

Mapping Peterson's Maps

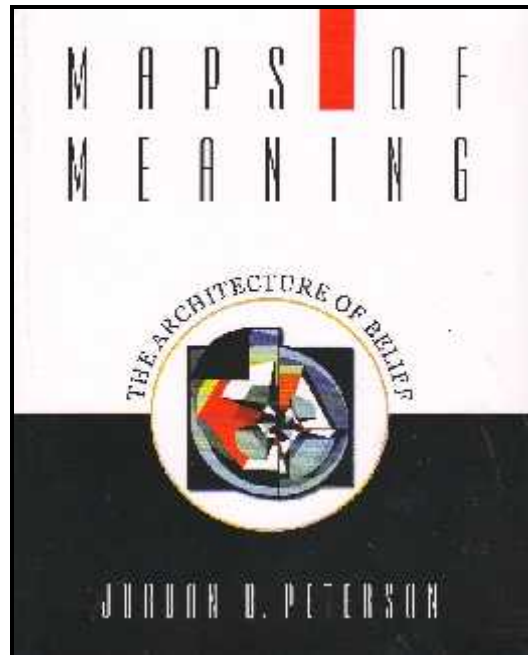


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By

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Jordan B. Peterson (1999). *Maps of meaning: The architecture of belief*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Preface

DESCENSUS AD INFEROS

*I will utter things which have been kept
Secret from the foundation of the world.*
(Matthew 13:35)

Something we cannot see protects us from something we do not understand. The thing we cannot see is culture, in its intrapsychic or internal manifestation. The thing we do not understand is the chaos that gave rise to culture. If the structure of culture is disrupted, unwittingly, chaos returns. We will do anything-anything-to defend ourselves against that return (p. xi).

Meaning is the most profound manifestation of instinct. Man is a creature attracted by the unknown; a creature adapted for its conquest. The subjective sense of meaning is the instinct governing rate of contact with the unknown...Meaning is the instinct that makes life possible. When it is abandoned, individuality loses its redeeming power. The great lie is that meaning does not exist, or that it is not important. When meaning is denied, hatred for life and the wish for its destruction inevitably rules: (pp. 468-469)

*If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you.
If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.*
(The Gospel of Thomas, saying 70)

This is the whole book! - Well, *Der Erste und der Letzte*.

Maps of Meaning

What this book is:

1. It has 541 **pages** – mostly single spaced with a few figures and drawings.
2. The **index** is 26 pages – and excellent index. Chaos is listed 55 **times** plus discussion in nine groups or **sections**.
3. There are 668 **footnotes** – some are at least a page long (lengthy and detailed).
4. There are then 468 **pages of work** – again, some with pictures/figures/drawings.
5. Actually there are 68 **figures** in the book – most of them are less than a half page. Actually the theme of the figures is in two parts showing **ORDER** and **CHAOS**.
6. **Uroboros** is used 34 **times** (see definition below).
7. (*Hippocampus* is used four **times** associated with “amygdala” – both will be on the test.)
8. The five **sections** are:

1. Maps of Experience: Object and Meaning

2. Maps of Meaning: Three Levels of Analysis

- a. *Neuropsychological Function: The Nature of the Mind*

The Valence of Things

Unexplored Territory: Phenomenology and Neuropsychology

Exploration: Phenomenology and Neuropsychology

Explored Territory: Phenomenology and Neuropsychology

- b. *Mythological Representation: The Constituent Elements of Experience*

The Enuma elish

*The Dragon of Primordial **Chaos***

*The Great Mothers: Images of the **Unknown**, or Unexplored Territory*

*The Divine Son: Images of the **Knower**, the Exploratory Process*

*The Great Father: Images of the **Know**, or Explored Territory*

3. Apprenticeship and Enculturation: Adoption of a Shared Map

4. The Appearance of Anomaly: Challenge to the Shared Map

Particular Forms of Anomaly

The Strange

The Stranger

The Strange Idea

The Revolutionary Hero

5. The Hostile Brothers: Archetypes of Responses to the Unknown

See the **Uroboros** at number 6. It is a snake...on page 141 – “The Uroboros – Precosmogonic Dragon of **Chaos**.” If we could connect the **times** Uroboros or the snake shows up in Peterson’s book you would see other names attached like devil, Satan, dragon, fallen angel, or has **Constituent** elements of the world like The Unknown, The Known, and The Knower.

What this book is not:

“It is not an easy read.”



Selected vocabulary/comments/quotes

Chaos, Orwell, psychology, Carl Jung, Freud, Descartes, Bacon, Newton, Nietzsche, cosmogonic, Dostoevsky, Thomas Kuhn, homunculi, Gilgamesh, Genesis, Enuma elish, Marduk, Mikhaila, cortical event-related potential, amygdala, hippocampus, alchemy, archetypal, Auschwitz, yang, yin, uroboros, Tolstoy, Tiamat, The Terrible Mother, Great Father, Tao, CHAOS, concentration camp, Gulag Archipelago, Dachau, Dante, Precosmogonic chaos, nigredo, Niebuhr, nested, myth, limbic, lapis, known, knower, Jesus, John, intrapsychic, incarnation, semantic (linguistically mediated) memory, episodic (fantasy) memory, post hoc, the belly of the beast, Jean Piaget, motoric repertoire, Eliade, Edenic, dragon of chaos, Devil, Delacroix, Solzhenitsyn, Frankl, *axis mundi* (center of the universe), and a ton more...

Amygdalic and hippocampal systems are critically involved in production of N2/P3 waveforms. The amygdala says, “if you don’t know what it signifies, you’d better pay attention to it.”

The hippocampal comparator constantly and “unconsciously” checks what is “actually” happening against what is supposed to happen.

You are *there*, in consequence, you are not an idiot, If you believed in God, you would thank Him.

*You don't believe that.
That isn't true.
You don't believe that.
That isn't true.*

- 1) What is?**
- 2) What should be?**
- 3) How should we therefore act?**



Eugene Delacroix "Mephistopheles"

"...and there seem to be demonic reinforcements in heathen life that account for the almost superhuman grandeur of the heathen empires, especially just before they fall" (p. 315).

We do model facts, but we concern ourselves with **valence** (preparation/strength), or value. It is not enough to know that something *is*. It is equally necessary to know what it *signifies*...(like the test on mice) Will this new thing eat me? Can I eat it? Will it chase me? Can I mate with it? Our most fundamental maps of meaning...portray *the motivational value of our current state*...accompanied *by plans of action*, which are our pragmatic notions about how to get what we want.

If problems are accepted,
and dealt with before they arise,
they might even be prevented before confusion begins.
In this way peace may be maintained.

Lao Tzu

The world as forum for action.
Towards pathological stultification.
All that I know is all that is necessary to know.

This is not good...[Peterson uses this term quite often in his lectures, talks, and class room.]

We move in a linear direction from present to future.
Myth is *not* primitive proto-science... Sky (An), Earth (Ki).
...convince himself that he is a man and not a piano-key!
The metamythology of the way describes the manner in ideas (myths) about the present...
The known...protects us from the unknown, from chaos...
We act to transform “where we are” into “where we would like to be.”

Everything *is* something and *means* something.
God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.

The eternal unknown – affectively ambivalent feminine character as in “mother” or “devourer.”
The eternal known – protective, predictable, heroic, and considered masculine.
The eternal knower – the knight who slays the dragon of chaos, the sun god, engenders cosmic.

Our affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses to the unknown (unpredictable) are hard wired.
Indeed, our very cultures are erected upon the foundation of a single great story: *paradise, encounter with chaos, fall and redemption.*

If I were you, I would take a good look at myself.

*It is true that man was created in order to serve the gods,
who, first of all, needed to be fed and clothed.*

Eliade



A demonic fall involves defiance of and rivalry with God rather than simple disobedience...

These three areas below take up about 68 pages and their size show how much emphasis Peterson has given to this section. Just by looking at the examples one can see how it is a 3x3x3 format. I point this out to show I have not commented much on this section in this paper and will highlight this area for some serious focus when reading the book.

*The Great Mothers: Images of the **Unknown**, or Unexplored Territory*

*The Divine Son: Images of the **Knower**, the Exploratory Process*

*The Great Father: Images of the **Know**, or Explored Territory*

The Adversary in Action: A twentieth Century Allegory p. 342

These 36 pages are a focus on what Peterson talks about in his classes and his concerts. This was the first place I looked at because of his emphasis on not only how Solzhenitsyn help shut down the Soviet Union but to expose the evil issues explaining how someone could be so cruel to fellow camp mates and how horrible the prisoners were treated by the Russians in the Gulag. Who will argue with a Solzhenitsyn when he states: “One man who stops lying can bring down a tyranny”?

He also included Viktor Frankl’s work as he survived the German concentration camp called Auschwitz and lived to write about it.

The punch line for this part of the book is:

“Faced with the horror of camp life – ‘It too, is life’ – many become corrupted” (p. 350).

Just this part, is worth the price of the book...

The picture below could show the hell of this section and the horror of the concentration camps.



Demonic chaos – maybe the belly of the beast...or on the edge of the deep and dark abyss.

List of the Peterson Books

Jordan Peterson *The Jordan Peterson cheat sheet.*

Jordan Peterson *Beyond order: 12 more rules for life.*

Jordan Peterson *12 Rules for life.*

Jordan Peterson (1999). *Maps of meaning.*

Ron Dart (2023). *Myth and meaning in Jordan Peterson.*



Satanic art for the day...



Devils Tower

Pertinent, pithy, and pedagogic: Period

Dr. Peterson would probably give me a low grade for marking up his book like I have; for sure, every page has some sort of pencil, ink, colored highlighters, Crayola marks, and five colors using Sharpie GEL highlighters – plus pasting pictures (on the first two pages) of St. George killing the dragon. He tells his class to not waste time ‘marking anything’ in their books. He admonishes them to read it till they understand what is written and remember it. Well, I could debate this with him (and win) by pointing out some of us don’t have a large enough memory on our hard drives to remember and recall like he does – nor the IQ to go along with it.

Dr. Peterson came alive while reading certain parts of his book as he has discussed some of the issues in TV or has taken some of the Map’s book into his other books. The first example is from his last page, the last line on that page which is a quote from the Gospel of Thomas where Jesus says “Do not tell lies...” in saying Six. This is part of Rule #8 in his “12 Rules for Life” which says “Tell the truth – or, at least, don’t lie.”

Dr. Peterson, it seems to me, is always trying to help. Always he is helping - regardless of his podium, chair, speech box, or sitting across from some TV personality. His book is backed up with the expressions he uses when he is being recorded. One example on page 447 holds this drift: “This is the message that everyone wants to hear. Risk your security. Face the unknown. Quit lying to yourself, and do what your heart truly tells you to do. You will be better for it, and so will the world.”

Dr. Peterson could be the modern day savior of our country and the world. In my opinion he has the most intellect of anyone on the Tube. Maybe he can save world. The one expression that hold together the warp and weave of his teaching is also on the last page of his Maps book. It is also from the Gospel of Thomas (Saying seventy). Here, again, is the wisest saying in the book .

If you bring forth what is within you,
what you bring forth will save you.
If you do not bring forth what is within you,
what you do not bring forth will kill you.

Dr. Peterson comes through quite nice in his book talking about how he trained, taught, and loved his kids. These stories bring him down (or up) to a point of not only a prominent professor and professional psychotherapist, but as a father. This is helpful to hear these stories – the letter to his father is also ‘of note.’ Again, while reading and hearing him say from the TV stories adds to the credibility of his book. Not to be missed is the intermingling of some patient stories used as examples for what he is talking about in his book.

Dr. Peterson’s Maps book will now move to the head of his list of books in my library...this one is a keeper – and it is marked up to show it!

Lastly, in this review of *Maps of Meaning*, he is always pushing to get the best out of everyone. This is best demonstrated how he discusses overcoming evil. He says to folks who need help “[You can start by cleaning up your room.](#)” He says some folks will need to fight the dragon in their lives. See the picture on page 184 “Figure 39: Castle, Hero, Serpent and Virgin: St. George and the Dragon.”

“All the elements of the ‘meta-myth’ are portrayed in this drawing...the hero, armed with the sword, who cuts’ the leviathan into pieces, and makes the world...”



Gustave Moreau

This painting connects with the painting on the cover page (although the Zafero version is a more modern).

The task of this paper was to put down some notes on what was said in Peterson’s book. My reason was to show or list items that I could refer back to for a quick review.

Hope this will add to the authenticity and readability!