

Video: Richard Dawkins v. Jordan Peterson (Mainly on Memes / Archetypes)

Post by “Cassius” of October 27, 2024 at 4:02 PM

Over at the Facebook group [a reader posted](#) to this video as part of a longer post which referenced several videos. The topic of the post was broadly speaking about issues with reductionism, with which I am sympathetic and frequently cite the David Sedley paper "Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism."

Now that i have had a chance to watch this video, I see that the topic of this one isn't really reductionism, but broadly about Dawkins' views of memes as a "mind virus" vs. Peterson's amalgamation of Jungian archetypes and all sorts of other things. As Dawkins says, Peterson is "drunk" on symbolism." [I hope the word is "drunk" - might be another word of similar meaning.]

So while this video is only tangentially related to reductionism, I do think it's very interesting for revealing how Peterson is happy to admit that he is not convinced of the truth of core Bible stories, but doesn't think that their truth is relevant to their importance. To me this just oozes of a Platonic "noble myth" approach where one doesn't care a bit whether a story that is being told is "true" so long as it is effective in producing a desirable social result.

I have tremendous respect for Richard Dawkins but I have to question whether Dawkins responded with the kind of intensity that was appropriate. Peterson is long-winded and tends to filibuster whenever he gets a chance to speak, with the result that this video is mostly Peterson telling Dawkins what Peterson thinks with an occasional break to give Dawkins a short reply.

For those who might want to watch I think this video is useful for:

1. Revealing a straightforward and bold-faced proponent of "I don't care if something is true as long as it leads to a result that i desire." (Peterson)
2. Giving an example of how someone who's broadly aligned with Epicurean views (Dawkins) can respond to such a position. I'm beginning to see Dawkins more as someone almost to be sorry for than as an example for Epicurean argument. His age is not his fault, and he seems to be under a lot of censorship pressure in England to tiptoe around religious issues he'd have been much more clear about in the past. And I detect that Dawkins' humanism inclines him to look for agreement with Peterson where he can agree on political issues, rather than to fight with Peterson on the fundamental errors of his approach.

But all in all it's a worthwhile video -- if you can stomach listening to Peterson's preachy style of talking.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wBtFNj_o5k

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4113-video-richard-dawkins-v-jordan-peterson-mainly-on-memes-archetypes/?postID=32754#post32754>