**Peterson's Interview: How It Shed Light on Present Day Miscommunication**

21st century media has a predefined image. The image usually has polarized opinions among different social groups and political factions. Modern day active political players from both the left-right positions have divided notions concerning the media, with the divide growing more severe as we move along either ends of the spectrum. But perhaps what is more interesting is the media's relation with the cultural revolution that has been ongoing since the 1980's. The West was the center of the revolution, with massive redefinitions of society and its inter-relations taking place, and a growing wave of liberal ideals being woven to the fabrics of Western society. After the late 1990's, the media became part of society's reformation of itself: topics that did not get much coverage or no coverage at all before, topics such as income and gender equality, began to be widely covered and it helped garner more public attention. Although the media's role in helping shed some light on issues previously ignored is irrefutable, its immersion into provocative modern day issues has resulted in it being intertwined in the complicated nature of things it tries to report, usually resulting in the blurred situation in which you can't tell whether the media is a separate entity, or just another institution that is ready to be abused by parties of interest. What recently brought this to my (and evidently many others') attention is a debate that took place a few weeks ago between Clinical Psychologist Jordan Peterson, and the UK's Channel 4 news reporter Cathy Newman.

Peterson is a Canadian Psychologist and Professor at the University of Toronto. His work ranges from his teaching career to advising individual clients, and he also works with other professionals by consulting them on how to further their careers. Furthermore, he is active in the political atmosphere of Canada and elsewhere, and it is this endeavor that brought him in the spotlight in the first place. He is an ardent advocate of free speech and describes himself as a classical liberal, and claims society's uncompromising alliance with extreme modern day ideologies has resulted in the "inaccurateness" and "corruption" of the social sciences. He argues this is directly responsible for the use of less factual and empirically tested, evidence based information, further fueling some peoples unpleasant belief that the humanities are fields that do not base theories and generalizations on fact proven data, but rather driven by word-mongorers.

The exchange he had with Newman was fairly unbalanced to say the least, and at times, pretty bizarre. She would ask a question based on his past comments or lectures; he would respond by giving a brief elaboration for every question, either from his experience with his clients or other social, economic, and demographic data. Most of the exchange centered around the gender pay gap and Postmodern culture. For each response he had, she would try to turn what he said into something exaggerated and unrelated in order to make him look sinister, and someone with an agenda of bashing at certain sections of society (like women) and Western liberal culture. Each time she would miss the point he was trying to make and he would end up trying to logically justify each suggestion. For instance, when discussing the pay gap, Peterson argues that the gap indeed exists, but he says there are several reasons behind it other than gender differences. According to him, research has already been done and it shows that although there is prejudice in the job market, gender related psychological factors and traits come in to the equation. She instead interprets this as if he denied the pay gap exists, taking the conversation from the basic journalist task of fact digging to making him face this unreasonable persona she persistently displays.

He remains constantly polite amidst the jibes she throws at him, although showing some signs of frustration at how she seems to completely misunderstand him. The climax of the debate takes place around 20 minutes into the exchange; after indicating that his comments have been divisive and identifying him with ultra-conservatives, Newman challenges Peterson why his right to freedom of speech should in any way overshadow another person's right not to be offended. He responds that in order for anyone to be able to think independently, they have to risk "being offensive", further offering the very same interview he was having as an example, to which he implies to Newman that she was obviously willing to risk offending him in her search for truth at that moment. He closes his idea by asking her why she had the right to exercise her freedom of speech and act in such a way, and he did not. At that point she gets trapped in her own projective logic and runs out of things to say.

The ultimate argument is not whether Peterson's implications are correct or not. The point is that the interview was an apt depiction of the failures of modern communication. An idea is proposed, and it seems as though countless opinions are formed through involuntary reaction that might not even be slightly related to the original abstract. And the media's role as a catalyst is huge.

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\* I would suggest to put the article in a separate corner established for non-Jacobs related topics, like the pulse’s “outside the bubble” section.