

Jordan Peterson and the Trip From Professor to Celebrity

How does a simple Psychology professor go from teaching a handful of students to selling out arenas around the world? Across the globe, mostly young men line up outside theaters and arenas to hear a small-framed man who sounds like Kermit the Frog talk about suffering and the meaning of life. What draws these young men to dress in their finest suits and ties, dressed to the nines, to sit in a theater silently with their phones off for 2.5 hours listening to a professor speak about heavy existential problems? He often speaks to several thousand people at a time, and it is common knowledge that you could hear a pin drop. Conversely, his message draws a lot of heat, mostly from those on the left and in the media and social media. Outlets like the BBC, MSNBC, CNN. Interviews on these outlets typically devolve quickly into traps set to ensnare Dr. Peterson into uttering something that they can use as a soundbite and clickbait. I will show several examples in the paper that will prove this to be the case. Dr. Peterson typically calmly disarms and dismantles the argument from a psychological viewpoint. I aim to prove that the real Dr. Peterson's rise to fame is a result of a yearning for meaning from young men as they struggle to find their way in a tough world and a platform that made him available to them. Dr. Peterson reaches men on a primal level with his lectures on family, responsibility, discipline, and literacy.

Beckner, Stephen. "Thought Crimes: Jordan Peterson and the Meaning of Life." *Skeptic*

Magazine. Skeptics Society 2018 Vol. 23 Number 3. pp. 26-34 EBSCO database

<https://web.p.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=7&sid=525b3cab-ceed-49bd-943d-5852b311057a%40redis>

Accessed 11 Nov. 2022

This article is mostly negative in nature regarding Dr. Peterson and his message. The author does offer a few positive points to both Dr. Peterson and his message. The article and the author both come across as very cynical and not lending much credence to Dr. Peterson's work. The author even states that they are hesitant to even utter a good word about Dr. Peterson and apologizes for doing so out of implied fear of response from their audience.

The reason I kept this article as a source for my paper is that it contains quite a few quotes from others and their opinions of Dr. Peterson. This article is helpful when establishing the controversial nature of Dr. Peterson. The inherent risk in researching controversial figures is sometimes the more controversial (especially in politics) the more opinions tend to skew negatively thereby coloring a person's perspective before they even encounter the subject. This article states a few inaccuracies that I hope to touch on. There are many negative articles about Dr. Peterson, like most controversial figures. I have zero clue as to the Ethos of the author of this article and as such take most of it with a grain of skepticism.

“If You Hate Jordan Peterson Watch This Video: It Will Change Your Mind.” YouTube.com

Uploaded By: Elite Psychology. 2018 https://www.youtube.co/watch?v=eMo_20J1J1Y

This YouTube clip shows the emotional side of Jordan Peterson and allows him to define his own motive. It follows Peterson through a couple of interview clips, a podcast clip, and a longer lecture clip. He discusses feedback he has received from students, fans, and listeners. He even gives a heartfelt and emotional response to a letter he received from a viewer regarding suicidal thoughts after a family member committed suicide. It brings Dr. Peterson to tears recounting the story of a friend in an analogous situation.

This clip shows a glimpse into who Jordan Peterson is as a human and Dr. It is but one of many such clips I could discuss. This video while a few years old still rings true as Dr. Peterson's pathos and ethos have not changed since this piece was made. It is significant in the fact that it offers from his own mouth and perspective views that that casual person might not know.

“Jordan Peterson debate on the gender pay gap, campus protests, and postmodernism”

YouTube.com, uploaded by: Channel 4 News 16 Jan. 2018,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMcjxSThD54with Dr. Peterson>

This is one of the two main videos that made Dr. Peterson a controversial and rockstar. Interviewer Cathy Newman takes a hostile tone with Dr. Peterson trying to constantly rephrase what Dr. Peterson is saying and twisting it to fit her narrative. He calmly dismantles her argument creating one of the best “gotcha” moments in recent internet history. This became known as the “So You're Saying” interview, where that is the response from Newman after everything Peterson says.

This video is of immense value when demonstrating the calm demeanor with which Dr. Peterson effortlessly can dismantle a hostile interviewer. It is antithetical to the argument that Peterson is an unhinged racist and misogynist. This is a civil discussion amongst professionals in which Peterson gets Newman to admit her view is wrong. This goes a long way in proving the underlying message of Dr. Peterson that in this case equality of outcome is a horrible idea.

“Jordan Peterson’s Vision for Conservatives: Part 1.” YouTube.com, Uploaded By: Jordan B.

Peterson, 17 Sep 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2yHGcmhbEk&t=398s>

This is some heavy academic lifting. This is Dr. Peterson in full PhD mode. He lays out a future vision for conservatives and those with western values. He discusses the tenants of virtuous life and meaning. This piece is one of the most intellectual and intelligent things I have ever attempted to listen to or dissect. It includes principals of humility, liberty, autonomy, merit, responsibility, and justice, among others. Dr. Peterson in the rare form actually reads the paper instead of giving a lecture on the subject. He does so as he states quite profoundly that this paper stretches the limits of even his cognitive ability.

That is an incredible statement in and of itself. This video and the compendium paper serve as proof off the intellectual credibility of Dr. Peterson and his ability to think profoundly about the way in which humans live their lives. His many years of research and study in the field of psychology have made him a brilliant scholar and it is on full display in this video. Some in the media such as Cathy Newman whose video we will dissect further have labeled him as a simple charlatan and purveyor of hateful rhetoric. This paper and video dispel all notions of intellectual shortcomings or lack of thought and preparedness.

Matthew, Elizabeth Grace. "Jordan Peterson Wants You to Grow Up." America Magazine,

America Press Inc. July 2021 Vol. 225 no. 1. pp.46.49 EBSCO,

<https://web.s.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=10e0101a-77ff-4d5d-a265-24765d37458c%40redis>

Accessed 11 Nov 2022.

This article from America Magazine reviews Dr. Peterson's compendium to 12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos. In it, the author makes the case that most of Dr. Peterson's argument stems from what used to be common sense for generations gone by. She states

that generations past relied on community much more than modern generations and as such did not need the dictum of Dr. Peterson to get through their lives. She also makes the case that Dr. Peterson appeals primarily to white males, and while possibly true, Dr. Peterson makes a compelling argument refuting that based on the overall demographic of YouTube. She discusses his audience at length and offers both pros and cons as she perceives them to Dr. Peterson's logos. She also offers the point of view from the Catholic perspective.

This publication serves my research in that it offers both support and some opposition to my arguments. The article gives the credentials for the author as follows, "Elizabeth Grace Matthew works in online education at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia." It does not say in what capacity. Given the article's relatively unbiased nature, I am willing to lend at least the benefit of the doubt regarding the author's credibility.

Needle, Flori, YouTube Demographics & Data to Know in 2022 [+ Generational Patterns].

Blog.Hubspot. Hubspot Inc. 5 Aug 2022 <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/youtube-demographics#age-demographics>

This website contains data on the demographics of YouTube. The site is broken down into various categories ranging from age, gender, and geography, among others. It sheds light on who is watching YouTube and what is common between them. The site takes data from Pew research and others and compiles it into lists and categories that can be broken-down easily. There is even a section for those who want to market products on platforms such as YouTube.

This site is informative and easy to read. It is current as it was updated in August of 2022. The data was updated after being published in April of 2019 for

“Comprehensiveness.” Data being taken from credible outlets such as pew lend credibility to this site and I have no reservations about the data being offered here. This data is useful when trying to figure out the demographic of Dr. Peterson’s viewers and fans.

Peterson, Dr. Jordan B, Owner. *Jordan Peterson*. Dr. Jordan B. Peterson 2022.

<https://www.jordanbpeterson.com/>

This Is Dr. Jordan B. Peterson’s website. It offers a short biography of him. It contains his blog, podcast episodes, YouTube clips and a few courses he offers. It also offers a link to a “Reddit” page where he has shared letters he has received from fans, patients, and critics. This site contains information about Dr. Peterson straight from the horse’s mouth. He offers links to his tour, academic classes, and even some merchandise. The Reddit page contains thousands and thousands of letters he has received full of tales of deep despair and depression and mental illness. It has built a community of people, mostly men taking care of each other's mental well-being. It is really fascinating

This is a particularly useful website when establishing Dr. Peterson’s ethos. Also the link to the *Reddit* page where he has published the letters he has received will also prove pivotal in demonstrating Dr. Peterson’s effect on people and the impact he has had in their lives. This can only prove useful as there is so much damaging and hateful criticism written about Dr. Peterson. It will be particularly useful and a pleasant change of pace to hear from average everyday people touched by Dr. Peterson’s work.

“The Simple Reason 90% of Men Are Lost in Life: Jordan Peterson” *YouTube.com*, Uploaded

By: The Motive, 19 Oct 2019 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iI_r2U8jX0

This clip breaks down Jordan Peterson's message into one word "responsibility." He makes the case that 90% of men feel lost because they lack a burden to bear in society or for their families. He makes the case by summarizing a breakdown of the 1st episode of *The Simpsons*. He details Homer Simpson's struggles as a bumbling foolish man, but one that is noble for the burden of responsibility he has taken on as provider for his family. He compares that to Man's struggle for meaning in life boiled down to need for responsibility.

This is a useful clip in pinning Dr. Peterson's vast and profound message into a digestible size video. This video takes place partially in a lecture hall and partially in a classroom giving the video an academic credibility even though not uploaded by Peterson himself. This video helps establish Peterson's message as one of positivity and productivity. It further establishes audience demographics where he breaks down his viewers and audience by gender and age group.

"The Video That Made Jordan Peterson Famous." *YouTube*, Uploaded by: Ariel View 16 Aug 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM7jpTJWPkg>

In this clip unhinged leftist college students harass Dr. Peterson outside one of his lectures about Nazis and his support of them. Peterson calmly dismantles this childish attack and attempts to re-engage with other students outside the auditorium. He is accosted again about pronouns and why he was a bigot for not following the Canadian Bill titled "C-16". Peterson calmly explains that his problem is not with the transgender people, but with the Canadian Government and their "Compelled Speech" law as he puts it. He plainly states that if an individual asked him to refer to them with certain pronouns, he would in fact consider it, provided the individual was sincere in their request of him to do so.

This is a fascinatingly useful clip. It shows the hate that attacks Dr. Peterson regularly. It shows his incredible patience and ability to think and respond on his feet.

This shows a sound belief in his views and that they are well thought out. He again shows his basic views that sovereign individuals govern themselves.

Various. "Letters." *Reddit.com*, Reddit Inc. 113 Jul 2014

https://new.reddit.com/r/JordanPeterson/search?sort=new&restrict_sr=on&q=flair%3ALetter

This site is filled with ~292,000 letters written to Dr. Jordan B. Peterson. Most of these letters are testimonials written to him stating how their lives have changed for the better due to his teachings. It is filled with tales of deep despair turned around by the work of one clinical psychologist whose only aim is to help others. These stories are not for the faint of heart. I will include several examples in the paper This site is both current and filled with ordinary people telling their stories of Dr. Peterson and his effects on their lives, this is crucial to establishing Dr. Peterson's ethos and pathos. It shows that above all the noise he is a Dr. Of Psychology and lives by the Dr.'s ethos of "1st do no harm." Some critical letters are sprinkled around the pages sparingly. Exceedingly rare, it is a stark contrast to the vitriol and hate Peterson receives in the mass media.