiable evidence that points to “mystical” experiences as fundamentally life-changing events. That seems to be as far as an empiricist can go when considering the question of the existence of God.
3. **Body Language.** The “dialogue” is quite civilized yet also very heated. Although the conversation demonstrates a willingness to listen to the other's point of view, their body positions suggest an encounter in which MD is firm in his stance against the “aggressive” stance of JP. For the most part, both men have one leg crossed against the other, acting as a physical barrier to the other, while MD sits back in a solid well centered position and JP “aggressively” leans forward. This suggests that no matter what MD is not going to change his basic secular skepticism with respect to the existence of God or the possibility that common ethical standards can be derived without any grounding in a transcendental being. Although presented as such, this is not an encounter at the 3rd reflective level of intelligence concerned with terminal value.