



Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief

Jordan B. Peterson

[Download now](#)

[Read Online ➔](#)

Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief

Jordan B. Peterson

Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief Jordan B. Peterson

Why have people from different cultures and eras formulated myths and stories with similar structures? What does this similarity tell us about the mind, morality, and structure of the world itself? Jordan Peterson offers a provocative new hypothesis that explores the connection between what modern neuropsychology tells us about the brain and what rituals, myths, and religious stories have long narrated. A cutting-edge work that brings together neuropsychology, cognitive science, and Freudian and Jungian approaches to mythology and narrative, *Maps of Meaning* presents a rich theory that makes the wisdom and meaning of myth accessible to the critical modern mind.

Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief Details

Date : Published March 26th 1999 by Routledge (first published March 1st 1999)

ISBN : 9780415922227

Author : Jordan B. Peterson

Format : Paperback 564 pages

Genre : Psychology, Philosophy, Nonfiction, Religion, Science, History



[Download Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief ...pdf](#)



[Read Online Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief Jordan B. Peterson

From Reader Review Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief for online ebook

Reginald says

In *Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief*, Jordan Peterson attempts to explain the neuropsychological, phenomenological, and behavioral basis of mythological imagery while trying to encourage the reader towards the behavioral path of “heroic” exploration.

Peterson argues that the empirical worldview (representing the world as “a place of things” that can be objectively tested and validated by multiple observers) is not how human beings primarily experience reality or how they decide to behave. He instead posits that all human beings primarily experience reality through the phenomenological worldview; a representation of the world as “a forum for action” composed of known territory (areas of experience where you know where you are, what you want, and what to do to get what you want), unknown territory (areas of experience that indicate you don’t [fully] know where you are, what you want, or what to do to get what you want), and the individual (as they experience navigation within and between these two territories, voluntarily and/or involuntarily). These pre-empirical representations structure all human behavior, according to Peterson, and were what the archaic minds of the past attempted to document in their mythologies. Peterson then attempts to establish a stable neuropsychological basis for these irreducible aspects of phenomenological experience. In essence, he makes the case that various functions of the brain support the initial claim that all human beings categorize known and unknown territory in ways consistent with mythological representation, and can voluntarily (re)categorize experiential anomalies - can transform “‘the unknown and terrifying world’ into the comfortable, productive, and familiar” - through cautious exploratory behavior. Once Peterson establishes these foundational claims, he then spends the rest of the book presenting his interpretive framework of how the interplay between “the unknown, the known and the knower” appears in various mythic imagery/motifs (taken from different cultures and time periods), and what implications these recurring themes (should) have on human behavior. His fundamental conclusion? Two phenomenological options constantly war for human embodiment via behavior and representation: arrogant (yet cowardly & childish) omniscience or humble (yet courageous & mature) inquiry. In other words, you can either choose to ignore anomalies (anything you don’t expect/understand, including your mistakes) or you can cautiously approach anomalies until you successfully attain resources/behaviors/realistic desires that get you what you want. To Peterson, these options constitute the mythic battle between good and evil – and Peterson argues that it is in your best interest to be good.

All of Peterson’s major claims and conclusions, however, need to be assessed for their degree of truth before they are fully/partially adopted by the reader. Arguably the most important question is whether a qualitative difference between empirical and phenomenological approaches to reality exists (and, as an important follow-up question, whether the phenomenological approach takes involuntary precedence over the empirical approach). The qualitatively distinct and predominant nature of phenomenology seems self-evident once reminded of the inevitable and necessary value judgments human beings make between objects/situations whenever they choose to behave – all action implies that one outcome is better than another. However, this framework of valuation cannot be provided by the indifferent empirical description of objects (which David Hume popularly observed with his “is-ought problem”). Phenomenology, then, appears to be the a priori approach to all human behavior - an approach where subjectivity and objectivity are (implicitly) conflated in order to identify what should be avoided or approached. The empirical facts Peterson uses to support his hypothesis of how the human brain structures experience seems scientifically valid and reliable (as indicated, in large part, by the amount of scientific articles & studies he references whenever making claims about how the brain functions on a neuropsychological level). Once these two claims are established as reasonable and

most likely true, it seems reasonable to state that any representation of reality that attempts to claim what should be valued or what should be done must be viewed primarily as a phenomenological representation (and therefore should primarily be judged by its success at helping human beings attain what they subjectively want, and not by how empirically accurate it is). Ancient mythological motifs that appear repeatedly across cultures and over long time spans are therefore the most “phenomenologically successful”, and therefore likely still inform/guide successful human behavior. This means that Peterson’s interpretive framework of what behavioral & phenomenological patterns are consistently represented in mythology are at least partially true – and true enough to take seriously.

The significance of this book cannot easily be overstated. Peterson effectively creates a compelling and nearly irrefutable argument for the importance of mythology in guiding human behavior, as well as providing a coherent framework that can be used to begin extracting practical phenomenological/behavioral principles from ancient (and contemporary) myths that can otherwise be dismissed as empirical fiction. Furthermore, he claims that destabilizing social manifestations of totalitarianism, nihilism, and decadence are the ultimately the result of the evil behaviors of the experiencing individual (evil being defined as the cowardly failure to learn from errors and strange, new phenomena) – he lays the responsibility of the world’s insanity at the feet of the reader. He also provides a solution: continually expose yourself to what you don’t know/understand in order to learn from it (or, alternatively: continually engage in activities you experience as meaningful, since the subjective sense of meaning “accompanies the honest pursuit of the unknown, in a direction and at a rate subjectively determined”). Successful adaptation to the unknown (and the sense of meaning experienced while this process occurs) will steer you away from nihilistic or decadent behavior, and will lead to adaptive behaviors and paradigms that will initially conflict with the traditional patterns of society (which prevents totalitarianism) and eventually lead to societal updates in behavior/resources/values (since your consistent success in situations that terrify most other people will lead others to imitate your behavior in those situations, updating perception on what needs to be done and what is truly valuable to pursue). Peterson therefore offers a call to action: if you become a hero, you will truly save the world.

Robert says

This book was a huge disappointment. It abounds with dense, often impenetrable, verbiage. Basic points are made repeatedly, but subtle ones occasionally appear in the middle of an argument and are never referenced again. Even worse, this text makes at least one statement that is factually wrong. This mistake is not a small oversight, either. It is one that demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of the topic being discussed at that part in the text, and throws into question the validity of other points made throughout the rest of the book.

I first encountered Maps of Meaning on TV Ontario as a lecture series with the same name. I found the lectures by Dr. Peterson fascinating, but, unfortunately, confusing in parts. There were details I wasn’t able to fully grasp, and I wanted to know more. That led me to this book, in hopes of filling in the gaps and developing a better understanding of the topics he covered.

One of the blurbs on the back cover says the book is "... exciting not just for the general reader ... ", suggesting that it should be accessible by a layman. Although I’m a layman in the area of psychology, I do have a graduate degree in computer science and have taken a handful of psychology and philosophy courses as an undergrad. Dr Peterson teaches an undergrad course based on this text that only has a couple of second year psych courses as prerequisites, so I figured I should be well-prepared to study, and understand, the book’s contents.

Things were slow-going from the start. There were repeated instances where the text could have said something simply (or at least with more clarity), but instead chose to obfuscate. Try this passage on for size (from page 13): "Active apprehension of the goal of behavior, conceptualized in relationship to the interpreted present, serves to constrain or provide determinate framework for the evaluation of ongoing events, which emerge as a consequence of current behavior." Now imagine 400+ pages in this style.

But I soldiered on. I took my time and tried to understand the details Dr. Peterson was presenting. In fact, there were parts of the book that I found genuinely fascinating and well-written. Unfortunately, these parts were overshadowed by a slowly growing feeling in my stomach that I was having the wool pulled over my eyes.

It was when I reached the middle of the book that this feeling fully crystallized. On page 235, Dr Peterson writes: "A moral system -- a system of culture -- necessarily shares features in common with other systems. The most fundamental of the shared features of systems was identified by Kurt Godel. Godel's Incompleteness Theorem demonstrated that any internally consistent and logical system of propositions must necessarily be predicated upon assumptions that cannot be proved from within the confines of that system."

That is most certainly NOT what Godel's Incompleteness Theorem states. I'd like to say that Dr Peterson has simply provided a naive oversimplification of the theorem, but that's not even the case. What Dr. Peterson has cited is a complete misrepresentation of Godel's work. Godel's Incompleteness Theorem has nothing to do with proving the "assumptions" (axioms) of the system from "within the confines of the system."

Dr. Peterson hammers on this mistake a page later when he describes the five postulates of Euclidean geometry. He writes: "What constitutes truth, from within the perspective of this structure, can be established by reference to these initial postulates. However, the postulates themselves must be accepted. Their validity cannot be demonstrated, within the confines of the system."

I can't give a proper exposition of Godel's Incompleteness theorem in one or two paragraphs, so if you're interested in details I direct you to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy which has a fairly readable description of what Godel actually proved.

This is where the book broke down for me. If the text so egregiously misrepresented Godel's Incompleteness theorem, what else had it oversimplified, misrepresented, or gotten plain wrong? And how much of its dense rhetoric was simply fancy word play to hide vacuous arguments?

To quote David Hume, "If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion." This is perhaps too harsh a verdict for Maps of Meaning. As I mentioned, there were parts that I found well-written and interesting. But taken as a whole, it's not worth the time investment required.

Scriptor Ignotus says

When I first discovered Jordan Peterson last summer, some months before his embroilment in the political controversy at the University of Toronto which made him a folk hero among the liberal right, I was first struck by some of the similarities between his intellectual journey, as he describes it, and my own.

Like me, Peterson earned a bachelor's degree in political science, but found himself unsatisfied with the exclusively materialist models of political behavior which seem to dominate the discipline. He became convinced, as I did, that in the quest to discover the material preconditions of socio-political life, the social sciences have lost sight of the degree to which material realities—and indeed, the very concept of reality, "The World", as apprehended by human consciousness—are a derivation of that seemingly-supernatural nexus of meaning called the human being.

To say that political life is dominated exclusively by material self-interest and arbitrary lust for power is simply bad anthropology; and any political theory, if it is to hold water, must account first for the profound *self-excessiveness* of human life as the fulcrum of our shared existence in polity, or else trade only in platitudes and superficialities; superficialities which, if sufficiently internalized and elevated to the status of dogma by would-be champions of "progress", can wreak havoc on the social order.

Peterson, having turned to psychology and perhaps regarding it as queen of the anthropological disciplines (as theology was once queen of the sciences), regards extreme political ideologies like fascism and communism as collective manifestations of psychopathology. Their appeal comes from their telling *part* (and only part) of a compelling mythopoetic story—compelling because it reflects and invokes certain elements of the evolved (and thus universal) structures of value and meaning in the human psyche. Their insidiousness lies in their inherently-violent propensity for rigid and pharisaical commitment to the assertion of what is essentially an isolated fragment of human value-experience over and above all others, degrading and damaging the fullness of the human personality in the process. Their political violence is an expression of a violently-disrupted psychological equilibrium. With murderous force, Hitler and Stalin tried to squeeze reality into a cramped and distorted ideological box. Reality prevailed, of course; but not before hundreds of millions of lives were snuffed out.

This is the danger of making an idol of a partial, superficial truth. Peterson would use the language of Jung and Neumann by claiming that political ideologues are under the possession of archetypes.

A militant feminist gazes into the impenetrable abyss of objective reality and sees only a malevolent patriarchal tyranny governing human affairs. A Leninist sees only class oppression. A fascist sees a primordial social purity corrupted by a plague of degeneracy. These are radical simplifications of reality; little ideational shelters in which the anxious can take refuge amidst the howling wilderness of the unknown, which is truth: the impossibly vast, uroboric ring of chaos surrounding the cosmos; the cosmos being the enclave of meaning-value carved out of this pandemonium by human consciousness.

Simply put, these ideologies are projections, and the projectors are fixated on half-truths. The father can be tyrannical in his negative aspect, but in his positive aspect he can be a benevolent protector and guide. The outsider might be a threat to social cohesion, but he could also be an emissary of light, renewing the society he enters by bringing new insight from beyond the realm of established knowledge.

To understand the nature of the whole man, one must understand that human beings view reality most fundamentally as "forum for action" rather than as "place of things". Modern empirical science, which has more-or-less successfully disentangled word-concepts from material objects, is a new and hard-won development in our intellectual history. The world of men was, and remains in better part, a world of meaning, value, and utility. Things are regarded not as they "really" are, but rather in terms of their significance for human life.

The great religious and mythological systems are not simply naïve theories of empirical science. They are better described as formulas for action; navigational charts of subjective valuation for the knower who

straddles the line between known and unknown. I'm tempted to call them "maps of meaning", but I can't remember where that's from.

I hope this book has found its moment, and that it can serve as an exorcist's manual for our apocalyptic, demon-haunted age.

Eric Sexton says

I just finished this book but I still need time to sit down and try to organize my thoughts about it. So this is more or a less my impressions immediately upon finishing it. But it says something about the depth and importance of what Peterson has to say that I couldn't possibly feel confident giving a proper review without sitting down and gathering my thoughts. Anyway, here goes nothing.

Peterson is one of the only living intellectuals that routinely blows my mind. Peterson couches really strange ideas in ways that the modern mind can swallow. It's clear that he's doing his damnedest to push the boundaries of human knowledge. Whatever he's actually accomplished in regards to human knowledge, he managed to affect me on a personal level in very deep ways.

What's most refreshing about this book is that it's not pushing a particular ideology. It's actually principally concerned with the dangers of ideology. The end result is the (incredibly organized) thoughts of a man who's clearly committed to the truth.

If someone asked me how to categorize it I wouldn't be sure what to say. Of course Peterson is a psychologist so there's a strong reliance on the field of psychology and his experience working as a clinical psychologist. But it deals just as much with ethics, evolutionary science, and religion. Perhaps the most general description I could give of the book is "an attempt to show the evolutionary origins of human morality" but that seems severely lacking.

I don't know, man. I'm in the mountains of Peru right now and sometimes I'm too distracted by the scenery to sit down and ponder my own thoughts. Maybe I'll come back here and update this once I've had more time to think. Probably not. Great book. Go read it. Seriously.

Dan Graser says

Having listened to a great deal of Peterson's lectures and having enjoyed his recent mass-market book "12 Rules for Life," I decided to tackle this huge tome on the formulation of myths and religions as a by-product of several neurological preconditions in addition to psychological understandings of the need to create meaning. Additionally, while I have enjoyed (though not always agreed) with his very direct, clearly-expressed views on a number of issues, it is in his discussions of religion in public life that I have found him to be somewhat vague and at times veering into mere casuistry. Given his style and his education I suspected there was more to it than merely, "dodging the question," which he rarely does.

Thus I suspected this textbook of his would elucidate his position on these issues more clearly and at greater

depth. In many ways that is the case and I think I have a better understanding of the importance he places on certain archetypal and symbolic elements of mythical and religious thought, beyond what I could already glean from his work having read a great deal of Jung myself.

As this is a textbook, readers of his more popular work may be a bit pressed to grasp some of these concepts as easily as in his lectures and other works simply because he is writing in a very academic style for an audience of students and professors in the field. Ignore the reviews that say his writing here is too dense or he is being deliberately evasive with his language, he isn't (at least not in THIS book), that is just a fundamental difference when writing a work for the general public or for scholars.

One of the important organizing concepts of the work follows a summary of Piagetian theory: "Behavior is imitated, then abstracted into play, formalized into drama and story, crystallized into myth and codified into religion - and only then criticized in philosophy, and provided, post-hoc, with rational underpinnings. Explicit philosophical statements regarding the grounds for and nature of ethical behavior, stated in a verbally comprehensible manner, were not established through rational endeavor. Their framing as such is clearly a secondary endeavor..."

Recent readers of his will also recognize several concepts that he has brought to a larger stage in remarks such as:

"The wisdom of the group can serve as the force that mediates between the dependency of childhood and the responsibility of the adult. Under such circumstances, the past serves the present. A society predicated upon belief in the paramount divinity of the individual allows personal interest to flourish and to serve as the power that opposed the tyranny of culture and the terror of nature. The denial of meaning, by contrast, ensures absolute identification with the group - or intrapsychic degeneration and decadence."

In such a far reaching work that has a specific theory and expresses it forcefully over 500+ pages, there will be areas of disagreement and perhaps a few oversteps in expression. However, even though I do not share his view of the role of religion in the development of the individual, I greatly enjoyed the work and would recommend to those with an interest in the development of mythological and religious meaning in ancient and modern cultures. Is this work as groundbreaking (published in 1999) as some of the hype now surrounding him would make it out to be? No. Is there plenty to learn and appreciate here? Yes there certainly is.

James says

A remarkable book, a key text in its field. Peterson shows that the myths of Christian and other cultures are maps of the ways in which human beings deal with anomaly, be it to shape a renewed culture and save it from chaos, or let it stagnate into decadence or totalitarianism. He is very clear on the psychological value of the Christ mythos, dazzlingly interprets from a psychological point of view key passages from the Bible and other texts, and shows how right Jung was to take an interest in Alchemy as a mirror of the individual soul's journey. A great achievement.

Devyn Kennedy says

Pseudoscience and claptrap that tries its damndest to use big words to bolster itself. a whiny child is still a

child no matters its vocabulary.

Olha Khilobok says

Not an easy thing at all, which adds to the feeling of personal heroic fulfillment while reading the last page.

A profound work which takes understanding of basic tree-act structure to the unprecedented depth. An exquisite example of how beautiful and fruitful multidisciplinary approach is.

Two month of both suffering and savouring with a pencil in your hand. Was it worth it? Yes, it was indeed.

Tim says

This is a work of great depth and complexity made accessible by Peterson's direct and engaging writing. Peterson synthesizes an array of scientific findings and philosophical frameworks as he endeavors to explain - to himself as much as his readers, it seems - what it means to be the creatures we are; burdened with the despair of our limitations, yet liberated by our capacity for self-redemption.

To oversimplify, this book is an exploration of the religious and cultural myths of our species, and how they relate to and correspond with neurological processes revealed by modern science.

Critical thinking at its finest.

Creative, insightful, honest, and inspiring.

David says

A few weeks ago my three year old daughter and I went to the library to check out some books. Usually she heads right to the section with Curious George while I peruse the kids books, looking for new and fun stories. Lately she's been randomly grabbing books off the shelf and declaring she wants them. Surprisingly they are usually quite good. I don't recall if she grabbed it or if I did, but we ended up with Scaredy Squirrel.

We took it home and read it. It was hilarious. Poor Scaredy Squirrel is terrified to leave his safe tree and journey into the unknown. He has all sorts of contingency plans for when and if he is threatened. Of course, when a bee flies by he forgets all his plans and dives out of his tree for safety.

A funny kids book and nothing more, right? Well, at the same time we got this book, I was working on Jordan Peterson's Maps of Meaning. A good chunk of his book is about how humans live in the midst of two worlds – the known and the unknown. We learn and grow by encountering the unknown, as scary as it is. The story of Scaredy Squirrel is a fun illustration of what Peterson was talking about, I actually flipped to the front to see if he had authored it.

I first heard of Peterson's book from a friend. My friend reads a ton of books and has introduced me to many great writers. On Facebook a while back he shared the ten most influential books he had read and this was

one of them. I added it to my list. When I finally got a copy and set out to read it was a challenging and delightful feast. Peterson draws on various fields, from science to religion. He brings them all to bear on his field, psychology, in a discussion of how mythology, the stories we tell, influence how we view the world. To put it another way, none of us sees the world objectively, as if the world is just objects out there which we all perceive. Instead we inherit maps of meaning from our ancestors which shape how we see the world.

There is a lot of good in this book. The only drawback is that it could have been more concise as Peterson tends to repeat himself and ramble at times. Overall though, this is a fantastic book.

Michael Volpi says

For one, this book, and Dr. Peterson's overall project (including his lectures, talks based on this seminal text), has completely transformed--complicated, illuminated--my conception and understanding of the fundamental psychological and philosophical importance of narrative. I'm a better learner, teacher, analyst and critic because of this text, for which I'm truly grateful.

Arthur Grunenwald says

Inspired by the infamously-titled video 'PhD gives up trying to reason with SJWs', I went down the rabbit hole of Dr. Jordan Peterson's poignant and critical thoughts about modernity and modern society. Unlike many modern academics, Peterson deviates from the commonality of Marxist thinking in relation to postmodern interdisciplinary studies. Instead of subscribing to the belief that economics is the root of the modern human condition, he utilises psychology and behavioural biology to explain the patterns of both national and international populations.

I was naturally drawn to Peterson as someone with affinities for language use and how it manifests itself in politics and society. I believe Peterson, at the very least, is outspoken against a certain kind of pseudo-intellectualism that is far too common in modern leftist thought.

This book was a 15-year project for Peterson and corresponds with his popular lecture of the same name at the University of Toronto; you can access his lecture videos as well as much more of Peterson's content for free on his YouTube channel. Seeing as how this is - for the time being - an underrepresented book on Goodreads, I look forward to immersing myself in this book and finding out what more Peterson can bring to the table.

Marie says

Disclaimers:

- 1) I don't think "Peterson is the evil misogynist, racist hero of the alt-right"
- 2) I don't think he's the ally of Western civilization, rationality and Christendom, either.
- 3) There are a few common sensical things that he has said (in regards to gender theory), which I don't rule out.
- 4) I'm Catholic, so Catholic things will ensue.

He's using an outdated ahistorical, unscientific Jung / Campbell / Eliade / Neumann base (read Wolfgang

Smith's Cosmos and Trascendence to see how far it goes into nonsense).

He agrees with Jung in a lot of stuff and especially the consideration that Christianity proceeds from Gnostic belief (specifically a 2nd century heresy that was fought by the Church Fathers, who he seems to ignore all around), that we all share a collective unconscious, that alchemy was the predominant "scientific" discourse in the Middle Ages, because there was no science in that time period (I guess Roger Bacon just didn't exist), that dogma is the same as fanaticism (the nerve!). That the realm of the unconscious presupposes a male overview where otherness is always female (before this is misread as "complaints about misogyny" ... I just question the universality of this subjective universal experience).

Following this model, mystic experience is impossible for otherness is almost always female (and God is not female, nor male), even an encounter with Jesus where in analogy to the Song of Songs, the default soul is GASP, FEMALE! Or even the Church, with its hierarchical structure is female. None of this would've happened if Christianity was truly Gnostic. Because Gnosticism despised femaleness.

Godel's theorem is badly explained, Panfield's model is obsolete (this guy died in 1976) and insufficient and fails to consider the independent movements of muscles, his interpretations of the Bible are throughout heretical (no evidence that the serpent was female, "dogmatic" positions equated knowledge of good and evil with scientific knowledge, and that putting Mary above God is a "Christian alternative"). He also clearly ignores representations of chaos which are sex-neutral or male, or those where the sun god is a sun goddess instead (Amaterasu); and that Christ defeated the "The Great and Terrible Mother". Death is never referred to as a mother in the Bible.

He also says that the existence of Islam is not seen as evil to a devout Christian. **DISCLAIMER:** Muslims are human beings, and they are created in the image and likeness of God, BUT the existence of Islam itself poses a heresy, cause of division for it denies the divinity of the Son, and NO, this is not innocuous.

Basically, for all people hoping for Peterson to convert, there's a long way to go if he still holds on to these schemes.

To close, no, morality is not constructed upon instinct or it wouldn't be objective.

I'll leave you with Sam Harris' criticism of this method.

"Has human evolution actually selected for males that closely conform to the heroism of St. George? And is this really the oldest story we know? Aren't there other stories just as old, reflecting quite different values that might also have adaptive advantages? And in what sense do archetypes even exist? ... [I]sn't it obvious that most of what we consider ethical—indeed, almost everything we value—now stands outside the logic of evolution? Caring for disabled children would most likely have been maladaptive for our ancestors during any conditions of scarcity—while cannibalism recommended itself from time to time in every corner of the globe. How much inspiration should we draw from the fact that killing and eating children is also an ancient "archetype"?"

Relative to style, the book drags on and on forever, and could be half as long if we didn't have to deal with Peterson's own projection in the nature of sin, religion, and the idea that he is as great as Jung based on the assumption that he "cracked the code". Please, just stop quoting things to repeat points you made pages earlier and earlier. Abuse of italics and quotation make this longer than it should be.

Gnosticism such as this can't masquerade as orthodox belief for much longer.

Relative to his recent declarations to socially enforced monogamy, I do think they might've been overblown BUT marriage has to have something else rather than just "the effects of diminishing violence" or else we're right into utilitarianism. We can't use the "make sure every man marries or they will end up being a psycho" as a rule, because celibacy of priests in the Latin Church, monks of various traditions (not necessarily Christian) and other paths of consecrated and even single life do show that being single is not the end of the world, but can be put to good use.

Liam says

This changed my way of thinking about fundamental notions. Towards the end it becomes harder to see exactly what he's getting at, and as the book progresses, the diagrams become more and more speculative, but for the first half at least it had a revelation on every page. Also, Peterson mentioned one of my favourite films, "Crumb" in a footnote.

Timothy Ball says

"The truth seems painfully simple – so simple that it is a miracle, of sorts, that it can ever be forgotten. Love God, with all thy mind, and all thy acts, and all thy heart. This means, serve truth above all else, and treat your fellow man as if he were yourself – not with the pity that undermines his self-respect, and not with the justice that elevates yourself above him – but as a divinity, heavily burdened, who could yet seethe light. It is said, it is more difficult to rule oneself, than a city – and this is no metaphor. This is truth, as literal as it can be made. It is precisely for this reason that we are always trying to rule the city. It is a perversion of pride to cease praying in public, and to clean up the dust under our feet, instead; seems too mundane to treat those we actually face with respect and dignity, when we could be active, against, in the street. Maybe it is more important to strengthen our characters, than to repair the world. So much of that reparation seems selfish, anyway; is selfishness and intellectual pride masquerading as love, creating a world polluted with good works, that don't work.

Who can believe that it is the little choices we make, every day, between good and evil, that turn the world to waste and hope to despair? But it is the case. We see our immense capacity for evil, constantly realized before us, in great things and in small – but can never seem to realize our infinite capacity for good. Who can argue with a Solzhenitsyn when he states: "One man who stops lying can bring down a tyranny"? Christ said, the kingdom of Heaven is spread out upon the earth, but men do not see it.⁶⁵⁷ What if it was nothing but our self-deceit, our cowardice, hatred and fear, that pollutes our experience and turns the world into Hell? This is a hypothesis, at least – as good as any other, admirable and capable of generating hope –why can't we make the experiment, and find out if it is true? "
