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Culture and Communications

Article Review #1

Jordan Peterson is a clinical psychologist and a professor of psychology at the University of Toronto who gives his thoughts on the subject of diversity. The title of his article, *The Great Ideological Lie of Diversity* gives a hint at his views on the topic. Peterson's article is in response to three Canadian research granting councils pledging to increase diversity among the recipients of federal funding for research. Peterson claims that, "Diversity" is a word that, on the face of it, masquerades as something positive—because it is positive, in some of its manifestations." He goes on to describe how a homogenous group of thinkers is not desirable for any organization, but diversity for diversity's sake is equally undesirable as it relies on the same prejudicial decision making which proponents of diversity oppose.

When describing diversity, Peterson claims, "What it truly means is 'let's aim for fewer white men in positions of authority,' which would be a fine idea if race and sex were reasonable criteria by which to judge applicants...The claim that group-based differences are so important that they must take substantive priority during hiring and promotion merely risks validating the opposite claim." He goes on to explain that people should be hired (and fired) based on merit and experience, not based on ethnic or racial background.

Peterson makes a second argument against diversity for diversity's sake. He argues that if one were truly aiming to represent minority populations accurately when filling positions of authority, there would be no end to the minorities which need to be represented for true diversity to be established. For even a the few categories of race, gender, disabilities (of which there are

many), and social class to be considered when truly diversifying a group, more than 30,000 positions must be represented. And that doesn't even cover half of the possible minority populations. Who decides which minorities must be represented in certain positions?

He concludes by telling his readers that as a society, we must return to the principles of individuality that West is known to value so highly. Each person must be judged suitable or unsuitable for a position based on merit, regardless of background. And it can not be assumed that any person thinks or behaves differently based on their skin color or gender.

<https://www.jordanbpeterson.com/blog-posts/lie-of-diversity/>

Selected quotes:

“What it truly means is “let’s aim for fewer white men in positions of authority,” which would be a fine idea if race and sex were reasonable criteria by which to judge applicants, and if it wasn’t motivated by a broad set of “progressive” beliefs, which include the idea that we live in an oppressive patriarchy and that men who work now should be required to step back so that a litany of hypothetical, indefinable and prejudicial historical wrongs might be righted”

“Diversity” is a word that, on the face of it, masquerades as something positive—because it is positive, in some of its manifestations.”

“There are real problems with this agenda, however. The first is that it’s dangerous, in exactly the manner it is hypothetically designed to fight.”

“The claim that group-based differences are so important that they must take substantive priority during hiring and promotion merely risks validating the opposite claim.”

“A final observation. The fact of the endless multiplication of categories of victimization, let’s say—or at least difference—was actually solved long ago by the Western emphasis on the individual. We essentially assumed that each person was characterized by so many differences than every other person (the ultimate in “intersectionality”) that it was better to concentrate solely on meritocratic selection, where the only difference that was to be considered was the suitability of the person for the specific and well-designed tasks that constituted a given job. That works—not perfectly, but less imperfectly than anything else that has been contemplated or worse, implemented. We toy with it at our peril.”