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Jordan Peterson and the Threat of Working-class Intellectual and Attitudinal Liberation

by Denis Rancourt / June 3rd, 2018

Why the industry of glib and vehement mainstream character assassinations of clinical and research psychologist Jordan Peterson? My examination of Peterson's "Rule 1: Stand Up Straight with Your Shoulders Back" suggests that it is a seminal work anchored in a prestigious body of scientific research that should form the theoretical basis of social science in the coming years. Peterson is simply presenting this nascent scientific paradigm of the primacy of dominance hierarchy directly to the people, without an institutional filter, and using it in a cognitive therapy approach to solve the self-image catastrophe that white males in particular are experiencing. There is no valid basis for the attacks against Peterson, which are motivated by establishment machinations.

I'm a world-class scientist. I'm a physicist with an [h-index](#) of 36 (i10-index 81). I was a university professor at 29 and a full and tenured professor at 40. I've made discoveries in physics and some of my most cited papers are in soil and environmental science. I'm not clever in navigating society's dominance hierarchy but I am intellectually honest and I am damn smart when it comes to understanding concepts and recognizing new phenomena.

Only those of my enemies who are professional liars (lawyers) have ever dared to call me stupid: "Mr. Rancourt is an intelligent man Your Honour", but not repeatedly.

That is why I have been surprised to observe the deluge of strident voices, opinion leaders of our time, who use the establishment's highest media venues to launch character assassinations of clinical and research psychologist Jordan Peterson based on... nothing.

Peterson is a fascinating media and social phenomenon worth investigating. I looked at his outstanding research record on Google Scholar and read several of his most cited and recent scientific papers. I watched several of his debates against said opinion leaders and several of his pedagogical presentations.

The scientific papers are exemplary, with correct applications of sophisticated statistical, significance and factor analysis tools. I often find sloppy and incorrect applications to be the norm in the medical field,¹ for example, but not here.

In the presentations, I find clear and intelligent statements on the questions related to his many areas of expertise, and ya, some exaggerations and incorrect statements in areas where his gaze has not been objective, it appears.

For example, I don't understand how an authentic intellectual could read the landmark works of Karl Marx and the critiques of the said work by the great anarchist theorist Kropotkin and not be thoroughly impressed by the genius of Marx, and the elements of his theory that are seminal and fundamental even if incorrectly extrapolated by Marx. I conclude that Jordan has not actually read this stuff or he is being irrational in his evaluation, for whatever reasons related to his personal history.

In my evaluation, however, Peterson's occasional stupid summaries are entirely a result of his boldness to put ideas out there, on the fly, in his broad and continuous interactions with the world; and they remove nothing from the depth and rigour of his other written and spoken words. Even Einstein wrote naïve and silly things without the prerequisite background study: "[Why Socialism?](#)", 1949.

Next, I decided to get myself a copy of his record-breaking best seller *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*. I'm a slow reader, and I read all the notes and most of the articles themselves that are cited. I have now finished up to the end of: "Rule 1: Stand Up Straight with Your Shoulders Back".

I thought: "Holy crap. This guy is doing something unprecedented. He is taking a nascent scientific paradigm and bringing it directly to the people, with no institutional intermediaries. Brilliant."

I'll explain what Peterson is doing and its significance but before I do...

I next went back to the products of the character-assassination professionals to see what the service intellectuals had said about "Rule 1", and I looked for "Rule 1" summaries and explanations on line.

I was shocked to find the degree to which the said service intellectuals had done their job. What a distasteful spectacle. Such vile dishonesty. Only an assigned mission and attempts at opinion mobbing could produce such trash, which actually hurts the brain unless your purpose is mindless subservience to establishment spin.

What is the "nascent scientific paradigm", which threatens key tenets of the current social engineering complex if it is not sufficiently buried? Let me be blunt. In the last decade or more, biochemists, biologists, animal behaviourists and psychologists have established proof of what some astute observers have been saying for centuries: Dominance hierarchy rules, across the animal kingdom and over evolutionary time. It is rooted in a primordial physiology and metabolic biochemistry.

The metabolism of the monoamine neurotransmitter serotonin, and the associated evolutionary biology, is the first synthesis of the new tectonic plates theory of social science, whether social scientists are aware of it yet or not. Period.

The metabolic biochemistry of dominance locks us in. No socialism theory that presumes altruistic cooperation as its organizing principle can ever work. Non-hierarchical anarchism and its libertarian cousin are useful conceptual end-points that can never be sustainably achieved. The best we can do is to have a responsive and optimally (evolutionarily) beneficial dominance hierarchy that is actively prevented from exercising pathological excess.²

Jordan is spelling this out (p. 14-15):

“ This is because “nature” is “what selects,” and the longer a feature has existed the more time it has had to be selected-and to shape life. It does not matter whether that feature is physical and biological, or social and cultural. All that matters, from a Darwinian perspective, is permanence —and the dominance hierarchy, however social or cultural it might appear, has been around for some half a billion years. It's permanent. It's real. The dominance hierarchy is not capitalism. It's

not communism, either, for that matter. It's not the military-industrial complex. It's not the patriarchy—that disposable, malleable, arbitrary cultural artefact. It's not even a human creation; not in the most profound sense. It is instead a near-eternal aspect of the environment, and much of what is blamed on these more ephemeral manifestations is a consequence of its unchanging existence. We (the sovereign we, the we that has been around since the beginning of life) have lived in a dominance hierarchy for a long, long time. We were struggling for position before we had skin, or hands, or lungs, or bones. There is little more natural than culture. Dominance hierarchies are older than trees.

The part of our brain that keeps track of our position in the dominance hierarchy is therefore exceptionally ancient and fundamental. [Footnote 17: "Serotonin and dominance", by Ziolkiewicz-Wichary, 2016] It is a master control system, modulating our perceptions, values, emotions, thoughts and actions. It powerfully affects every aspect of our Being, conscious and unconscious alike. This is why, when we are defeated, we act very much like lobsters who have lost a fight. Our posture droops. We face the ground. We feel threatened, hurt, anxious and weak. If things do not improve, we become chronically depressed. Under such conditions, we can't easily put up the kind of fight that life demands, and we become easy targets for harder-shelled bullies. And it is not only the behavioural and experiential similarities that are striking. Much of the basic neurochemistry is the same.

Consider serotonin, the chemical that governs posture and escape in the lobster. Low-ranking lobsters produce comparatively low levels of serotonin. This is also true of low-ranking human beings (and those low levels decrease more with each defeat). Low serotonin means decreased confidence. Low serotonin means more response to stress and costlier physical preparedness for emergency—as anything whatsoever may happen, at any time, at the bottom of the dominance hierarchy (and rarely something good). Low serotonin means less happiness, more pain and anxiety, more illness, and a shorter lifespan—among humans, just as among crustaceans. Higher spots in the dominance hierarchy, and the higher serotonin levels typical of those who inhabit them, are characterized by less illness, misery and death, even when factors such as absolute income—or number of decaying food scraps are held constant. The importance of this can hardly be overstated.

There is an unspeakably primordial calculator, deep within you, at the very foundation of your brain, far below your thoughts and feelings. It monitors exactly where you are positioned in society ...

What the ignorant hit men against Peterson have failed to recognize is that Peterson has summarized the greatest scientific advances of the last few decades, which have immediate relevance to human anthropological consciousness—not to mention representing a direct threat to the medical establishment and pharmaceutical industry.²

Peterson is doing this as part of a state-of-the-art cognitive therapy guide or companion.

How can his glib critics be oblivious to this? Simple: Their place and the place of their bosses within the dominance hierarchy are threatened.

Jordan goes on (p. 23-24) to explain the fundamental roles of anger and of fighting back, both as necessary elements of personal liberation and as the fundamental agent to prevent societal spiralling into totalitarianism. His summary on this point is brilliant, and is as seminal as Ward Churchill's *Pacifism as Pathology* in the geopolitical field.

The same point is also the main thrust of my 2013 book³ and was made in my 2011 blog extract from the book:

“ There is no denying the first reality about humans. We are social beings, first and foremost regarding the forces that determine our lives. Our societies are hierarchical and, when not constrained by geography or balancing natural forces, spontaneously grow in size towards more hierarchy and fascism.

A recent antidote against the runaway excesses of Western monarchical and religious hierarchies has been the development of an ethos of individual freedom, spawned in the Enlightenment and anchored in mid-layer economic independence from the top hierarchical predators. ...⁴

Peterson is not waiting for the social and medical sciences to catch up to the paradigm elucidation that has recently occurred among dominance-hierarchy pioneers. He is taking those discoveries as his world view and as the foundation for his advice to the youth.

The dominance-hierarchy view of nature is powerful and compelling, now supported by a few decades of hard science. It is a predictive model with unlimited capacity to organize our perception of the world. It is a dangerous truth, as is any truth about ourselves, which is not dominance-hierarchy-given but which instead is anchored in objective reality.

In the words of Harold Pinter:

“ [T]he majority of politicians, on the evidence available to us, are interested not in truth but in power and in the maintenance of that power. To maintain that power it is essential that people remain in ignorance, that they live in ignorance of the truth, even the truth of their own lives. What surrounds us therefore is a vast tapestry of lies, upon which we feed.
– Nobel Lecture (Literature), 2005

Peterson is having an impact because his important words are true and because oppressive false words have gone too far.

Goodness is helpful in stabilizing the domestic dominance hierarchy, but goodness has been co-opted and used to excess by one side of the establishment forces, the so-called “Left”. In a classic positive feedback loop—not unlike Jordan’s explanation of alcoholism—goodness (political correctness) has achieved pathological levels and its totalitarianism is spraying dead bodies all over the landscape.

Regular white males are very publicly being told to “check their privilege” (that is, to shut the fuck up), to cower and to apologize and make amends for a historical accumulation of “toxic masculinity”. Privileged (professional class) non-white and non-male service intellectuals are recruited into a deceitful industry of supposedly fixing society by engineering language and by mounting witch hunts against perceived attitudinal blasphemy.

Dominance hierarchy theory tells us that this is a recipe for backlash. Self-image catastrophe is the dominant determinant of ill-health and is accompanied by violent outbursts or self-destruction.⁵

Jordan Peterson is furiously working to prevent and alleviate a violent race and gender civil war, waged by competing hierarchical exploiters, and guided by a disgusting array of careerist social managers.

Jordan Peterson is also fighting for reason and objectivity and against ideological madness.

I mean, come on:

“ [T]he idea that there is no binary male/female sex divide in humans is simply a vast overstatement of the fact that many other things also occur in the genital and metabolic physiology of a minority of individuals. ...

That environmental factors—including culture and the violence or authoritativeness of the local social dominance hierarchy—affect both natural reproduction and the said set of sex-differentiating physiological attributes does [not] invalidate the sex binary in human society.⁶

Jordan's Rule-1 explanation about gender roles (pp. 15-16) is anchored in science. His Footnote 18 is “Darwinian sex roles confirmed across the animal kingdom”, which has:

“ Combining Bateman's principles with Darwin's conception of eager males and discriminating females, the Darwin-Bateman paradigm is now the most commonly invoked concept to explain conventional sex roles (...). Specifically, it provides the conceptual framework to understand two central manifestations of conventional sex roles—female-biased parental care and male-biased sexual dimorphism.⁷

What is next? Are we going to pretend that sexual dimorphism is not real? Or postulate that virtually all animal behavioural studies are cultural fantasies imagined by the field observers? Are we going to throw out evolutionary biology and all of Darwin's ideas as “male science”? Why not discount Einstein's theories as “Jew science” while we are at it?

Look, white males are assholes, fine. But the “Words that Wound” industry service intellectuals are going too far.⁸ Establishment “science” can be lethal, as is literally the case with medicine,¹ but that does not negate what we actually know about cell biology and metabolic reactions. Likewise, fundamental empirical discoveries about dominance and sex are not negated because Freud was off and psychiatry is a horror. You cannot simply extrapolate cherry picked scientific reports of anomalies into broad self-serving ideological conclusions.


These are the things that Jordan Peterson is responsibly questioning. Thank god.

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1. “[Cancer arises from stress-induced breakdown of tissue homeostasis](#)”, by Denis Rancourt, *Research Gate*, December 2015, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.1304.7129. [[D](#)] [[D](#)]
 2. “[Cause of USA Meltdown and Collapse of Civil Rights](#)”, by Denis Rancourt, *Dissident Voice*, September 7, 2017. [[D](#)] [[D](#)]
 3. [Hierarchy and Free Expression in the Fight Against Racism](#), by Denis Rancourt, Stairway Press, 2013. ISBN 978-0-9859942-8-0. [[D](#)]
 4. “[Individual freedom versus collective oppression as the determinative conflict in a hierarchical society](#)”, by Denis Rancourt, *Activist Teacher*, August 16, 2011. [[D](#)]
 5. “[Self-Image-Incongruence Theory of Individual Health](#)”, by Denis Rancourt, *Dissident Voice*, October 26, 2014. [[D](#)]
 6. “[Respecting 'Rules of War' in Societal Battles: Science, Sex and Hate Speech](#)”, by Denis Rancourt, *Dissident Voice*, November 8, 2016. [[D](#)]
 7. “[Darwinian sex roles confirmed across the animal kingdom](#)”, by Janicke et al., *Science Advances*, 12 Feb 2016: Vol. 2, no. 2, e1500983 DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.1500983 [[D](#)]
 8. “Critical Race Theory and Freedom of Speech” by Henry Louis Gates Jr. Chapter 5 in: *The Future of Academic Freedom*, edited by Louis Menard, University of Chicago Press, 1996. ISBN: 9780226520049; which is a critique of *Words That Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*, by legal scholars Mari Matsuda, Charles Lawrence III, Richard Delgado, and Kimberlè Crenshaw, Westview Press, 1993. [[D](#)]



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