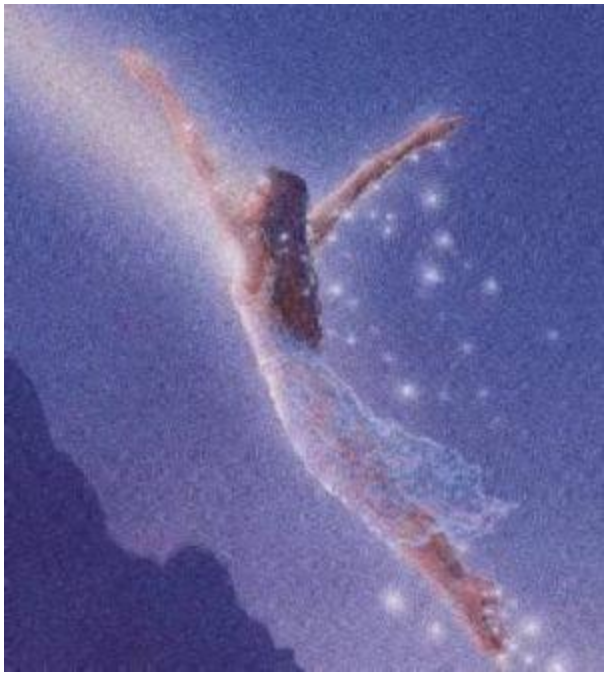
Extraordinary Belief and Rational Approach



If you believe that you are driven by a greater cosmic force toward a certain kind of purpose, and that this purpose does not allow you to explain it fully to rational minds, then whatever cosmic force that may be, one shouldn't immediately impose their idea of right and wrong, true or false, rational or irrational, over you. You have a right to believe certain things, whether or not they are rational. That's because what **seems** rational isn't necessarily true. And we generally ought to act on things that are **true**, whether consciously or not, rationally or not, even if sometimes the "truth hurts" or is anathema to our conscious minds. We also must remember our **civil liberties**, to practice things that may not always seem rational to others. Or that it is **rational** to tolerate instances which are in debate whether they are ultimately rationally justified. But is it possible that **rationality can approximate truth?** If so, then it could pay to act on rational trends for the most part.

It is **rational**, then, in itself to seek a compromise in society between what people can **rationally justify**, and what people can rationally have the liberties to do, without justification.

Why Rational?

The general consensus of the world is that although we cannot clearly identify "good" from "bad" . . . we can identify "progress" from "regress." That is to say: We can identify things that will help us get "better," (ie, more capable, more harmonious) as opposed to things that cause us to get "worse" (ie, less capable, less harmonious). It is a general consensus of the world that for right now, **rationality is progress**. And although it is a stretch to say, we can induce that as a result: **rationality is good**.

Why is rationality progress? Mainly, because we depend on the truth, and rationality is our approximation of the truth. Truth not only tells us how to get things we want, but also justify why we may want things. What **clearly seems** rational is closer to the truth than what **doesn't seem** rational. To put it short: **What's evidently more rational is generally the better**

choice. You should mainly do what's rational, act on rational decisions, especially when there's a lot of (calculated) risk involved in that decision. And people taking big risks that potentially afflict many others, based on irrational decisions, should be brought to justice, assimilated back into the collective of rationality. But only . . . to a degree. Forcing everyone to taxing standards of rationality can also be an irrational choice.

Whatever tricks of the trade help us to improve rationality, is also generally good. If we can agree with this, then we can continue to say that some "tricks" to aid rationality depend upon other components. Without these tricks being properly coupled, they are unworthy. The use of these unworthy tricks, we can call **insidiously irrational**, or **pseudophilosophy**. Because they liken some rationality, but omit some very important components to make it wholly rational. And there are many many examples of this pseudophilosophy today.
There are large collectives based on irrational arguments, assimilating people and destroying opponents. Suppose a statement by the leaders of a collective, addressed to its followers, referring to them such as "the freedom loving, freedom fighting, truth seeking people" (ie: "good" people). This is looping the assumption "if you joined us, you must be good" and therefore "because you're good, this collective is good" - a circular argument from which there is no escape. Something is amiss.

Figuring out which collectives are most rational can seem a difficult task. There are many examples today, big and small, of people acting on evidently **irrational** arguments with a lot of risk. This is a serious problem. We're not talking about a game of chess. We're talking about people whom are needlessly tortured and killed. About starvation, dieing ecosystems . . . the list goes on. Irrational agencies often go on to slander other opposing agencies that are far more rational. But because their slander is heartfully listened to, their irrationality reigns supreme.

These **irrational collectives** are not necessarily stupid, which makes them all the more dangerous. Because even an intelligent process can lack a crucial piece of rationality. Smart systems can be irrational. Smart people, seemingly responsible for the most part, can be regressive ("bad") to the common goals. Likewise, simple people with rational thoughts can also be swung into the perpetuation of irrational systems. The underlying tone of this message is to say that you should pay attention to rationality, more than to sophistication or "kind" behavior, more than to whether the conclusion is mundane or exciting, and more to the nature of people rather then become dead set on one series of institution. What's rational is good. What's irrational is generally bad, bad collectives or downright bad people. True? Generally believed so. You decide.

A few words we are now going to look at are: Logic, Prudence, Wisdom, Knowledge, Science.

Logic

If you are familiar with the science fiction: Star Trek, then you will know how Spock was one of the most fundamental characters of the genre, a high-ranking starfleet member, and a member of a species which helped humans create the "United Federation of Planets." You would also know him and his species to talk about one thing incessently. That is: Logic. Perhaps if Gene Roddenberry, the creator of Star Trek, were alive today, he might consider that although his aim was quite altruistic, his syntax could have been slightly improved-especially for a word that would become a hallmark of this multimillion dollar industry. Perhaps he would have considered swapping **logic** for **rationality**.

Logic in its purest sense is not tangible to real world things. There is no "logical" real world decision. Logic is in fact abstract. A thing philosophy would call Aposteriori. Or "subsequent to the fact." This is not to say that logic is useless. On the contrary, logic is why we can send rockets into space. Statistical precision of calculating data was highly responsable for developing the necessary theories. But logic is merely the process of taking **abstract, digital constructs** and submitting them to a rational decision toward accomplishing a set goal. It is possible for someone to be very logical, and yet absurdly irrational. You may have met one. They can be anal-retentive, to the point that they would starve themselves, or fail to pay rent, in order to complete a jigsaw puzzle, or becoming physically hostile to someone that moved their furniture. They do submit their own logical constructs to a certain precise rationality. Yet they may also completely evade real-world solutions, because real-world problems are not always logical ones, or at least cannot be measured so precisely in order to articulate only one logical solution. It is only our own logical constructs which can make them appear so, and can sometimes approximate the truth. Perhaps we could all learn from Spock . . . if we could just hand him a thesaurus.

Prudence

If you ever heard someone being called a "Prude," you were probably aware that it was derogatory. That's because prudence is not necessarily pleasant.

Prudence is the virtue of seeking truth over pleasure. (Ie: Ignorance is bliss . . . usually).

[in process of rewriting . . .]

When we talk about being **rational,** we mean a very specific thing. We mean: The most sound reasoning, or the best justified belief- when compared with other contradicting views. Rational beliefs are so because they are beliefs more *justified* than their counterarguments. There are many types of reasoning which can justify a thing. But the level of justification, (ie, the weight of the evidence), depends upon each piece of the reasoning connecting with minimal gaps. A rational argument is language essentially in the form of: "A because B, B because C, C because D" and so on. Each "_ because _" is one step of the reasoning. Sometimes the reasoning may seem complex overall, because it has many different steps that lead into one another. **However,** only rational claims make *each step* as simple as possible, and very necessary for the answer- moreso than its counterargument.

A rational decision at the most basic level operates on two things: **Argument, and claim**. There are lots of rational facts that as far as we know simply haven't been argued very well yet. So an irrational argument (a poor argument / bad argument) doesn't mean that its claim is also irrational. What a bad argument means is that it lacks relevance to the claim. In other words: A bad argument doesn't make its claim false. It's just a bad argument. You can argue for the falsity of a claim; against a claim; as in "why this claim is false." Arguing against a claim is different from showing a poor argument. Just because the argument is bad, doesn't mean the claim is false. The kind of reasoning here is illustrated in the [] fallacy.

Fallacy brings us to the heart of the matter. Our concern is not simply about what makes something irrational. We're concerned with what at first glance appears *deceptively rational*, when on closer inspection it *appears deeply irrational*. And fallacies are spying tools to catch these kinds of arguments.

If just one of these steps in rationality lacks clarity or necessity for the reason . . . then something is amiss. The whole argument faces a problem. Either the rationality is flawed, meaning that it can still be rational but it was just argued poorly, **or** it is deceptively irrational, which means it's like a cancer strain in the body of public knowledge. A lie (intended or not) that many people will believe and behave according to, threatening progress. Progress being what we all generally want according to what seems to matter.

The Virtues of Rationality

Eliezer S. Yudkowsky identifies 12 points of what can help ensure a statement is rational. Identifying where a paper lacks any of these 12 points can suggest irrationality. I have paraphrased these steps out of need for summary. The original paper is available here.[LINK!]

(1) Curiousity. Expresses a genuine desire to know.

(2) Relinquishment. A welcome to destroy some of your fundamental beliefs if it brings you closer to the truth.

(3) Lightness. The truth could lead any which way and one welcomes the constant shift that it brings them.

(4) Forced conclusivity. That the evidence doesn't really give you a choice in saying anything otherwise.

(5) Argument. Welcome the dialectic. Argument is good. Especially from those whom are well researched on a related topic and can show the relation.

(6) Empiricism. Evidence. Something physical is best. A measurement is worth a thousand opinions.

(7) Simplicity. The more complicated or obscure it sounds, the harder it is to rationalize.

(8) Humility. You've probably made a lot of mistakes already, don't forget to check for what they are and admit them.

(9) Perfectionism. Be relentless at finding yet more errors in your rationality.

(10) Precision. The more accurate the better. Often the only difference between right and wrong is a standard of accuracy. If the colour is blue- how blue is it?

(11) Scholarship. Your discipline on the subject is relevant if not primary to the evidence and your conclusion.

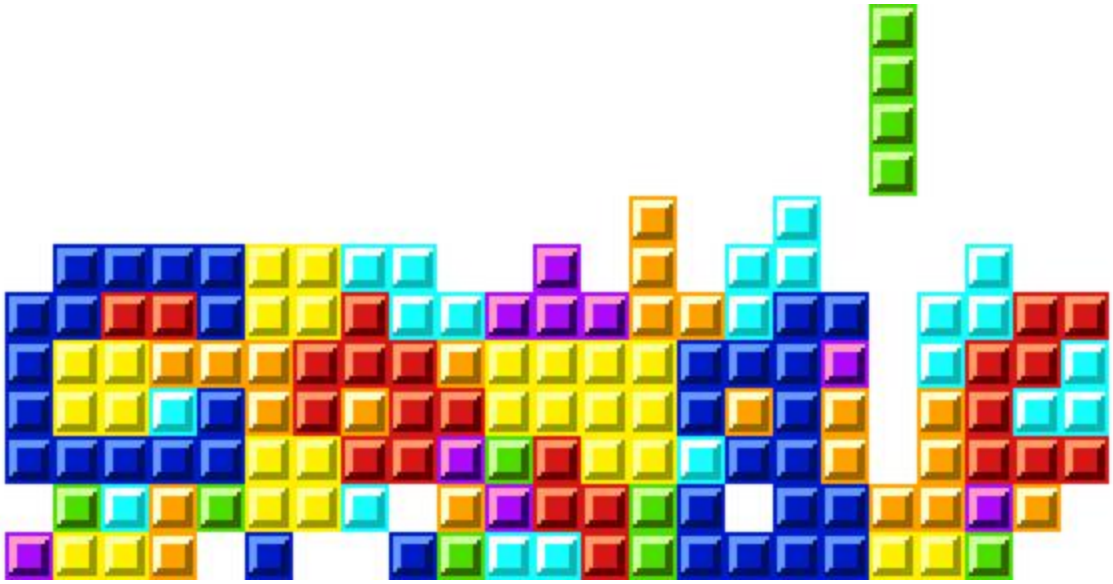
(12) Abstaining from erroneous additions. Don't try to fix a good thing. Once a paper is as rational as you can see it, there is nothing you can somehow add to give it better flavor. Let others do with it as they will, so long as you have the original presentation.

The flavors of Justification

Justified beliefs come in any combination of four flavours of reasoning. Your brain does this reasoning all the time, but it's very different to be *consciously aware* of these decisions you make as opposed to the way we normally make these decisions unconsciously in our daily life. These types of reasoning are as follows.

(1) Didactic Deduction: Eliminating an assumption because two meanings don't make the least bit of sense together. For example: We can say that cows are not oranges by didactic reasoning.

(2) Dialectic Deduction: Eliminating smaller assumptions while keeping some bigger assumptions because two meanings seem to have flaws when argued, but there is concensus between them. For example: Cows are not oranges, but they are both life forms that carry similar dna. And it is even possible (although strange) to have oranges with cow parts or cows with orange parts.



(2) Induction: Making new assumptions based on consistent patterns that *never show* or *rarely show* exceptions, through repeated controlled experiment.

(3) Syllogism: One thing connects well to the other.

(4) Occham's Razor: What yields the most observance with the least analysis?

In essence: When you can say that these four elements are used in your process of justifying a claim wherever possible, then you can call it a

rational claim.

Because philosophy itself is always in debate, then the philosophy for rationality is also subject to debate. Nothing is necessarily true, so far as we **rationally** know.

Rationality is the type of argument that we build foundation on. The stuff of architects, engineers, lawyers, and even most philosophers. The stuff that not only helps us think more clearly through our measurements, but also build more precisely to achieve things we hadn't done otherwise. Modern technology is the hallmark of rational thinking. There is a consistent archeological pattern found throughout civilization, that belief systems which adopted more rational modes of thought, like dialectic, were also the common innovators of technology. Like Athens, Greece, 500 BC. Where modes of dialectic reasoning gave rise to better architecture- bigger buildings.

It's not necessarily healthy for us to try to be as rational as we can be all the time. Sometimes we need a break. But when we want to make a very serious decision about something, and we agree with the foundation of rationality, then we are burdened with being pragmatic, prudent, rational. To put on our "thinking caps" for that time of making decisions and justifying the reasons. It's not that we need to always be rational people, but that our decisions ought to be rational outcomes when we consent to a rational basis of thought.

The **rational** pursuit of knowledge begins with trying to answer a most basic question possible. It does not necessarily mean that you believe or disbelieve one outcome of the question you're trying to answer, but that you are interested in anything which might offer evidence for that purpose. You are willing, at times, to pose hypothetical answers that are still not necessarily true, and test them. You are intent on answering questions that have not been redundantly asked and thoroughly tested without new evidence, and that have rather strong implications for how others ought to change their behavior in light of such an answer.

There is reason to **consider** rational explainations for why very strange things could be true, as long as there is some smidget of evidence for it that has not been thoroughly tested.

So this is the basis of Rationality. We must draw from this every time we question whether a line of reasoning is rational. It must stem from deductive or inductive reasoning. We must draw back to this every time we question whether or not a line of reasoning is rational.

Science

Science is a system that has been found most efficient, based on rationality, for the purpose of making it practical to our everyday life, ideally toward the common good. The elements of rationality used in science are outlined as follows.

Inductive: In science, no theory is considered sound until it has been demonstrated by a well repeated and documented experiment.

Didactic: No theory is necessarily a permanent fact, so long as any contradictory theory has the potential to prove better reasoning.

Dialectic: A fairly new or recent theory must be left to some observation of potentially contrary theories. It can be altered by such contrary observations.

Every scientiffic endeavor (or scientiffic paper) can be summarized by 7 steps:

(1, hypothesis) having a reason to consider something, given a small token of evidence,

(2, theory) planning thorough (reasonably inexpensive) tests to things that have not been thoroughly tested,

(3, justification) explaining why a theory should work,

(4, prediction) positing a rational prediction of the outcome.

(5, process) describing and carrying out tests, looking for answers that would ultimately improve the truth, to see if it matches the prediction,

(6, observation) exhausting the arguments against or in addition to a prediction,

(7, conclusion) seeing what remains in the theory.

What kinds of things can be put to this formula of rational, scientiffic tests is

anything to your imagination. These tests are generally applied to the *natural sciences*. The observation of physically measurable qualities through controlled experiments. This has also been applied to "soft sciences" such as economics, social sciences, or *behavioral sciences*. These are not so evenly predictable sciences, because they measure things that are secondary to a physical function- they make some degree of speculation. For example: We can induce based on continuous tests that people get angry or frightful if you show anger toward them. We haven't explained all the little physical circumstances happening throughout the microtubules of the neural synapses in the brain, but we still have a general, reliable prediction

So if science works for things like predicting people's behavior and figuring out things like the motion of an electron . . . then what about things like a social science based on how a conspiracy often works?

Conspiracy is a crime in Britain, according to section [] of the []. So conspiracy theory is a sort of criminology based on that certain type of crime.

But there are two other aspects to science we must add to call the rationality complete.

Hypothetical

A hypothesis is the beginning of a scientiffic experiment, and therefore quite the opposite of a conclusion. It is speculation. There are unproven hypothetical models of the way all of measurable reality might be. These models are not used to assume the entire basis of reality, but they are designed to see in what different ways all of reality can fit together. In modern day, this is mainly concerned with fitting together quantum physics and astrophysics- the small and the large. M-theory is an example of this hypothetical model. Although it is not assumed factual, it is a series of theories that seem to fit well with a great deal of scientiffic papers. There are other papers as a "theory for everything" designed to fit these hypotheticals.

Skepticism

Hoaxing and antithesis are complementary types of science.

Or how about observations on the current holes regarding classical anthropology? Can we shape a science around questioning whether governments tell us reasonably honest things? Can we shape a science around questioning whether the origin of human kind or the presence of life on the planet is just as we have considered in the recent few centuries?

It is only since the Renaissance of the sixteenth century that the common human masses have believed anything other than Gods ruling the world. Compare that with the millennia in which the vast majority of known humanity has always believed in rule by supernatural beings. Are the findings of our recent centuries the most correct?

Belief in things like conspiracies and extraterrestrial life are rational pursuits, if they can fit these 3 criteria. Even purple chickens that live on Earth, perhaps, are rational if just one piece of evidence can indicate such a thing. But given that these hypotheses are pursued rationally, there is also only certain ways to pursue answers to such questions. Namely, with the use of logic and inductive reasoning.

It helps to rationalize why a person would be motivated to fool others, and how others can be fooled, despite a person's answer as to why they make a certain claim. Magicians are wonderful skeptics. They show us just how easily others can make powerful suggestions which fool even large masses of minds, intelligent or unintelligent alike. Both the common limits and potentials of the human brain are an important factor in asking ourselves what we ought to rationally believe.

Hoaxers, and even con artists, sometimes help us to better understand not only how easily we're fooled, but what motivates a person to fool others. This is another important factor. There are a great deal of examples where people prey on the fears and fantasies of others- to make their claim. The fallacy of *appeal to emotions* is not the rational justification for a belief.

There are a few common things that you might be familiar with in literature and the internet.

(1) People who claim things.

(2) People who claim things and have documents to prove things.

(3) People whom claim things, have documents to prove things, and have objects or means in direct relation to their claim which can be repeatedly tested.

(4) People whom claim things, have documents to prove things, have objects or means in direct relation to their claim which can be repeatedly tested, and show much more motive to be right than to be wrong (eg: "My career is at steak").

(5) People whom claim things, have documents to prove things, have objects or means in direct relation to their claim which can be repeatedly tested, have much more motive to be right than to be wrong, and have reasonably trusted institutions backing them.

You can bet that each successive level is a lot more reliable as a rational statement than their predecessor. Because each one successively uses more logic, more formal challenge, and has a few more motives to be honest.

Alternatively, you might be familiar with this kind of succession in literature

and internet.

(1) People who claim things.

(2) People who claim things and gain popularity by their claims.

(3) People who claim things, gain popularity by their claims, and have packaged influence backing them as they gain popularity.

(4) People who claim things, gain popularity by their claims, have packaged influence backing them, and motions made to act on their goals because they are so popular.

One of these is a rational progression. The other is a rational regression.

The first example, the most common on the internet today, is people who claim things only. These are "channelers" and "contactees" and people who basically believe something and might say that the message comes from someone or something spiritually way above (or transcendentally distinct from) themselves. This certainly makes them appear humble, as to not be the messiah but merely a "messenger" of a kind. Still, that doesn't make their claim more credible. It just helps them be regarded a little more affectionately- as they're not so prideful and boastful (despite the fact that they claim to have a special ability that few or none have developed with these spiritual beings). Contacts are like the stronger version of channelers, that believe they physically do have physical contact with extraterrestrials . . . they just . . . for some reason cannot be monitored on the instances that this happens.

It's not that psychic ability is irrational. There is some evidence for it (such as through Princeton Engineering Anomalous Research and the PEAR proposition). But even psychic ability ought to be *tested*, in order to be rationally verified as genuine.

Maybe some channelers and contactees are right. But **rationally,** little or nothing tells us that they're right if they have no evidence along with their claims. In fact, we know for certain that they are generally making a handsome amount of money on their publications. Often, the only rational explanation for their "channeling" is for them to con people into believing them for their own luxury, something humans tend to desire. So a rational person will dismiss **all** of these claims so far as a basis of fact. Some of the

claims might inspire them to do research, but none of it can be used as a credible source.

The second example, still pretty common, at least carries documentation from pretty reputable sources. But there's still plenty of reason to debate why they carry plenty of disinformation. One big example of this kind is an organization called the Disclosure Group. These are people that leave a paper-trail in their jobs, so that we can verify who they worked for. But the things they claim do not have a paper-trail. So we have to ask ourselves why they would want to claim these things **other** than to simply tell the truth.

The third example, very uncommon, is a very difficult and very narrowly-scoped lens of what their claims are and how it is verified. **Physicists** and **engineers** are one type of people whom can argue for a claim based on their level of understanding. **Scholars** of a certain field can speak on matters of their scholarly background. These professionals vested a lot of time and money on their education. They also expressed their agreement with certain methodology. So they're not anxious to give it all up and make statements which betray their discipline. They've earned credibility. They may have the curious desire to learn things, but they are also burdened with the obligation of rationality, which adds to their credibility. Still, they are not messiahs of any kind. They don't (and shouldn't) expect your absolute faith.

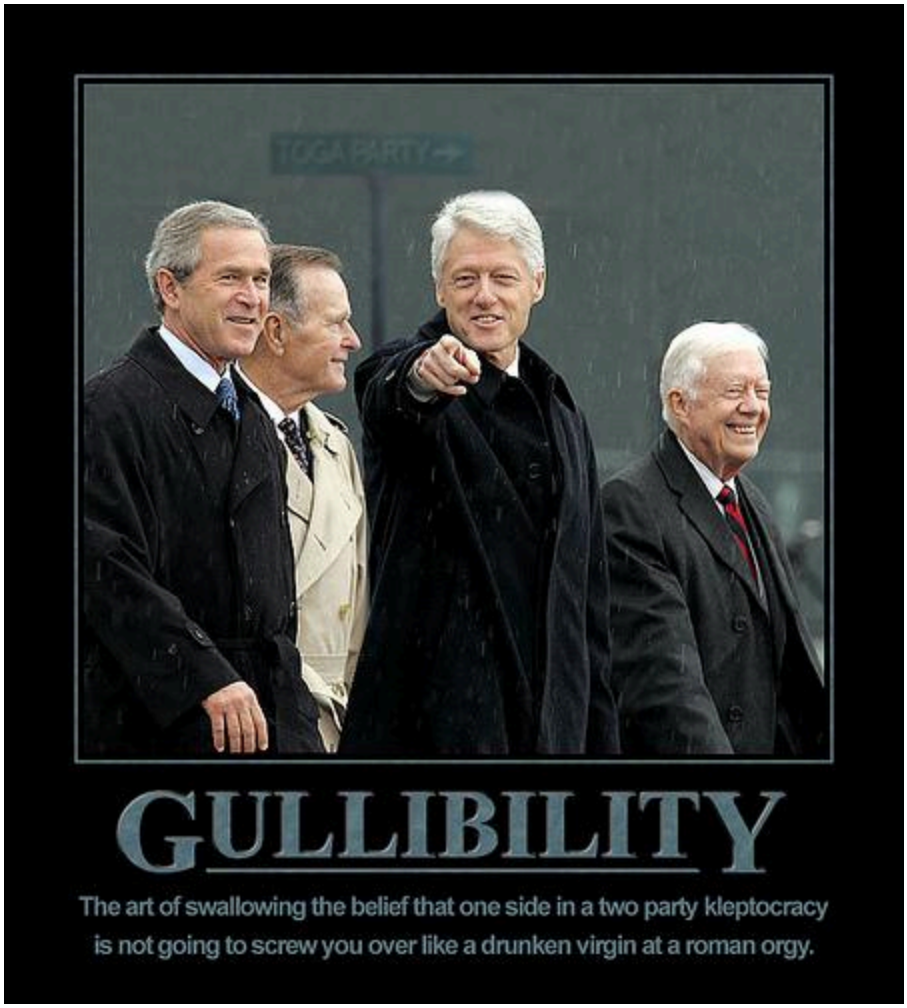
Finally, **lab test documents** are one of the most important documents you can name. In the past, research was done moreso in the laboratory of human senses. But since then, instruments which are sometimes more diverse and accurate, as well as guaranteed more honest, can be fully appreciated. It is the difficult task of rational people to prove a claim based on lab test results, and somehow make statements on the test document to draw conclusions that can be brought back to plain english.

The idea of extraterrestrial life on earth can sound pretty silly- for good reason. Nobody seems to see any. If it is true, they must really seem to avoid being known by us. In pursuit of such a question, we need to remember that it could be a pretty silly question and turn out to be entirely false.

Likewise, even if we think that it could be real, that is not reason to immediately fear a certain outcome or choose an idol of worship. Silly, or scarry, or ellegant. Dangerous, or benevolent, or any combinations of the above- we should keep in mind how plausible any of these outcomes are, perhaps combinations, or neither, and not necessarily only one. If they really are on Earth, perhaps we would liken their relationship to us in some way as our relationship with animals. Perhaps animals wonder to themselves what

people are really like. And we should give them the room to ask these questions. Even a very rational dog will ask himself whether to be loyal, or kind, to a certain person. A rational dog is also very aware of what damage he is capable of, and is not overtly anxious to cause damage.

Even if we are primitive to the elleged "them," does not mean we cannot be rational. Perhaps there are those so far advanced to us, that their motives and presence is simply beyond our comprehension. But perhaps there are also those somewhere in between . . . if we can imagine a very smart person, maybe built a little differently- we can still ask: What does that very smart person possibly want and do?



Rationality

> The virtue of *Rationality* means the recognition and acceptance of reason as one's only source of knowledge, one's only judge of values and one's only guide to action. ... It means a commitment to the principle that all of one's convictions, values, goals, desires and actions must be based on, derived from, chosen and validated by a process of thought.
>
> *Ayn Rand*

Rationality is the habit of acting by reason, which means in accordance with the facts of reality. The only alternative is acting by whim, which because reality is absolute, will result in undesired consequences. This is because an action based on a belief in a particular cause-effect relationship will not occur if that relationship is invalid.

A second consequence to acting irrationally is that it undermines one's ability to act rationally in the future. By choosing to act irrationally, you are confessing your lack of trust in your own mind. The more often you do this, the more you will believe what you are practicing. You will accept that the mind is impotent, and that you cannot make the right decisions. This undercuts your ability to live, since reason is man's means of survival.

Rationality is in your self interest because the only way to achieve desired outcomes is to act according to reality. To understand reality, one must use reason consistently. Any deviation can have long term problems, since one's knowledge is often derived from one's previous knowledge. To accept a false belief once can have the effect of polluting all further knowledge, until the mistakes are cleared away and the new knowledge reevaluated.

Rationality does not mean being a perfectionist in one's thoughts and ideas. It does not require you to spend enormous amounts of time evaluating every idea. It does not require you to learn everything there is to know, to become an expert at every topic. Rationality means acting according to reason. It means accepting

only that which you have reason to believe. It means using logic to weed out any contradictions. It means when you have to accept the judgment of another, you use your own mind to determine whether you should. Is the person educated in that field? Is it knowledge that someone is capable of having? From what you know about the rest of his ideas, is he someone you believe will be correct? Rationality is foremost a method of survival. It is a virtue only to the extent that it encourages one's survival.

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